

The resurrection  
by Carol Sandford

The woman was a witch. The thought struck Will with such clarity that it made him shudder. Her watched her back as she seemingly busied herself across the room, but what she was ~actually~ doing, left him wondering. Occasionally she would punch the flat screen and study the result, and then she would scan the tricorder she held as though her soul was being displayed right there in her hand.

But just what was she doing - besides forcing his incarceration even longer than need be, he didn't have a clue. Okay, he'd admitted he wasn't ~quite~ ready to resume duties, but he was certain he was fit enough to wallow in his own quarters for a couple of days. At least there he could be free, of several things. Including her.

But then again, did he really want that? He kinda liked laying in his bed watching her go about her duties. Sometimes she came and chatted with him, other times, she just simply smiled shyly at him from the curtain of her her vibrant hair. Other times she blatantly, and frustratingly ignored him.

He'd always thought that Beverly Crusher was an enigma. Even when he had been blessed with being Odan's host, he was more than aware that he had only gotten to see a fraction beneath that frosty exterior. There was more to her than met the eye, and the longer he lay there watching her, the more he was convinced.

But, did he dare try to see beyond what the world could see?

Once, when he'd been asleep, still burning from the fever that ravaged his body, he felt her hand touch him. It was not the touch of a doctor, he was certain of that. It lingered too long, too softly. Too...intimately. He'd felt her breath upon his heated forehead, as though...as though she was in torment as to what to do next, especially when he felt that same breath hover briefly, and hesitantly over his lips. It felt deliciously cool and he achingly...hopelessly, wanted to feel that coolness upon his mouth. His soul felt the loss when she finally settled her mouth tenderly upon his brow, the impact staying with him for hours after, just not because of their coolness, but of what the gesture held.

She cared for him. Beverly Crusher cared for everyone, it was part of her nature and her profession. But there were certain people who got the extra dose of her kindness, and he always felt he was one of the chosen few - even before Odan came into their lives, and even before he had blindly and ignorantly proffered words that he had only ever shared with one other. He wondered if she still harboured on those impressionable, impetuous and ill-fated feelings, feelings that were better left buried. Feelings that neither one seem capable of forgetting.

But they must. Somehow, someway, they knew that they must forget. Times and circumstances were not right for them, and nor he thought, they ever would be, no matter what. But, damn it all, he couldn't shift her from his thoughts, especially when he was forced to be near her practically every minute of the day. But was it what he wanted. Was it what she wanted? For the life of him he didn't know, and it was driving him crazy, laying there, watching her, wondering, and hoping. Curiosity ate away at him like his fever had not so long ago.

The subtle swish of her blue lab coat broke into his train of thought, along with the heady scent of her perfume as she came to a stand before him. Her elegant, flawless features held a smile - a doctors smile as she briefly swept the tricorder over his body, snapping it shut when nothing untoward showed upon its multicoloured screen.

"Everything okay, Commander. Can I get you anything?"

He sighed heavily, with a hint of hope and a whole heap of sarcasm, "Yeah, lemme outta here so I can suffer in peace. You constantly watching my escape route is beginning to make me dizzy, doc."

He watched as she slipped her tricorder into her pocket, but immediately placed her fists upon her slender hips, the

action outlining her curves, causing him a prompt, primitive response, damn her!

"Commander Riker, if you could walk in a straight line without swaying with dizziness - which you can't I might add, I would be happy... no, ecstatic to let you out of my sight. But you can't so you're staying right where you are until you can. Do I make myself clear, Commander?"

Harmonious blue eyes locked as one struggled to defy the other. What started out as a light moment turned into something darker. Something deeper. It was how it always seemed to be with them these days; Words twisting to reveal hidden questions. Answers always being equally evasive, hiding truths.

He saw his chance, his one opportunity to get near her and pushing himself up onto his elbow, Will searched Beverly's face before tentatively reaching out his hand to capture hers, pulling it away from her hip. He felt her resistance, but the eventual acceptance that he was not going to release her, finally allowed her stubbornness to subside and she stood beside him, her energy reserved for fighting against Will, draining from her taut body.

