

## Innocent Longings

By Carol Sandford

Counselor Deanna Troi strolled along the corridor to the turbolift, life was good at the minute. She had settled well on board the greatest ship ever to hit the skies, and better still, she was close to her Imzadi.

She had been disappointed that things didn't quite go the way she had planned, but when she finally came face to face with William T Riker once more, he had changed and herself had changed along with him.

Gone was the youthful passion, instead came something better. The tranquillity, and a closeness that rivalled any long standing happy marriage. A closeness that meant they were always there for each other, no matter what. And an understanding that they both knew that when they needed physical love, were mature enough not to get in the way of each others happiness, whatever the outcome of any other relationships. They knew they always had each other, and that was worth everything...

Deanna felt the first stirrings that something was amiss as she went to step into the turbolift. Her foot paused on the threshold as her senses told her that she was being followed. She looked along either side of the turbolift, but saw nothing. She shook her head in puzzlement and stepped into the lift, dismissing the notion and headed up to the bridge.

\*Phew, that was close...'

The ensign shook nervously behind the column he had dived behind until he heard the turbolift doors close and the gentle hum that indicated that she had left the floor. He stepped out from his hiding place and cautiously headed towards Deanna's quarters. His voice squeaked out the override code to admit him and he stepped into her domain.

He stood and looked around for sometime, taking in all that he saw. He wanted to learn everything he could about her so that when he talked to her, he had some common ground to engage a conversation with the women who he intended to pursue.

He tentively approached her bedroom, drinking in everything. Her sense of colour, the flowers that threw a riot of colour and scent around the room. His eyes rested on the photo beside her bed. He picked it up and studied it. It was of her and William Riker, taken some time ago. They looked happy. His arms were wrapped around her shoulders as he stood directly behind her, he didn't have a beard then, and he looked kinda geeky. The ensign smirked at the nasty thought that ran through his mind, 'One day Deanna, I'm gonna be doing that to you'

He set the photo back on the side and purposely headed back to the lounge reaching into his pocket as he did so. Pulling out a small container that held a small brooch of a cherub, he had looked up old Earth love customs and symbolic artefacts and he had liked this, and had had it replicated, taking care to eliminate all traces of use so he couldn't be rumbled. He placed it on her small table with the small note slipped under one corner of it, simply saying 'From an admirer'

He grinned to himself and hurriedly left her quarters to resume his own station.

~~~~~  
Deanna sighed as she stepped through her own doors, and started to strip off her uniform. The thought of the long hot shower had been her uppermost thought for the last hour. and by the time she had reached her bathroom she was naked.

She usually had a sonic shower, but today she wanted to feel to sensation of the steaming water on her body. She stood, unmoving for ten whole minutes and let the water wash the days troubles down the drain where they all belonged. She felt better for that thought alone as she stepped out and wrapped the huge fluffy purple towel around her slender body.

As Deanna wandered into her lounge area, she spoke out loud, ' Computer, music, soft jazz 20th century' She continued rubbing at her hair with one corner of the towel, now humming to the soothing music. She stopped as she spotted the cherub and bent to pick it up along with the note, she grinned, \*Will\*

As she prepared to dress for the weekly poker game in Will' s quarters, she felt her spirits soar. Perhaps he' s had a change of heart, perhaps he want' s us to try again, at long last...she pinned the cherub on her dress, caressing it lightly, loving it' s feel, and more so, loving the thought behind it. She left her quarters a lot happier than when she entered it an hour earlier...

~~~~~  
She met Beverly as she approached Will' s door, her eyes immediately going to the delicate little brooch, 'Oh, Dee, that' s pretty, is it new?'

She nodded happily, ' Yes it is, Will gave it to me, wasn' t that sweet of him?'

The door opened and they looked around noting that once again that they were late. Worf almost snarled his disapproval, Data merely looked on curiously, and Will over brightly grinned and stood slightly and mock bowed to the two ladies ' So good of you to join us...eventually...'

Deanna and Beverly looked at each and grinned, the same thought running through their minds

' Tough!' They giggled as they resumed their seats. Deanna as usual sat beside Will and as he watched Data pass around the cards. Deanna lightly touched his arm, he turned to look at her, and she silently sent to him, \*thank you\*

Her smile enough to melt chocolate.

His smile back was puzzled, but when Worf' s voice boomed around the table and they broke the eye contact and picked up their cards, Will turned to glance at her several times, but she had obviously decided to save it for later. But he did catch the sparkle of the brooch pinned close to her breast, and wondered who had given it to her.

Atmosphere at the poker table was on a high tonight, everyone was in good spirits by the time the game wound up about 11.30pm. Data stood and spoke directly to Beverly, ' Doctor, may I escort you to your quarters?'

She smiled and nodded her acknowledgement, and made her way to the door, Data stiffly stuck out his arm for her to take. She threw a grin at the others who were watching Data's effort at being courteous with their usual degree of po-faced humour. 'G' night everyone, see you in the morning.' And as she exited Will quarters like she was royalty, even Worf managed a gwarf!

There was an awkward moment when Worf realised that Deanna was remaining behind. Worf hurriedly growled his farewells and all but stormed out of the door. Both Will and Deanna watched him go with some surprise 'Looks like Worf's a little jealous Deanna, did you know you had a secret admirer on board?'

She laughed outright at his suggestion 'Worf!... I don't think so Will, I don't think my nails or teeth are sharp enough for his kind of foreplay...'

Will roared at her outspoken comment, 'Dee, as I recall, you left a few marks on me back in that jungle on Betazed.'

She blushed at the memory, but then turned and stroked his face. Time stood still as they devoured each other's features, drinking in each other's eyes, remembering the love that they had discovered at Janaran Falls.

Will's arms came around her body and completely enclosed her within them, as she kissed the hollow of his neck he kissed the top of her head. Then her temple, then her eyes, the tip of her nose and as his hands came up and held her jawline captive, he finally kissed her gently on the lips.

