

The Request
by Carol Sandford

You towered over me, bent slightly at the waist and your arms seemingly hang limply at your side. Only I knew you were feeling anything but. I could feel it in the waves of anger, shame and terror radiating from within you, and I could see it in the carefully constrained aura that surrounded your body.

Somehow you stopped it from reaching out to me, not allowing it to beckon me into your arms, because you knew that if I did, you would crumble before me and you didn't want to do that.

Knowing that you didn't want me in your arms hurt so much that the misery that I had kept barely hidden, bubbled to the surface, spilling out through the eyes that searched yours. Eyes that didn't understand how you could treat me like this.

I loved you.

No, I worshipped you, but you'd had enough of our kind of love. You didn't want me looking at you and knowing how you felt, or watching you when another woman passed by, or spoke to you. You hated me knowing that you were craving her body, even though you loved me.

But you see, I understand all that. I understand that that is what happens. It is as ancient as is life. It is who we are. It is what we do. Me included.

I've looked at another man and wondered just the same as you, Will. But it doesn't mean I love you any the less. But you've decided you can't handle it. You've decided that to hide me from you, we have got to part.

Oh, darling, don't you know. Don't you understand?

But I guess not. You came to me barely half an hour ago and shattered my heart into a million pieces just because I teased you. Just because you want to do more to that ensign than think about what could be. When I teased you, it had been the last straw, for us.

Do you think I would have kicked and screamed and behaved like you had destroyed my life?

You're wrong, Imzadi. This is worse, by far. You are not even going to give me the benefit of the doubt. You are not even going to let me prove just how strong my love is for you. You aren't even going to ~try~, and that hurts me more than anything.

She is just flesh and bones, Will. She is nothing; a dalliance. A toy. Something to play with and discard when you've had the thrill of being a hot-blooded, virile man.

I am your life, Imzadi. I am ~The One~. I am the dependable, non-judgemental person that is strong enough to let you be who you want to be, just for a little while, but you don't seem to know that.

You look at me with eyes that I know so well. So serious, so deep and insightful as though you are always in control.

But not today.

Not now.

Now you look scared, as though you have just realised what you have done. What you have said. What you are

doing.

You are asking for your freedom, and I am giving it.

But you don' t want it.

Not like this. Not so easily.

You search my tear-laden eyes, looking for something other than what you see, but you can' t find it. You search for hatred, for anger and disgust, but you find none of them.

All you see is understanding, and yes, misery, but then what do you expect? Did you expect me to be jumping around with joy. Happy that I' m free of you and free to pursue the odd man that has crept into my dreams just like other women do in yours?

How wrong you are, Imzadi. How very wrong you are.

You think that just because I' m going to set you free, you can screw around, pretend that the other woman is the woman of your dreams. You think that I am not going to know what is going on? You think that I am not going to ~feel~ what is going on?

Darling, I am encased within your heart, your mind, your very soul, so deeply, that your moans will echo through me, letting me ride the erotic wave along with you. The sweet nothings that you will huskily whisper into her ear will whisper into my own.

Do you think I like it, Imzadi? Do you think that you loving them reduces my love for you? Do you think that walking around this ship ogling everything that is female will obviously pass me by?

God, you are wrong, Will, you are so wrong.

But I am not going to fight you. I am not going to dissolve in your arms and beg you to love me, and let me in, or not to leave me.

I' m not going to, Will.

You go and do what you' ve got to do. You go and show the world that you can live without me in your life.

You just go and try, Imzadi.