

Hidden Desires

by Carol Sandford

Taking in the delicate scent of the tiny bright orange Bolian rose, Deanna giggled as the fragile petal tickled her nose, the man beside her smiled in amused tolerance as he watched her antics with a familiarity that they had both become accustomed to over the many years.

She was still grinning as Will gently took her elbow aiding her rising, keeping it there as they moved along the gravelly path that meandered through the gardens. The comfortable silence between them as they admired, sometimes touched, and sometimes couldn't resist smelling the profusion of blooms along the way.

The silence was broken by two young children chasing one another through the maze of paths, the high-pitched screech of the female child to the clearly irksome boy as he barrelled past Will and Deanna's legs at a break-neck speed, "Come back here at once Daniel Thompson or I'm gonna tell mommy!"

Both Deanna and Will watched the two with comical fascination until the tiny tornado's disappeared as fast as they had come and the tranquil quiet prevailed again. Reaching the heart of the arboretum, Will indicated for Deanna to sit on the bench, placed there so the visitors could relax and enjoy the restful sound and sight of the cascading fountain that continuously spurted forth frothy water from the strategically placed scantily clad woman seemingly pouring the water from the urn held in her arms.

Deanna loved it here, Will too. It was a place of peace. A place to talk and if you didn't want to talk, then to just be together, just for a while. Today Deanna wanted to talk.

"I wonder if the little girl caught up with Daniel Thompson? I wish it were that easy; to simply call for a man and for him to come running. I would use it on Simon Carsdale. I could just shout 'Here boy!' and he'd come running instead of me trying my hardest to drop subtle hints and making myself look like a total idiot."

"Who's Simon Carsdale?" Will asked, "I haven't heard that name before."

Deanna nonchalantly leaned forward and swirled her finger tips in the cool water, "He's new on board. He's not scheduled to officially join the crew for another couple of days, but had the opportunity of coming on board a few days early. He's terribly dishy and I was attracted to him instantly." She turned her head and smiled dryly up into Will's handsome face, "Trouble is, so are the rest of the unattached females on board the Enterprise."

"You'll just have to be patient, your time will come. There is no man alive that can resist your charms, Deanna."

Deanna gave a hefty sigh, "But he doesn't seem to know that I exist."

Will looked away, he appeared to be studying the distant display of flora, but seemed to notice nothing, "I know how you feel." he ventured at last.

Deanna was stunned, "You do?" For as long as she'd know William Riker, she had never known him to have lady trouble. Quite the opposite in fact. She studied him a little closer. Now she could see the fatigue lines, the tousled hair, the 'not so confident' air that surrounded him. Deanna felt guilty suddenly. So wrapped up in her own pursuit of a romantic liaison, she had neglected to notice that her closest and dearest friend was having some troubles of his own.

He cleared his throat before answering her, "Yes."

Deanna looked even deeper. The blue eyes looked the same. he looked the same, but at the same time he looked...different.

Will dared a full frontal look at the woman before him. It was enough for him to pluck up the courage to say more, "Yes...I do know the feeling..." Another glance at her surprised face gave him a tad more confidence; he had to go on. "Absolute hell actually. " His body slumped again as he turned away and muttered more to himself than her, "But what can you do?"

The silence stretched between them as they each digested each others revelations. At last Deanna asked quietly, "Who is she?"

Deanna wasn't sure at Wills response to her perfectly obvious question, but he seemed surprised to hear it and before he could think coherently, he repeated it, knowing he sounded stupid for doing so, "Who is she?"

Deanna saw the invisible wall go up before Will did, and she sat back, out of his direct vision, "Sorry, I shouldn't have asked, I didn't think perhaps you don't want to tell me."

Will immediately swung in his seat towards her, "No, no, I'm sorry, its alright, really." He sighed with resolution as he prepared to reveal his secret - or so Deanna thought until he sighed again, "Just...a girl I know."

Deanna almost screamed with frustration. He was being deliberately evasive and it was driving her insane. Her she was, laying her heart for him to see and he was deliberately avoiding an issue that somehow annoyed her beyond reason. Damn it, he was supposed to be her friend. They were supposed to tell each other their secrets. They were supposed to be there for each other, through thick and thin. But William Riker had decided to play coy with her and she was festering inside. No way could she let it go now, no way, even if it did make her feel like a leech.

She pushed on relentlessly, "What's her name. Where did you meet her. Was it on board the Enterprise. Have you spoken to her?" And just for good measure she added, "Does she know

that 'you' even exist?"

Will fell back against the seat dejectedly, his arms crossing across his chest as he warded off the chill that ran through him. He pursed his lips before finally answering her quietly, "Ros. her name is Ros... Rosalind."