When he didn't get any resistance, he persuaded her to open her mouth and delved inside, the action bringing a deep, longing groan from both of them. Both at the same time remembering how good it had been, both realising that they had been kidding themselves into believing that they could only ever be best friends.

Deanna felt herself gently being picked up and being carried over to his bed. He laid her down, and stretched himself along beside her body and pulled her up to his. His large hand caressed her small behind, continuing to kiss until she broke away gasping. Her ragged breaths giving away her desire, Will's own desire pressed into her stomach. 'Deanna, we shouldn't be doing this, but God help me, I need you... What made you change your mind?'

She pushed herself up on to her elbow and looked at him puzzled. 'What do you mean?...I thought you had changed your mind...'

He watched her hand come up and stroke the brooch that he had noticed earlier, 'Didn't you give me this brooch, and the note?'

He frowned deeply at her, 'No, I'm sorry I didn't, what did the note say?'

She sat up, now realising that she had put them in a very embarrassing situation, 'Nothing really, just that it was from an admirer...I assumed it was you as it tends to be the sort of thing I'd expect you to do.'

He smiled at her and said gently, ' Believe me, if I wanted a lady to notice me, I would sure as hell make sure they knew it was me!'

' So... Who is it from then?...and more importantly, what are they doing in my quarters...?'

~~~~~

Next morning Deanna woke with a heavy heart. She knew it was for the best that her and Will had chose to stay ' just good friends' , but why did she feel like this? From the moment she had left his quarters last night, she felt...lost.

Deanna threw herself on her sofa and stared out at the passing stars. She remembered a time when she was on her home planet, waiting for Will to come back to her. She used to stare up at the stars, knowing that he was out there... somewhere, and one day she would see him again, of that she was certain. And now she had found him...she could wait, even it took them past their lifetime, she would wait...

~~~~~

Will sat in Ten Forward, a rapidly cooling cup of coffee sat beside him on the table. He leaned on the arm, his hand supporting his head that too stared out at the passing stars.

He couldn' t believe that he' d blown his chance to kick-start the romance between him and Deanna. He' d forgotten how good it was as he felt his loins stir just thinking about her. He physically squirmed in his seat, his stomach knotted as his thoughts carried him back to a time when she lay beneath him, revealing her heart, her body, and her soul to him. He could still remember her sighs, her begging for more, and for as long as he lived, and beyond, he would never forget when he heard her call him ' Imzadi' ...

## Chapter 2

Deanna couldn' t wait to reach her quarters after her shift. She felt miserable. It had been a bad day. Will didn' t know what to say to her, so he said nothing at all. That hurt...Even Beverly' s teasing didn' t manage a smile and Worf, well, Worf practically snarled at her if she came within ten foot of him.

Deanna went to throw her padd on the table when she spotted the envelope. She looked around her making sure no-one was behind her, her senses also telling her that she was alone. She gingerly picked it up and pulled out the paper inside. It was a poem, very basic, very immature, but very sweet,

' One day you will be mine, to have, to kiss, to hold,  
like your picture that speaks of many secrets untold,  
One day we will be together. One day, you will love only me  
until then, my love, my dreams will fulfil my fantasy.

Deanna didn' t know whether to be flattered or scared. She knew that it wasn' t Will, and it couldn' t be Worf...could it...? She decided to go and ask him, she had nothing to lose. She' d humiliated herself in front of the only person that mattered, so this should be a breeze.

She made her way to his quarters and made herself known. When he opened the door and saw that it was her, he snarled, baring his teeth, and growled deep in his throat, ' What!?'

Deanna took a step back, and knew there and then that it wasn't Worf. So she turned and ran, throwing over her shoulder, by way of an apology, ' Sorry...wrong door...'

~~~~~

She hesitated outside Will's door, and was startled when it opened and he stood looking at her, his eyes not quite trusting what he saw, ' Deanna...?'

' Hello Will, I... I just wanted to ask, did you send me the poem?'

She held her breath, hoping that he was going to smile and say it was. But her heart hit the floor when he shook his head and muttered annoyed, ' No Deanna, it wasn't me. Like I said before, I like to make sure my ladies know...'

She held up her hands to stop him going any further, she didn't need reminding that he didn't want her, ' I know, I know... Sorry I asked'

Deanna quickly turned and walked away before Will could say anymore. She headed back to her quarters and found her self pacing back and forth ' Who could it be?'

~~~~~

Deanna sat uncomfortably in her chair on the bridge the next day, her back was ram rod straight, her hands clasped nervously together on her lap. She couldn't look at Will, but she could feel him watching her. Eventually when her jarred nerves had just about enough for one day, she asked the captain if she could be excused. Using a raging headache as an excuse, Deanna made her way to sickbay.

Beverly was just finishing up some notes in her office when she walked in. Beverly looked up in surprise to see her friend walk in, clearly in mental pain. She rose to meet her, took her arm and ushered her to a bio-bed and as she ran the tricorder over her, ' What's up Deanna?, you look like hell.'

She decided to spill the whole story about the brooch and the following episode with Will, and Worf and the poem. ' It's beginning to worry me for some reason, I know it's very flattering, but I'm becoming uneasy about it. Someone is coming into my room, and I'm sure I've been followed a few times.'

Beverly looked worriedly at her dearest friend ' Have you told the Captain about this?'

Deanna shook her head, ' No, because I thought it was Will, or maybe Worf.'

Beverly's eyebrows shot up, ' Worf!...I hadn't noticed he'd got a crush on you...'

Deanna's look made Beverly change her mind. ' Have you tried to talk to Will?'

Deanna nodded sadly, ' I really blew that one. I thought he wanted us to be a couple again...how could I have been so wrong? He barely speaks to me now' .

Beverly smiled knowingly, ' I think you should try and talk to him again. If anyone can

help...it' s Will.'