Will's fingers gently caressed hers as he continued to study her face for a sign - any sign that she was ready to hear what he had to say. He finally saw her eyelids flutter shut as private images permeated through the frosty shell that she had erected around herself.

"Beverly, I must leave here. I must get out of sickbay. I can't lay here watching you struggling as much as I am. We both agreed that what happened between us was something that shouldn't be continued, even though I know I feel the attraction as much as you do. We agreed, Beverly, that it was for the best."

Will shifted his long body over as Beverly sank down beside him, the thrum of the surrounding machinery adding to the fraught tension between them. Will's eyes hadn't left Beverly's from the moment he had bared his soul to her, but she was unable to look into his knowing depths, afraid of what she might see. Afraid of what he might.

Will felt her tremble and he was aware that it wasn't just fear, it was his presence. Beverly wasn't just afraid of the moment, but of the past, and the future. Their future.

Will tugged on her fingers, urging her to look him in the eye, "Beverly," he whispered, "look at me...please."

But she squeezed shut her eyes, her lips forming a hard line, "I can't. Why can't you ignore me, Will. Why do you insist on tormenting me? Its unfair."

He gripped her fingers tighter, bringing a welcome sting of tears to her shielded eyes, "What's unfair, Beverly is us both being left in this impasse; neither of us wanting each other, but neither one of us able to let go. We've got to deal with this, Beverly, one way or the other. Do you really want to end something that never even got started?"

He felt her shudder as the truth of his words filtered through the fog that had stubbornly clouded her mind since the fateful day when her world had fell apart. It still haunted her dreams and still hurt her heart when Odan's handsome features swam before her. But nothing seemed to hurt as much as facing the man that lay beside her. Her living memory.

At last her eyes finally settled on his face, the tears that had seeped through, coating her blonde lashes, now trickled down her cheeks, but Will only saw the pain that swam in their depths, "I don't know how, Will. I don't know what to do. It just hurts, too much."

Beverly saw Will move towards towards her, knew his intentions, "No!" and then the momentary terror left her, "no, don't hold me, Will. We can't do this. It's wrong." If Will hadn't of been holding her hands, she would have leapt from the bed, but he was, so she couldn't and it made her heart ache being so near but wanting to be so far.

Will shrunk away from her. It had been the first time that she hadn't allowed him to comfort her, and that was all he wanted to do. Throughout everything, they had been able to hold one another when their situation had overwhelmed

them both. But not now. What had changed? He was certain she still cared for him, deeply, perhaps too deeply it seemed. There was a fine line between them and they both seem to be teetering on the very edge of it. But where would it take them if they fell either way?

They were both too scared to find out.

This time when Beverly pulled away, Will let her go, watching her assent with wary eyes, words slipping from his lips as it registered that their business was not finished with, "Don't go."

She looked at him, tormented; wanting to run, wanting to stay, "I must. I have a sickbay to run, Will, and besides, I have an appointment...elsewhere."

His heart began to pound, "With Deanna?"

"Yes," she sighed, "with Deanna."

His head began to pound, "Is she helping?"

She sounded surprised at her answer, "Yes, believe it or not, she is."

He inwardly sighed with a mixture of relief and disappointment, "That's good."

She sighed again, "Yes."

He turned quizzical eyes towards her, "Do you think I should see her?"

Her eyebrows rose, hidden by the fall of her hair, "You mean you're not?"

His voice held dejection, "No. I don't think she can help me."

Beverly's heart began to thump against her ribs as she asked, "Is it...is it because you were...once...?"

"No," his voice found its power again, "we've gone beyond that. Deanna and I are merely...friends." Did he really sound that miserable?

She didn't believe him, "Why did you hesitate?"

He hated trying to put his relationship with Deanna into a category, it always managed to diminish it somehow, "Because friends is never quite the right word for our association."

The accusation stung the air, "Because you were lovers?"

No! NO! he thought, it's more than that, "Because we are Imzadi."

She was astonished, "Still!?"

Still wondrous, still grateful, he smiled shyly, his voice holding a hint of pride, "Still."