Deanna chewed the name over in her mind, searching for its familiarity. Was she a crew member or a guest currently on board? she didn't recognise the name and that sparked an inner dread within her once more. She wanted to be able to say, "I know her." And she wanted to know if the woman should be considered a serious threat to their incomparable relationship, but Deanna's memory bank came up blank.

Deanna was desperate to know what 'Ros' looked like. Gamely she threw him a grin and said, "With a name like that I bet she's tall, blonde and willowy. I bet she's highly distinguished and her family are loaded." Deanna chuckled knowingly, "And I bet she'd got big boobs too."

The sparkling grin that Will threw her as they chuckled together seemed to satisfy her curiosity. Suddenly laughing out aloud, Will heartily answered her obvious attempts to find out about the woman that had captured his heart, "Couldn't be closer."

As the two friends finally pushed themselves to their feet, locked arms and began to make their way out of the arboretum, Will was relieved that Deanna seemed satisfied with her own definition of Will's typical female companion. Somehow it seemed safe to leave it as it was. The trouble was now he had to convince Rosalind that he was the man of her dreams.

Part two

Over the coming days, Deanna did her utmost to push 'Ros' out of her mind, but Will's continued air of dejection - and now Deanna had realised it for what it was, she had been amazed she'd not noticed it before - continued to push through her own needs. She was worried about him. Ashamed to admit that her own desires had neglected to notice the well-being of not only her friend, but an important crew member. A man that had always, always been there for her, as she for him, until now.

She had to make it up to him, somehow. If she was going to have a tempestuous affair with Simon, then it was only fair that Will should be with 'Ros'. After all, they were both grown ups. They were both single. They were both in love. Or was it lust? Deanna grew warm inside as she envisaged herself within Simon's arms. Lust, definitely lust.

Then Will's face popped into her thoughts. He didn't look like a man in lust. Will Riker looked like a man in love. Deanna came to a halt in the middle of the corridor; the impact of her thoughts slammed through her senses enough to give a passing ensign cause for concern at the unexpectedness of the Counselor's sudden immobilisation.

Will was in love?

It was a concept that Deanna hadn't considered. Not really. It was impossible to imagine that Will could have those same self emotions that he'd had for her once, but then she reasoned, he did have a right to something, if not as profound as what they'd had once. He was a human being after all. As was she. She still searched for that elusive 'happy ever after' scenario, and it seemed Will searched along beside her.

Deanna managed to swallow the immense disappointment, knowing that she had no right to behave that way. Will was her friend, she wanted him to be happy, desperately. And so she decided that she was going to help him, somehow.

The opportunity came along a few days along when Beverly Crusher decided she was going to have a party to celebrate her 'Four - Oh my God, my life is over!' birthday.

First and foremost, it had given Deanna the ideal opportunity to invite the man of her now constant hot and heavy dreams. It had cost her a lot of pride to press that button outside his door and invite him as her escort to the birthday bash. She'd been lucky. Every Goddess in the universe must have been on her side that day as he agreed somewhat jovially. Somehow it hadn't felt right to turn down the woman that had been so startled with his response, that she'd dropped the entire contents of her arms at his feet.

Simon Carsdale had seen her around the ship at various intervals. He couldn't avoid her really as she'd made it more than obvious that she was interested in him. But he hadn't been interested in her...then. He'd only just arrived on board the greatest ship to grace the skies, he didn't want to get tangled up with a woman, especially not a woman of her ranking. A woman who'd he'd heard on the grapevine was 'technically unavailable' for a long term thing.

But, he'd also heard that Deanna Troi was one of the hottest babe's on board and after a while, he'd figured she was worth a chance. If she was as hot as he, then he figured they could blow each others flames out. If it took one night, then so be it. If it took a little longer, who the heck was he to complain? She wasn't what he normally went for, but a little variation never hurt anyone right?

And here she was, practically begging him to escort her to a birthday party. Simon asked her in to his quarters. He was mildly surprised when she agreed. It was then that he'd learnt that she was Betazoid and had known he was no threat to her. It was also then that he discovered that she also had an ulterior motive, and with reluctance, he'd found himself agreeing to her proposal's. As long as she left with him at the end of the night, he didn't care what she did, even if it did involve the Commander.

Two days from now, Simon Carsdale was going to have the night of his life.

Part three

The woman was on a mission. From the moment Deanna Troi had entered the room, she had positioned herself in such a way, no one had a chance of getting in, or out without her zooming in on them.

It was a big night for Deanna; the man of her fantasies on her arm and a chance for her best friend to have the same. She was doing the right thing, she was sure of it. Everyone was entitled to their shot at happiness, even Will and Deanna.