She knew she was right as Beverly administered a hypospray for Deanna' s headache and she followed her back into her office. ' So...how are things with you and Wesley? Has he settled in yet?'

Beverly smiled tenderly at the mere mention of her precious son, ' Oh yes. I think he' s in love. He' s always got this goofy look on his face these days, and I am absolutely not allowed to go into his bedroom,. Mind you I haven' t seen him with any particular girl, so I don' t know if he' actually going out with her or not, but I' m not worried, it' s nice to see he' s normal.'

They both laughed and Deanna felt a lot better for their chat and left Beverly to her work. As she headed back towards her quarters she felt it again, but every time she turned around, no-one was there. She reached the turbolift and pretended to go in, then quickly and quietly backed up around the corner and waited, with bated breath. She heard the soft footsteps and stepped out to face Wesley...

She didn' t know who was more surprised, him or her,

' Counselor!'

' Wesley!'

There was an uncomfortable silence, and when he finally realised why Deanna had already sensed all The emotions and feelings that were radiating from him. ' It was you...!'

Chapter 3

Once they were seated in her office, Wesley perched on the edge of his seat. Deanna sat back, with her arms and legs crossed, ' Why Wesley?'

He looked pathetically young, and his voice even smaller, ' I' m sorry, but I wanted to let you know how I felt, and I thought that once I' d sent enough stuff, you would look at me a bit different, y' know, more like a man...'

Deanna had a great deal of difficulty trying not to smile. She stood and went and sat on the front of desk in front of him. Weighing up her words very carefully, Deanna knew that she didn' t want to lead him on, or upset him unduly, ' Wesley, I am very flattered that you find me... desirable, but I' m sure you realise that a relationship is not possible.'

He stood up in front of her, and she found herself watching his eyes as he rose. She didn' t see his hands rise and take her fingers within his. She was so stunned that Deanna didn' t immediately pull away.

When Deanna looked back to his face from their linked hands, she realised she had made another mistake, Wesley Crusher was no longer a boy, but indeed a very handsome young man.

' Deanna...I am in love with you...'

She was so gobsmacked that all she could do was stare when Wesley moved nearer and kissed her lightly on the lips. He stood back and looked longingly at her, then simply turned and walked out of her office...

Deanna's fingers lightly touched her lips that still tingled from the impact that shot through her body. But what worried her more was her own response. He had managed to bring her already raw feelings to the surface, and she felt her own body go hot.

What had she done?...

She was still sitting in the same position when Will called in. He looked worriedly at her face, still in it's dazed look, 'Dee, are you alright? Beverly said that you were a bit scared about what had been happening, and I'm sorry for the way I behaved. You threw me off balance for a while there, and I've only just managed to stand up straight again.'

He attempted to grin at her, she still only stared at him 'Deanna, your scaring me, has something happened? Talk to me, dammit!'

His mild curse filtered through her reverie, and she stood and brushed invisible fluff from her clothes hoping that it was enough time to gather her face to neutrality when she looked back at him. She plastered a big grin on her face, and attempted to brave it out, 'I'm fine Will, I accept your apology, but everything's o.k. Now, I've solved the mystery, it was just somebody playing a joke on me. I just took it too much to heart that's all...'

Will didn't believe her, he knew her mind was in a turmoil, he could feel some of it. Her eyes held a sparkle that looked suspiciously like she was close to tears, but he knew better than to pressure her. She obviously wasn't going to talk about it now, so he let her have the benefit of the doubt,

'Your sure?'

Deanna nodded rapidly, forcing a grin across her face, 'Yes, thank...I've got to go, duty calls...'

She edged her way past him and hurried out the door to the sanctuary of her own private quarters. Her mind raced over and over, 'My god, I let him kiss me! What was I thinking of. What am I going to do?... What am I going to tell Beverly?...'

Deanna agonized for hours, then decided to do nothing. She was sure that his crush would pass eventually, when he realised that she wasn't going to return his affections.

~~~~~

Deanna was surprised when she found a single red rose on her table the next morning. She sighed when she realised that yesterday's little chat did nothing to deter him. She pondered whether to ignore him or go and read him the riot act. Or better still, tell his mother. She chose to read him the riot act, 'Computer, locate the whereabouts of Wesley Crusher.'

'Wesley Crusher is in cargo bay 3'

Now determined, Deanna made her way down the the cargo bay areas. She spotted him checking over an instrumental panel with another young ensign. Wesley watched her walk in, marvelling every step that she took, even if she was obviously angry. She came to a halt in front of them.

'Ensign, could you please excuse us for a few minutes? I need to discuss something personal with Ensign Crusher.'

The young lad shrugged and moved off, ' Sure thing Counselor, it' s about break time anyway. I' ll meet you in the canteen Wesley...'

Wesley nodded his agreement and they both watched him walk out of the cargo bay. When the door had closed, Deanna turned to Wesley and tried to sound cross, ' Wesley I...'

Wesley butted in quietly before she had a chance to finish ' Hello Deanna, you look beautiful this morning.'

Her mouth opened to say something, but shut it again. Once more he had managed to catch her off guard. She turned away from him and tried to hide the confusion that she was sure showed on her face, ' Wesley, this has got to stop.'

Deanna jumped when she felt his arms steal around her and hold her close. He was so gentle, that she momentarily stood still and enjoyed the sensation. It reminded her of a time long ago when Will had done the same. His arms still scrawny from immaturity just like Wesley' s. She smiled at the remembrance, and she almost wilted when she felt his feather light kisses on her neck.

Wesley grinned when he heard her moan. He had waited a long time to do this. The photo had become a sort of goal, and he was determined to take the first opportunity to mirror it. He didn' t expect it to come this soon, but he knew that she was going to come to her senses any moment.

Sure enough, he felt her pull at his arms. ' No, Wesley, this is wrong. I see I' m going to have to stay away from you completely.'

Her heart wrenched at the boyish grin he threw at her, ' No Deanna, I don' t think your going to be able to...'

Wesley walked around her, still grinning, as he continued to watch her face as he walked out of the cargo-bay, leaving her standing there, stunned.

#### Chapter 4

Deanna was going crazy! And worse, she had absolutely nobody to talk to. Will wouldn' t understand. Beverly would kill her, and the captain...well, she could just imagine his face. That alone was enough for her not to tell him.

She found herself sitting in the Ten Forward lounge, sipping a hot chocolate. Even that didn' t



make her feel any better. ' It can' t be that bad.'

Deanna looked up into the rich chocolate eyes of Guinan, she often thought that they were very much alike. Guinan probably solved as many counselling cases as Deanna did in her own way. It never annoyed her, in fact, sometimes it was a blessing in disguise. Sometimes she didn' t want everyones emotional baggage, Oh, she loved her job, but even Counselor's got a little depressed, and somehow Guinan always filled that gap that she purposely left.

' Oh believe me, it is...'

Guinan' s eyebrows lifted, ' Really!, anything I can help you with?'

Deanna laughed quietly, ' Well, I' m actually too embarrassed to say, but I must say, it' s nice to be able to say that to you.'

Guinan pondered over the strange conversation for a moment, ' Y' now, you should really tell some-one you completely trust. It wouldn' t matter if it disgusted them, or angered them, in the end they would get past all that, and eventually, they would there to help you.'

Deanna stared into her drink, realising once again that the bartender was right. She looked up to tell her so, but as usual, Guinan had wandered off, leaving Deanna to pluck up the courage to go and see the only person she trusted her whole life with. Will Riker...