The suspicions crept back into her voice once more, "So, why don't you think Deanna can help you?"

Here it comes, "Because I don't want to be helped."

The flare of hope sparked in her eyes, "You don't?"

He captured the flare and set fire to it with his own, "No, Beverly, I don't, not anymore, and I don't think you do either."

Silence fell. The hum of the machines, the comforting heartbeat of the Enterprise herself, and the two people, whose very souls lay exposed to the all the raw elements that rose from their buried depths, all fell silent.

Will noiselessly shifted his large frame, his feet slowly coming to touch the floor, both hands reaching out to capture hers that met him halfway. Barely a moment later, he had pulled her into his arms, her own naturally, as natural as breathing, meandered around his waist.

Why had they fought against what they knew now to be right? The moment they had touched. The moment that they had dropped the pretences, the rightness stepped in and claimed its place within their hearts again. It had never truly left, but stubbornness, pride and conscience had taken its place, just for a little, just long enough for the love that was undeniably meant to be, to nurture, mature and take over when it was ready, and that time was now. Love had been reborn.

Mutually. they pulled away from each other just long enough to see that love swimming in the depths of each others blue eyes, read the acceptance of what was to be, and then their lips met, and time slipped away into forever.

It was only the chirp of Beverly's personal communicator that ripped the reunited lovers apart, but even then, Beverly couldn't answer the hail as she and Will stood still locked in each others arms, their lips still saturated with one another's moisture, their eyes, heavy with desire, yearning and frustrated.

The chirp sounded again and Beverly pulled her arm up in between them and tapped the offending object, "Crusher here."

"Doctor, Counselor Troi here, have you forgotten your appointment with me?"

The counselor's concerned normally melodious voice finally shattered the last remaining shred of breathless awe that clung to them and they sprung apart as though Deanna was actually in the room staring at them with a myriad of emotions flitting across her beautiful face; Betrayal, surprise, anger and loss.

"Doctor Crusher?"

Silence.

"Beverly?"

Guilty, telling silence.

And then it was as if she knew. It was as if Deanna had realised that Beverly's lack of response was because something had happened. That being alone with Will as he recovered from his injuries had finally given them the opportunity to lower their defences and give in to the pull that they had been struggling against for so long.

Her heart pounded as she spoke her Imzadi's name, her voice dripping with dread "Will?"

As soon as Deanna uttered the one word, both Will and Beverly relinquished the breaths that they held, but not the eye contact. As Will stared deeply into Beverly's now scared blue orbs, he reached up and tapped his own communicator that sat on his bedside ledge, "Yes, Counselor, I'm here...and we'll both be along shortly. Riker out."

He watched as Beverly's eyes widened along with her mouth, "Why did you say that, Will,? I'm not ready to do this. I need time." She stepped forward and touched his arm, her eyes imploring him to understand, "~We~ need time, Will."

As suddenly as love blossomed, Will snatched it away as he released her trembling fingers and turned towards the door. He seemed to forget that he was still in his pyjama's and that he was in sickbay because he was still suffering from vertigo. He weaved his way slowly towards the door, and Beverly watched open-mouthed as he hastened his step to reach the door's frame before slipping to his knees.

But that wasn't what her stunned silence was about. It was his parting words.

"I'll give you long enough to reach Counselor Troi's office. If you haven't made your mind up by then, then I'll accept that as your decision and leave you be, Beverly."

He stepped gingerly through the door, pausing only briefly to sidestep Nurse Ogawa as she came through the other way, her stunned expression mirroring the doctors as she watched Will's unsteady exit from the safe harbour of sickbay. She soon realised that she had stepped right into the middle of something when Beverly's voice, heavy with unshed tears, spoke behind her,

"I will not be bullied, Commander Riker."

Will stopped briefly and looked back to her, his glance briefly shifting to the nurse who stood unashamedly trapped between them, but when he captured Beverly's gaze again, his own now held only sadness. Resignation. "I know."

As the door hissed shut, Nurse Ogawa turned and faced her superior officer, questions flitting rapidly through her mind, worry, and curiosity lacing her words, "Aren't you going to follow him, Doctor? He may need you." the double entendre spiralled between them, and she thought she'd gone too far.