It wasn't long before she spotted Will's overly tall form enter the room, but he seemed to be hovering near the door. Deanna figured he was waiting for Ros to arrive. She continued to dance with Simon, but her mind was only half on the man's body close to hers. The other half was with Will, willing for the elusive Ros to arrive.

There was a slight commotion at the door with new arrivals. Deanna searched the faces for someone who looked like a Ros. It didn't take long to find her; The woman was beautiful. She was tall, and she was willowy. She was also blonde and buxom. Will's favourite kind of woman.

In an instant, Deanna had a brainwave, and before Simon had even stopped circling the floor, Deanna had left him and had flung herself into Commander Riker's arms and proceeded to dance with him. He wasn't sure who was more stunned; herself or Will.

"Wha....what are you doing, Deanna?!"

"Shut up Will and behave as if we are a couple. Pretend to be gazing into my eyes - like this." Sparkling black met surprised blue, as Will tried to listen to her with his ears and devour her with his eyes, " You've got to be more ruthless, Will. You've got to let Ros do the chasing. If she wants you bad enough, she'll come running."

Will's heart thumped painfully as he considered her words, "You think?"

"She rolled her eyes at him, exasperated, "Yes! absolutely. You know, you're far too nice. Some women like to take control sometimes, and Ros certainly looks the type to want that. "Come here."

Before Will could even begin to ask why, Deanna had reached up and pulled his head down to hers. He almost leapt into the air as he felt her lips gentle lick his ear lobe, her urgent whisper tickling the sensitive spot, " I'm trying to make Ros jealous, you idiot, at least try and behave like you think something of me, Will."

Even before the words had left her mouth, Will felt the familiar pull of the woman in his arms. He didn't need any reminders of how to feel when she was near. It was almost as if Deanna had been born to be his lifelong fantasy. If he walked away from her right now and never, ever saw her again, one image, just one picture in his mind of her beautiful face would culminate in the same feeling that rocked through him right now. It always did. It always would.

Deanna felt Will's submission and acceptance to her plea. Within seconds she felt him pull her against his body, his movement slow and comfortable, his breathing low and breathless. she threw her head back and wasn't disappointed when Will instantly knew her intention and began to nuzzle her neck.

She heard his groan against her throat, and she couldn't stop the husky laugh from bubbling through her, "Hey, down boy, otherwise we'll scare her off for good."

Will came back down to earth with a bang. God, what was he doing?! this was Deanna Troi! This was his friend, the woman that he hoped to one day settle down with.

One day. But not today, not now.

Deanna barely heard his mumbled 'Sorry.' but the moment past as they both realised the song was almost over. Deanna looked up into Will's face, the moment was forgotten as he tried to focus his scattered emotions on the words that were slipping fast and furious from her lips, her need to dish out her barrel load of advice before the song ended and she vanished from his arms back to her own lovers. He barely heard her 'Be cool, act like you don't give a damn and I guarantee, she'll come running.'

By some small miracle, Deanna's dream came true. Ensign Jameson and Ros moved towards him, and for all intent and purpose, when Deanna looked his way as she left the room draped over Simon Carsdale's arm, Will was in an animated conversation with the two women. She threw him a wide and knowing 'I told you so' grin as she sashayed out of the door. What she didn't know was the threesome were having a riveting discussion on the flora and fauna of Alaska.

Part four

It was one of those sharp, crisp autumn mornings. The kind to take a long, miserable, solitary walk on. Deanna was alone, and alone meant lonely and right then, at that moment in her life, she felt lonely.

Her night with Simon had been an unmitigated disaster, for a variety of reasons. The main one being him. Her imaginary night of passion had been a non-starter. The man, Simon, had been entirely self centred, chauvinistic, boring and so in love with himself, Deanna had turned off sexually as soon as he'd stripped off down to his black satin thong. He also had a silky smooth totally hairless body. Skin that was even softer than her own, and the tiniest willy she had ever seen.

As he had crawled up the bed towards her, like a tiger stalking its prey, Deanna's thoughts had flicked back to the man she had left standing at the party, surrounded by women, one of which he was likely to now be doing pretty much the self same thing as she.

Only Rosalind was being entertained by a real man; a virile man. A man that had an enticing smattering of body hair, just enough to make him look like a man and not a gorilla. A man that put a woman's need long before his own. Long before.

Deanna wanted Will's touch; his arms around her, his lips on hers, his body melded to hers. His words uttered to her and only for her.

She also wanted Will's love, but it was too late, she'd lost him to Rosalind.