~~~~~

By the time Deanna had reached Will' s quarters, she was shaking. But she knew that she needed to unload this weight off her chest otherwise she was going to explode.

It was some time before he answered her hail, and was surprised to see her standing there. ' Deanna! come in, I was just about to eat, care to join me?'

She shook her head 'No, thanks. I' m sorry, I can come back later...'

She turned to go, but Will sensed that she needed to talk, so he gently grabbed her arm and pulled her further into the room and motioned for her to sit. He felt the anxiety begin to rise in him and he knew that something was seriously upsetting Deanna.

He touched her lightly on the arm, ' Dee, what' s wrong? Come on, talk to me...You can tell me anything...'

Will started when he saw the tears spring to her eyes at his last remark. He felt his heart race and he reached and pulled her into his embrace, ' Imzadi...please...'

Her voice broke on a sob, ' Oh Will, I don' t know what to do. I' ve got myself into an impossible situation.'

' It can' t be that bad can it?...'

Deanna nodded rapidly against his chest, his mind raced through so many terrible reasons that

he was almost to frightened to ask, ' What...'

She pulled back from him and looked into his face, ' Someone has fallen in love with me...'

Will laughed, relieved it was nothing so bad, ' Is that it?...'

She nodded again,

Will was bemused, ' So what' s wrong with that?'

' I think I have some feelings for him too...'

' Yes, So what' s wrong with that?'

' He' s very young...'

' Yes, so what' s wrong with that?'

' He' s only seventeen...'

' Yes...so what' s wrong with that?'

'It's...Wesley crusher...'

## Chapter 5

Will stared at her face, trying to see if this was some kind of sick joke or not. He decided that it must be and laughed nervously. But then he must have imagined something really funny because he suddenly burst out into a fit of laughter. But when he turned to look at her face again, the laughter died just as suddenly.

Will found himself staring at her again, ' Dee, tell me you are kidding...please!...'

Deanna broke the trance-like state she gone into when he' d started laughing at her. The pain she felt when she realised that he didn' t understand was even worse than what she had imagined. Deanna looked down at her hands and shook her head sadly. She couldn' t bring herself to say anything, jumping at his voice when he spoke again.

' Wesley Crusher!... Deanna, he' s a child...He' s a spotty teenager with raging hormones. He' s geeky, and I bet he' s still a virgin too!' ...He' s skinny. He' s big-headed, conceited, obnoxious and he' s goofy. He' s...'

Every statement Will made jabbed at her heart. Deanna knew everything he was saying was true. But then why did she feel like this towards him? Her eyes when she looked back to Will, mirrored her despair, stopping his tirade when he realised that this really was happening, Deanna' s tears confirming the worst, she really had fallen for Wesley. He had no choice but to ask her, ' What are you going to do about it?'

She shrugged at the same time she shook her head, her dilemma clear. Deanna knew that a relationship was out of the question. But she also knew that there was something between them that needed resolving.

Will decided to try forcing the facts at her, ' Can you really see yourself walking around the ship arm in arm with him. Could you sit in the same room as Beverly while you were draped over each other. Can you imagine what the captain would say!?'

He lowered his voice and barely whispered to her, ' Deanna, could you really see yourself making love to him...?'

Deanna stood abruptly, his words screamed through her senses. She couldn't answer him, she didn't know what to say. Will kept quiet while he let her absorb what he had said.

He eventually heard her sigh, ' Your right, it is a stupid idea' She turned and gave him a watery smile, 'Thanks... I really needed someone to knock some sense into me.'

