

The Pretence
by Carol Sandford

Deanna flipped over in the huge bed, refusing to acknowledge just how many times she had done that. Was it 10, 20, 100? It felt like thousands.

Her eyes hurt from the force she was inflicting on them to remain closed, when all she really wanted to do was stare up at the ceiling in the darkness and think.

And remember.

She turned again, steadfastly refusing to give into the urge to face that ceiling. Who was she pretending to? That was the stupid question that went through her mind, over and over. The rest of the time was spent pretending that she didn't care.

Pretending that she didn't notice that he was missing from her bed, her arms.

She turned again, opening her eyes to look longingly at the vast empty space beside her. God, how she missed his presence, his body, even the reassuring familiarity of his heavy breathing. But most of all she missed his arms.

That was all she needed to fall into that deep dreamless sleep.

She turned again, punching the pillow angrily as she did so. It didn't make her feel any better, it never did.

Deanna hated Will working the night shift.

She felt the pillow moisten beneath her cheek as a tear eased its way free of her closed lids. God, how she missed him.

She wanted him home.

One hour passed.

Then two more.

And then suddenly she heard the faint hiss of the door. He was home, her Imzadi was home at last.

She heard him undress and slip into that vast empty space behind her. She felt him slide over and slip an arm around her waist, gently and tenderly pulling his body up against hers. She heard the smile in his tired sigh.

Within moments the pretence was gone as they slipped into blissful slumber.

Together.