For a long minute, the pretty nurse thought the doctor was ignoring her, and then suddenly, she seemed to snap back into reality, her face flushing with she knew, an assortment of reasons; shame, guilt, longing, and fright. Beverly Crusher was scared, but what of?

She took a deep breath, her slender shoulders rising and dropping as she let it go, "You're right, Nurse, I forgot he is still a patient under my care." As she stepped towards the door, she stopped and turned to her, "Commander Riker will be returning to his quarters. Can you clear sickbay of his belongings and log his release for me please?"

"Of course, Doctor." But her words fell on deaf ears as she watched Beverly purposely turn and hastily exit the sickbay. But once the doors closed behind her, Beverly's seemingly purposeful footsteps slid to a halt. Before her the corridor was empty. He hadn't waited.

The disappointment cascaded over her until she remembered who she was dealing with; Will Riker. The man waited for nothing and no-one, his confidence and bull-headedness belied anything his heart told him. Will was certain that she would follow him, even if it was only to see that he made it to Counselor Troi's office okay.

She sighed heavily again with resentment. The man infuriated her when he wasn't turning her insides with desire, and he did, too damned often. Just one smouldering look from those azure eyes of his, created the most erotic sensations in the pit of her stomach. Just as the way he said her name, caused her to imagine him whispering it as he slid his massive hardness into her willing and waiting body. The way he held her face when he kissed her. The way he stroked his fingers along her curves as he worshipped her body.

The way he loved her.

Beverly turned the corner and slid to a halt once more. Will leant against the wall, waiting. His arms were crossed

and he appeared to be simply that; waiting. But as Beverly edged nearer, it soon became apparent to her medical eye that all was not well. Quickening her steps, she soon came to stand before him, searching his pale face, his wary eyes for anything that could give her an answer.

"Will, are you feeling dizzy again?" she asked, concerned.

He remained where he was, his eyes looked defeated, his voice laced with misery, "You're only here because I might fall on my ass. You weren't going to follow me, were you, Beverly?"

The brief, heavy silence between them seemingly held a lot of questions, and answers, none of which either asked nor answered. Fear clung onto the air as Will watched the woman before him do everything in her power to provide an adequate response, and, unable to come up with even one.

Wearily, Will pushed himself away from the wall and moved on away from her, not stopping when Beverly finally found her voice, "Where are you going?"

With his head hung low, somehow his tall frame looked shorter, dejected. When he spoke, his voice matched his stature, "To see Counselor Troi. I think I need to see her now," he hesitated, turned and briefly looked over his shoulder at her, his final word shattering every illusion that ever meant anything to either of them, "alone."

Beverly watched Will walk away from her, the movement signifying that not only were they done with then, but for the future, and she knew in her heart that she had to move, she had to follow him. But she couldn't do it. While her heart screamed to her to follow him, her head, and her feet refused to be swayed, and so she stood, in the middle of the corridor, watching the man she loved, walk away from her.

Silent tears began to trickle down her face as she watched her future vanish before her very eyes. She couldn't tear her eyes away from the solid expanse of his back as he slowly walked away - until something else came into view; An arm. That arm snaked its way around Will's waist and his own gratefully lifted and clung onto the slim shoulders that were more than ready to take his load, and with dismay, Beverly also thought, maybe his heart.

Batting away the river of tears, Beverly could only stare as Deanna came and took her place within Will's arms. Jealousy ripped through her soul and her heart-wrenching, gasping sob reverberated along the corridor when she realised what she had done, and lost. But still her feet refused to move.

Until the couple ahead of her stopped and turned.

Two smiling sets of eyes looked back at her; one set as dark as midnight, the other as light as a summers day. Something snapped to life within her. She was being given a second chance. As she looked to the two people who, meant more to her than a life without, a fresh cascade of tears trickled down her still wet face, only this time, they were tears of another emotion.

One ridiculously small, and one large hand reached out towards her, "Well, Doctor Crusher, what are you waiting for?"