Will stood and walked over to Deanna and placed his hands upon her shoulders, forcing her to look up at him. His gut churned at the misery in her face. He kissed her gently on the forehead and left. Will knew that she needed to be alone, hell he needed to be alone. His mind relayed over and over the conversation, he just hoped he'd made her see sense. The thought of her and Wesley Crusher together angered him beyond reason, and there was no way while there was still a breath of life in his body, he was going to allow him ever to get the chance, even if it meant chasing after Deanna Troi himself...

~~~~~

Deanna walked slowly along to her quarters, her mind going over her conversation with Will. She stopped short when she saw Wesley propped up against her door. He looked slightly nervous, but also determined.

Wesley stood up straight when he saw her approach. When she came to a stop in front of him, her arms automatically crossed as she looked at him sternly. ' Wesley, you shouldn't be here. This is wrong, please leave me alone...'

He shook his head slowly, ' No Deanna, you don't really want me to go. I want to talk to you'

He moved forward to stand so close that she could feel his breath on her face. His eyes smouldered and she couldn't stop herself from leaning into him. Wesley seized the moment and captured her within his arms, and bravely gave her a kiss that surprised himself more than it surprised her.

Wesley looked down onto her face. Her eyes were closed, but he heard her sweet whisper, ' Take me inside.'

Wesley grinned and called out the override code. The door hissed open. He took her hand and led her inside. As he stood in the middle of the room nervously, it was then that Deanna realised that Wesley didn't know what to do. She audibly sighed, ' Kiss me again...'

Gently, Wesley took her in his arms and kissed her the same way he had in the corridor. Deanna groaned. Not because of the passion, but because he didn't know what to do next. Will would have begun caressing her body as his kisses would have become more ardent. Will would have swept her up into his strong arms and carried her into the bedroom.

This time Deanna groaned with frustration as her body began to react with the vibrant images racing through her mind. She broke the kiss and looked up into Wesley's face. Deanna knew she shouldn't do this...She knew that she was going to have to.

Deanna took his hand and placed it upon her breast. Wesley's startled look soon turned to one of wonder, as he awkwardly moved his fingers around, feeling the luscious contours. He got braver and placed his other hand on her.

As Wesley watched her face, he felt his own excitement grow. Deanna's eyes were closed, and her head hung back, abandoned. Her mouth was slightly open, her breathing shallow. Wesley was entranced as he moved closer and nuzzled her neck. Deanna pulled at his body so that it touched hers.

She needed him closer. Will would have started undressing her at this point. Her mind screamed at Wesley to do just that, but it wasn't until she moved her hand to the back of her tunic that Wesley realised what she was going to do.

He stopped his ministrations to stand back from her to watch, his eyes wide at the sight that was unfolding before him. He couldn't believe his luck. Many times, him and other young ensigns on the ship had gossiped about Deanna Troi, ultra babe... Boy! Did he have something to tell them now.

As Deanna stood before him in a sheer cream camisole set, Wesley continued to stare at her. Once again Deanna sighed with despair as she took his hand and led him into her bedroom...

~~~~~

Will prowled around his quarters. He hadn't got the conversation with Deanna out of his mind since he'd seen her. It was driving him insane. His mind made up he barked to thin air, 'Computer, location of Wesley Crusher?'

His heart stopped at its reply 'Wesley Crusher is Counselor Deanna Troi's quarters.'

Will held his breath as he asked with dread, 'Computer, location of Counselor Deanna Troi'

'Counselor Troi is in her quarters.'

Will tried to reach her telepathically to see if she was in trouble, but he felt nothing from her. He sighed with relief, and headed out of his quarters and trotted along to hers along the corridor as he tried to convince himself that there was nothing but a conversation going on behind her closed doors. 'She must be talking to him, a bit unsafe doing it her private quarters though...

When Will reached her door and hailed her and he got no response, he began to panic. Using the override command, he stepped cautiously into her domain. It was quiet, too quiet. Will walked towards her bedroom door and pushed it open slowly.

The light from the lounge filtered through enough for Wesley Crusher to realise that they were no longer alone. He swung around with a startled look upon his face, Will's mirrored it with shock, until he moved his eyes down Wesley's body. His eyes stopped at his pants. One leg off, the other in a pool at the bottom of his foot on its way to meet its mate.

Will's eyes shot back up to the younger man's face, not believing what he was seeing. Then Will heard the gasp behind Wesley and craned his head to look around him. Deanna was laying prone on the bed, in pretty underwear, that was also in the process of being removed, willingly by the way that her body was positioned across the bed.

After the silent shock wore off they all cried in unison, 'Commander!...' ' Will!...' ' Deanna!...

## Chapter 6

' GET OUT...!

As Will's voice boomed throughout the room, both Wesley and Deanna jumped with the ferocity that came with it. Will turned and pointed towards the door, his full stare on Wesley, ' I said GET OUT!..NOW!...'

Wesley stumbled over his trousers and hurriedly crept past Will, cowering in case he hit him. Will watched him until he had left her quarters. He didn't care that he was now probably running along the corridor in his underpants. He was so angry, mostly at himself for not seeing it coming, angry at himself for turning Deanna away. Angry for leaving her on Risa. Just angry...

Will slowly turned to face Deanna. She was sitting up in bed, but she looked scared. He watched her pull the sheet up to cover her body, her eyes never leaving his face. They stared at each other trying to rein in the emotions that were still screaming out of control. Time stood still for the couple who had so much between them, but not enough to totally fulfil each others wants and desires, neither one daring to take that last leap of faith to re-unite their long lost souls.

Will took one step towards her, and hesitated when he saw her eyes grow wider as she started to panic. He stopped himself again, closing his own eyes to bring himself in check before he dared to speak to her. He knew that what ever he said to her now could escalate into words that they would both regret, ' Why Deanna?... ' His voice cracked with emotion, he swallowed hard to keep back the choking that threatened to come with his words.

Deanna's eyes filled with tears and she numbly shook her head. She was confused, he could sense that. He took a few more tentative steps towards her. ' Why Deanna?...after everything I said to you.'

She held her hand out to him, her eyes begged him to sit beside her. Begged him to try and understand. Begged him to forgive her. He looked at her hand outstretched to him, and after

some moments, took it and quietly sat beside her.

Deanna hesitated before she spoke. Will saw the tear escape her eye and trickle down her cheek. He reached his hand across and gently stroked it away. Her hand caught his and she pressed her face into his palm. He felt the featherlight kiss, and his heart quickened its beat. He pulled his hand away, he wasn't ready for this now ' Deanna...why Wesley Crusher? I need to know'

Her beautiful face frowned lightly as she wondered about the reason why she was so drawn to him, ' I'm not sure... I know that when he's near me, I think about you.'