As Deanna stood and looked across the valley, that she had created in the holodeck, the early morning frost still covering the ground, creating a landscape of infinite beauty. Autumn colours graced the trees in a blanket of leaves. The icy cold water in the stream, a few meters away from her feet, ran rapidly over the array of tiny rocks on its way to Lord knows where.

But Deanna didn't see any of it. Her heart was heavy with not only her loss, but with her new found knowledge, a knowledge that she had no one to share with except the vista before her. The words slipped from her lips without her realising it, " I love you, Imzadi."

Only the wind listened to her heart-breaking confession.

Part five

It was more than Deanna could bare when she careered into Will and Rosalind outside his quarters the following day. If there had been one time when she'd wished their quarters weren't next door to each other, it was now, it was just so painful to watch him disappearing into his room with or without a woman.

She was jealous if he was with one, and she was jealous if he wasn't because she wanted to be in there with him, and she never was, except for ship business. It just wasn't the same.

And it was jealousy, Deanna understood the emotion clearly now. Something had happened. Something had changed. Something had reminded her of her commitment to Will, her bond, her attraction and her reason for being on board the Enterprise.

They were all for Will and it had taken a long time for her to appreciate and understand it. She was here for Will and she had lost him to another woman. His thoughts were sensual, his dreams were erotic, his days were filled with Ros. Not her, and she missed him so much she almost couldn't bare to see him anymore.

Until the day when Will sought her out.

He found her in the arboretum, the same place that they had had their fateful conversation only a few days ago. It seemed a life time ago, and a lot had happened since, especially for Deanna.

Will had realised Deanna's feelings towards him had changed. It had been a long time coming and he was ready for it. In truth he'd been ready for a long time, but this time, it had been Deanna holding back. It was Deanna that needed the shock treatment. Will hated doing it, but desperate times needed desperate measures, and Will was desperate.

He wanted Deanna back, he'd decided that a long time ago. It hadn't been a sudden decision, but something that had slowly crept up on him over the past months. He had sat back and watched Deanna try and try again to establish relationships with other people, but

had continuously failed.

But with each new relationship, Deanna was changing. She had begun looking for just a good time and not a permanent liaison. Even Will knew what kind of reputation the woman he loved was going to end up with if she continued with this line of seduction.

Will knew it wasn't what Deanna truly wanted, not really. She was settling for second best, but even that wasn't enough. Deanna needed love, pure and simple.

What hurt Will most was that he was there, with enough love for both of them, but how did he tell her. How in the world did he change what they had into something more?

And Will wanted more. He wanted it all. He wanted Deanna.

I had taken a lot to get here and put his heart on his sleeve. But Will couldn't stand seeing the woman he loved in so much pain, especially when he could be the one with the solution. He stood behind her watching her solitary form, oozing despair. It hung around her like a shroud.

It was time.

His words were low, but very strong, "I made her up."

He watched her outline stiffen as her tension increased tenfold. Will didn't stop, "There is no such person as Ros, it was just a name I thought up. I was trying to make you jealous, but I only caused you pain. I'm sorry for that, Deanna."

The silence hung between them as Will's words told their own story. Will tried again. "You had Simon, and I...I wanted you, Deanna, I've wanted you for a long time, but I didn't want to spoil your happiness. I wanted you to have a good time with Simon, God knows you deserved that. But I wanted you to think I was happy with someone else. But I wasn't."

Will slowly moved to stand beside her, their eyes meeting as she digested his news. He could see her mind milling over his revelation, clearly not quite comprehending what had happened over the past couple of days. Will put her out of her misery.

"There never was a Ros, she was just someone I made up to hide my true feelings for you." Will slid down to the seat beside her and took her chilled fingers within his. "Her name was Theresa, she's the sister of ensign Jameson. She was only here for a short visit. That's why she wasn't registered to the crew, Deanna."

On hearing her name, Deanna finally came out of her stupor, her brow furrowed with a million questions, "But...but I saw you kissing her. I saw you laughing and dancing with her. She was 'not' a figment of my imagination, Will."

Will laughed tenderly as he pulled Deanna's tense body to his, his laughter ruffling the curls on the top of her head, "Oh my love, Theresa is a woman, just like you. She could see what

you were trying to do; your little ploy to make her jealous. But even she could see that it was I who was jealous. She saw the way that I looked at you and decided to turn the tables and be the one to make 'you' the jealous one."

Will lifted her chin and looked deeply into her eyes, his smile was gentle and teasing, but oh, so very sincere, "It worked, didn't it, Imzadi?"

Their lips touched and released the torrent of pent up emotion that engulfed them both. They kissed like they have never kissed before. It was a kiss like no other, this one was full of love, of promises, of desire and contentment.

The circle was complete, they were together again, only this time it was forever.