He looked at her surprised, it wasn't what he was expecting her to say, ' Me!, why?'

Deanna looked away as she remembered time past, ' I see him and I remember you, when we were on Betazed... I think it's because he reminds me of how you were then.'

Will was clearly perplexed, but no matter how he tried to see it, he couldn't see the connection. ' But he's nothing like me, not to look at, or how I am...'

Deanna picked up the photo of the two of them and studied it with a sad smile on her face, ' When Wesley held me like you did when this picture was taken, it was you...I can't explain why...'

As Will pulled her to her feet, the sheet fell to the floor. Nobody noticed. This wasn't the time for anything sexual. Will gently pushed on her shoulders so that she faced away from him, then placed his arms around her, and hugged her close, ' Like this?'

Deanna shook her head, but they continued to savour the moment, both remembering the long past memory, both lost in each others thoughts. ' No it's not the same. You're not the same...'

Will was beginning to get annoyed, ' What do you mean I'm not the same? I'm still me, I can still hold you the same, I still love you the same...'

Deanna swung back around to look up into his face, ' No! your...bigger. The Will on Betazed was still a young man, not much older than Wesley, you didn't have a beard then either, like Wesley. It's like he's you...then.'

Suddenly Will understood. He gently lifted her face so that she had no choice but to look into his eyes. His understanding, his love, his compassion, his sorrow, and his heartfelt apology at the grief he had caused her for when he had left her behind on Risa.

' I am so sorry Imzadi, I should never have left you, I know now that I could have both you and my Starfleet career. I should have come back for you, I wanted to...so many times. I should have known that you would have waited. I used to dream about you every night, dreamt that you were calling me... I should have come back...I'm sorry...'

His last apology came with a choked sob and Deanna pulled him into a tight embrace. Together they tried to mend past hurts. The time they stayed like that was immeasurable, both

soaking up strength from each other to face whatever lie ahead for which ever path they chose to take from now on.

Will slowly moved his hands up her slender body as his fingertips brushed lightly over the satin camisole. His response instant. Deanna moved her own hands over his back in unison. Both looked into each others eyes at the same time, both succumbing to the passion that had to happen between them.

Their lips met and they exploded. Will groaned into her mouth as he pulled her tighter into his embrace. His hardness pressed against her own rising desire, forced there by his hands as they gently cupped her behind somehow bringing her even closer.

Deanna whimpered, ' Will!?'

Will bent a little and picked Deanna up by her buttocks, her legs automatically locking around his waist. Still kissing her as he lowered her onto the bed. Still between her knees, there was no time to remove clothes. No time to stop and do it leisurely, neither wanted it any other way.

Will reached down and unzipped his fly, moving aside the satiny material the had kept her hidden. He entered her in one swift motion. Her scream was caught in his kiss, as he held her head captive within his strong hands. Her eyes flew open at her surprise.

Will grinned, ' something else that has gotten bigger with the rest of me!'

Chapter 7

' Wesley Crusher to Commander Riker.'

Will looked at Deanna' s face while they waited for his response to come back, 'Yes Sir'

' Can you please join the Counselor and I in her quarters A.S.A.P?'

Wesley' s voice turned squeaky again, ' Y..Yes Sir...I..I' m on my way.'

Will and Deanna sat on her sofa ready for a confrontation that they all knew that they had to have, Will' s hand reached across and briefly gripped hers in a reassuring gesture. She smiled nervously at him, then jumped a little when the door beeped his arrival.

Will barked, ' Come!'

The door hissed open and Wesley, looking like a scared little boy, hesitated on the threshold. Unsure of what was going to happen, his large eyes showed his fear at what the man who had become like a second father to him. The man who, besides the Captain, held his respected awe in every aspect of his young life. All his goals that he aimed for were incited by his reverence of his Commanding officer, which made this ten times harder. He wasn' t ready to give up on Deanna and had to pluck up the nerve to tell him so.

' Come in Wesley, I' m not going to bite you.'

Wesley hesitantly stepped into the room. Will watched the handsome young man' s eyes settle on Deanna, his love for her was evident in his eyes. Will turned to look at Deanna and was startled to see her looking at him in the same way. No words were said, but the air was charged with a smouldering passion, and Will realised that this was going to be harder than what he thought. He now knew that it wasn' t just Wesley Crusher he was dealing with, but his own Imzadi too...

~~~~~

They had originally planned to talk openly about the attraction, to try and make Wesley understand Deanna' s dilemma, to let him down gently. Now Will decided it need a much larger shock tactic...He reached across and took Deanna' s hand, ' Wesley...Deanna and I are a couple again'

He watched Wesley' s eyes leave Deanna' s face to turn and look at him, his confusion apparent. Will tried again, ' We are lovers...'

Deanna gasped at the bluntness of his remark, ' Will!...'

Wesley mind finally focused on what was being said, his reply puzzled. ' But...Deanna wants to be with me...!'

Will gently shook his head, his smile kept hidden, this wasn' t the time for ridicule. ' No Wesley, Deanna attraction to you was because she was having difficulty getting through a traumatic event in her past with me, and you reminded her of it...and of me.'

Deanna finally found her voice, ' I' m sorry Wesley, but Will is right, it can never work between us. I love Will, and he loves me...'

Wesley jumped, staring alternatively at both of them, ' No!...No, you love me Deanna. One day you' ll love me instead of him. I' m not giving up...I' m going to fight for you Deanna!'

Before either of them could react, Wesley rushed out of her quarters. Will watched him go with a feeling of trepidation. Deanna watched him go with a feeling of anticipation...

## Chapter 8

No matter how many times Will tried to search out Wesley Crusher, he always managed to either elude him or conveniently be with someone. Even hiding behind his mother had become a frequent occurrence.

Of course, Beverly was delighted at her son' s attentions, she was relating his latest affections to Deanna in the Ten Forward lounge one afternoon. 'I don' t know what' s got into him Deanna, he doesn' t seem to want to leave my side...I wonder if this girl he' s obviously attracted to is giving him the runaround... I wonder who she is... There' s only eight teenage girls on board...it must be easy to find out who she is...'

Beverly suddenly brightened, an idea forming in her head, ' How do you fancy doing a bit of



detective work with me Counselor?'

Beverly looked up at Deanna in surprise when the Counselor suddenly jumped to her feet, ' Crikey, is that the time?...duty calls, my next appointments due five minutes ago!...gotta run, bye Beverly...'

Beverly watched her closest friend practically run from the lounge her own ' bye' dying on her lips as she wondered what all had just happened.

~~~~~

Wesley was in Engineering when he heard the hail for all senior officers to report to the Ready room. He knew that they had just reached an uncharted moon, which meant that after a short briefing, an away team would be heading down to the planet for a look. His private grin brought a curious look from Geordie ' Everything o.k. Ensign?'

Wesley face beamed full force, ' Yes sir, things couldn' t be better.'

Geordie frowned as the younger man made his way out of engineering ' Now what' s that boy up to?...'

But knowing how intelligent he was, he had no qualms about leaving him under the guidance of his other staff. Geordie chuckled to himself, recalling many a time when Wesley had indeed taught him a few things about his job.

~~~~~

Wesley watched the runabout leave the docking bay, his heart beat growing quicker with anticipation, ' Computer, location of Counselor Troi?'

' The Counselor is in her office.'

He quickly made his way to her door, constantly looking around him, expecting Will Riker to leap out of the shadows and put his huge hand on his shoulder. He sighed with relief when he finally reached his destination. Wesley heard no voices on the other side, and decided that surprise was the best course of action.

Wesley quickly opened her door, Deanna looked up in surprise, her mouth opening wide when she saw who it was. He walked straight over to her, his steps quick and sure. Before she had a chance to move, and before he had a chance to lose his bottle, Wesley bent and planted a kiss on her lips.

Nothing had been said, nothing wanted to be said, and before Deanna had a chance to react, Wesley kissed her again, this time the kiss deepened. She felt his tongue trying to invade her mouth. Deanna resisted until his hand came up and gently held the back of her head, his other hand reaching down to capture hers and pull it up to his chest. Wesley felt her submission, and his tongue finally made it' s way into the hot depths of her mouth.

Neither heard the soft footsteps approach her door, but both heard the horrified gasp that told them that their intimacy had been witnessed. As they sprung apart, they both turned to face the unbelieving sight of Beverly Crusher...

## Chapter 9

' GET OUT...!'

Beverly screeched the command out, her anger making her visibly shake. As her finger pointed to the door, Wesley went to walk towards it. Somehow, her voice managed to raise another octave,

' NOT YOU! HER!...GET OUT!...'

Deanna visibly paled as she stood, ' Beverly, please...let me expl...'

' NOT NOW COUNSELOR!'

Beverly's next words shook Deanna to the core, ' I' ll deal with you later...'

Deanna walked towards to the door, pausing briefly to try once more to explain. But when she looked into her dearest friends eyes, and saw the anguish, she knew that now was not the time. The distraught woman quietly left the room, tears running unchecked down her cheeks, blinding her vision. When she was out of earshot of her office, she slumped against the corridor wall, and slid down onto the floor. Her sobs became uncontrollable, as she hid her face, and her shame in her hands. How long for, she didn' t know.

But before she realised, she felt herself being pulled up and surrounded within the familiar strong arms of the only person who knew that despite what had clearly happened, still embraced her. Still whispered comforting words. Still loved her with every fibre of his heart, body and soul.

They both looked up as they heard the hiss of the door opening. Will gripped her firmly, she didn' t know whether it was to stop her running away, or for moral support for whatever they were about to receive.

Wesley nearly walked into his mother as they came face to face with their two friends still locked in a passionate embrace. A stony silence followed as each pair of eyes looked at each others. Hurt, betrayal, anger and despair showed. Eventually it was Beverly who broke the frozen moment. Holding her head high, she walked past them without a second glance.

Wesley followed her, his eyes never leaving Deanna. He hesitated briefly, as if to say something, then thought better of it and hurriedly caught up with his mother. Will and Deanna watched them walk down the corridor and out of sight. Will hugged her tighter and gently manoeuvred her back towards her office. When the door had closed, he leant against it, and watched her pace restlessly around the small room, eventually sitting stiffly on the edge of the couch, her quiet voice broke the silence, ' I' m sorry.'

Will tried hard to keep the anger out of his own voice when he asked, ' What happened Deanna?'

Deanna vaguely raised her hands, she wasn' t sure how it happened and didn' t know how to tell either, ' I don' t know, he just came to see me, and we...started kissing. Beverly caught us...'

Will pushed himself off the door and walked over to her and sat, the same way as she, facing her. She couldn't bring herself to look into those brilliant blue eyes that only wanted to understand. That made her feel even more like a wretch.

Here she was, trying her hardest to screw around with a teenager, when she had the dishiest man to grace the universe at her back and call. Who loved her. Who worshipped her very being. The man who had made her what she was today. She wanted to die.

Deanna felt Will's hand rise to lift her chin, forcing her to look at him. A single teardrop escaped from the pool that had gathered again in her eye. He watched it trickle down her cheek, stopping at her lip.

Will leaned forward and gently kissed the spot. ' I love you Imzadi...I want to help.. Help me...'

Her choked sob brought on a fresh wave of tears, Will kissed her as she sobbed until eventually, she finally stopped. After a quick hug, he pulled her back to a stand, his words bringing a new dread. ' Come on, it's time to talk to Beverly...'

## Chapter 10

Beverly was in her office in sick-bay when Will and Deanna finally found her. She was sitting in her chair, waiting. She knew that would come, they had to, they were too good a friend to leave things as they were.

And although she was angry, Beverly also knew that this was not the normal behaviour of Deanna Troi, and she had begun to wonder if there was a medical reason. What she didn't know was that Will had had the same idea.

Deanna hesitated at her door, and Will gently tugged at her arm. Beverly smiled sadly at her, ' Come in Deanna... I'm sure there is a perfectly logical explanation.'

Deanna looked to Will for assurance, his smile gave her the necessary nudge that she needed. They both went and sat down and waited expectantly, as Will clutched her hand. Beverly smiled at the gesture. ' If you were ten years younger Deanna, I would have been happy for you and Wesley to be an item...However, the fact that you two seem to be unusually drawn to each other makes me come to the conclusion that something is not quite right. So...I want to run a few tests just to make sure...o.k.?'

Deanna nodded slowly and dared to ask, ' Where is Wesley now?'

Beverly took on a stern motherly look and told her, ' At this very moment, he is in Captain Picard's quarters getting a stiff fatherly lecture about who you can, and cannot fall in love with...'

Will grinned surprised, ' The Captain! I'd like to be a fly on the wall for that conversation, he's not exactly endeared to children.'

Beverly muttered, ' Yes, well, he was my only choice as he couldn' t very well talk to you, could he?'

Will looked down at his hand, ' Yes I know, I' m sorry about that.'

An awkward moment followed, then Beverly abruptly stood up, ' Well Will, if you' d care to leave us for a while whilst I run these few tests, I' ll give you a call when were done.'

She ushered Will out of the door and Deanna followed her into the sick-bay area and gingerly slid up on to the bio-bed. Beverly instructed her to lay down and pulled her ever present tricorder out and began to run it above Deanna' s nervous body.

After tapping it a few times Beverly put it to one side and turned to the consul beside her. Deanna watched the various coloured waves cross the screen, her eyes flitting to Beverly every once in a while to see if anything registered. Beverly concentrated hard on the screen.

Still absorbed with the screen before her, Deanna started when Beverly spoke, ' So...did you get very far with my son...?'

Deanna' s eyes turned to her, as she considered her question, ' Are you asking me if I made love to him?'

She watched Beverly nervously swallow, her head nodding quickly. Beverly couldn' t look at her.

Deanna touched her arm, imploring her to face her. Beverly quickly glanced at her, saw the genuine look of friendship in her eyes, and finally, boldly looked at her, head on. ' Beverly...I did not sleep with Wesley'

The breath that Beverly held same out slightly shakily. Deanna sensed her relief, and smiled encouragingly at her, her hand squeezing her arm. Embarrassed, Beverly turned back to the screen, her attention now fully focused to the matter at hand.

Noticing the slight, very slight, change in the wave pattern to a previous routine check, Beverly spoke excitedly, ' I think I have found something. The Neural Imaging scanner is picking up a slight variation. Tell me...what happened when you first found an attraction to Wesley?'

Deanna thought for a moment, then slowly replied, ' He left a brooch in my quarters, and I assumed it was Will. And then he left me a poem, which reminded me of something Will gave to me when he was on Betazed...But it really started when he held me...'

She quickly looked at Beverly to see how she was handling it. She felt her tension but Beverly whispered, ' Go on...'

' I have a photo of Will and I in my bedroom that is very, very special to me. One day, Wesley held me that very same way. It took me back to then...I kept seeing Wesley as Will...'

Beverly frowned, ' But why...he looks nothing like Will!'

Deanna smiled to herself , the familiar thought running through her mind, \*I' ve had this conversation before\* ' It was Wesley' s build mostly, the way he kissed me, and held me...Will said Wesley was bringing out a deep traumatic feeling of loss when he left me behind on Risa...He...Wesley brought it all back to me.'

Beverly stared at her friend for a long moment, then shook herself out of her reverie, ' Well...the good news is that I can help suppress these thoughts with a Neural neutralizer. It will hopefully cure the problem. But I suggest you have a long chat with Will, and get things totally out in the open. It sounds like you' ve both got a lot of forgiving to do.'

As Beverly wandered over to her work station to prepare the hypospray, as Deanna nodded her understanding. Although they had already started to talk about it, there was still along way to go,

' And the bad news...?'

Beverly pushed the hypospray onto her neck, ' The bad news is...how are we going to cure young Wesley...'

## Chapter 11

Three weeks later...

The Captain looked around at his senior officers who were waiting for his explanation of why they were taking on board their latest guests who were due to be beamed aboard from the planet Clavdia. ' We have been asked to escort the new leader, and her companion to her home world Daled IV. The planet is in the middle of an uprising, and are in desperate need of the new ruler to arrive and take leadership Worf you will accompany me to the transporter room please...Thank you, that will be all.'

They all rose together, and headed off to their various stations. Back down in engineering, Geordie remembered that he' d forgotten to pick a new SCM from the stores. He spotted Wesley and called him over, ' Hey Wes, do me a favour and run to stores for me and pick up a new SCM will you?'

Wesley grinned, finally, a chance to fit a new superconducting magnet, ' Yes sir, right away!'

Minutes later, as he stepped out off the turbo-lift he nearly walked head on into the group who were walking along the corridor. Wesley' s eyes focused on another pair of eyes. He couldn' t help himself stare into the face of the prettiest girl since, well, since Deanna.

He had gotten over his infatuation with her after constantly being chaperoned everywhere so that they were never alone. Although Deanna had somehow managed to block his attentions out now, all had been forgiven, after all, everybody had a first love.

The Captain broke into his wayward thoughts, ' Ah, Salia, Anya, this is Ensign Wesley Crusher, a promising young officer who will go far with his chosen career in Starfleet.'

As Salia and Wesley looked longingly into each others eyes, Captain Picard raised his and thought ' Oh no, here we go again...'

~~~~~