

Reunion

by Carol Sandford

She sat beside me, systematically putting popcorn into her mouth. She was relaxed, the most relaxed I'd seen her for a long, long time. In fact, I can remember the last time I had seen her this way. It was when we had a 'chill out night' once before, and it wasn't so long ago.

I watched her from the corner of my eye as she seemingly stared at the vidiscreen in front of her. She'd chosen the movie, and I was happy to go along with the mushy crap that she'd chosen, simply because she was Deanna, and because I'd known, eventually, she would tell me what was on her mind.

Well, I knew what was on her mind. Ben. Deanna had been dating Lieutenant Benjamin Hayden for a while. Not too long, just long enough to actually consider it, 'a relationship', and not, 'a fling', a word which Deanna detested.

She grinned at me as she reached out for her glass, sipping at the turquoise concoction that smelt as sickly as it looked. But Deanna liked it, and, I must admit, I quite liked the taste that was left on her lips, a mixture of coconut, rum and her. I remember wondering at the time what her tongue would taste like - if I got beyond her lips.

Maybe one day I'll find out, and I wondered if maybe I dared ventured beyond tonight.

When she'd arrived at my quarters at 19.00 hours, I'd opened the door to a woman that was in bad need of venting. I let her have that. I let her rant, rave, curse, cry, and finally accept that she was who she was; Deanna Troi, Counselor to many. Friend to all. Lover to none. Well, not any more.

And then there was me.

But sitting here watching her relax after her tantrum, I begun to wonder just where I did fit in. I know I'm her friend. I'm that for always. It goes hand in hand with being Imzadi. But sometimes, I see her look at me and want more. Sometimes I see her and see nothing more than the friend.

And then there are occasions like tonight, when she sits beside me on my sofa, and for all appearances, we could be an old married couple, especially when she snuggles up against my chest, like she did a short while ago when a particular part in the movie got even more slushier and erotic and I realised that she didn't want me to see her face as it reacted to the images on the screen.

But then I didn't need to see her face. Just feeling her melt against me was enough. Just sniffing in that unmistakable scent of arousal was equally telling. I think if I'd have slipped my hand down from her shoulder onto her chest, she would have let me caress her. And I think if I'd have pulled her onto my lap. I could have probably made quiet, sensuous love to her.

But I didn't. That's me. Idiot that I am. But then she is my friend, and tonight she needed a friend, not a complication.

I moved over to accommodate her feet as she settled herself further into the corner of the sofa, swinging her slim legs off the floor and under her own thighs, her eyes barely moving away from the screen. But I wasn't watching the movie at all. I wanted to talk to her. I wanted to get deep inside her head and analyse her problems. I wanted her to open up to me and let me in, where I belong.

Since we'd boarded the Enterprise and settled on the relationship we have now, I have often felt like I was sitting on the edge of a swimming pool, waiting for an invitation to dive in, balancing on the thin edge, wobbling. Afraid. I hated being scared of Deanna. But the truth of it, I was. Am.

I wanted to dip my toes in the water so many times, just to test how far I could go before being drowned. Or worse. But something always held me back. Something always told me I'd be making a mistake if I tried.

So I never did. I've got too much to lose.

She looked uncomfortable, sitting there, all hunched up. I could sense her dilemma; her need to move her stiffening legs against making herself look daft at squirming around yet again in her quest to get comfortable. So I took the bull by the horns, grabbed her feet and pulled them out from under her.

Her startled, half-hearted protest was soon squashed as I placed her feet against my thigh and held them there, "Thanks," she grinned, "I was kinda getting uncomfortable."

"No problem," I murmured, intensely aware of the surprise affect of having her nylon clad feet upon me, the heat already permeating through the soft fabric of my pants.

We settled down again, my hand resting comfortably upon her ankle, the natural curvature around it helping stop my intense need to stroke it. But then she suddenly pulled her foot up and lay it on top of my thighs, stretching her knees.

Close. Too close. I silently groaned. I could feel her foot's heat against my tightening loins, and I found myself clamping the tiny ankle and moving it further away, just a fraction or two. Just far enough away for the heat to die.

But it didn't because she'd decided to raise her other knee up, shifting the soft fabric away from her thighs, giving me not only a glimpse of a lacy stocking top, but a generous helping of a soft creamy hip. I felt the breath whoosh out of my lungs, stick in my throat and threaten to strangle me. I had to get out of this predicament, now, before I did something incredibly stupid.

It took a gargantuan effort to pull her eyes away from the screen and force myself to *not* look down as I spoke to her, suddenly realising that I would cheerfully die on the spot just for one glance at what lay beyond the creamy skin, not that I don't remember from our time in the jungle.

But that was then, and this was now. Then I was a jock, and now I was a...man. Back then she was little more than a girl, and now...now she was an incredible woman, and I wondered if making love to her now would be different - for both of us.

A vision filled my head, right then, right at that moment, and I failed in my effort to *not* look, catching sight of a tiny piece of black satin before rapidly raising my eyes again to her face, which now held a mixture of bemusement and embarrassment. Her very subtle hand movement to her hem, moving it to recover her modesty was mutually ignored by both of us.

"So, what are you going to do about Ben?" I asked, purely for want of something to say and the need to take my mind away from...other things.

Her soulful eyes studied mine for a moment, before she delicately shrugged and said, "Nothing. It's over." But the way she dropped her eyes away from mine in an attempt to hide her pain told me a whole different story. I didn't need to see how much she was hurting. I'd seen in the tantrum she'd thrown when she'd arrived here. I'd seen in the tears that had fallen like a waterfall from her beautiful eyes. And I'd seen her soul as she'd unwillingly revealed it to me in her weakest moment; the moment that I'd pulled her into my arms and absorbed her loss.

But that had been then. This was now, and now she was trying to put it behind her. Make light of a bad situation. Pull the wool over her own eyes and let the pretence begin. But when she suddenly swung her feet to the floor, switch of the vidiscreen, and high-tail it into my bathroom, I followed her, stopping the door's automatic closure with my hand.

She began to run the faucet, and splash the cold water upon her face. I knew it was to mask the tears that had sprouted again. I wasn't stupid. I knew she was hurting still. She would always hurt. It's not fun being kicked in the nuts time and time again. I should know, mine are still swollen from my last encounter with the female of the species.

But damn it all, this is Deanna, and I resent her hurting from some other guys carelessness of her feelings. I'd always considered that I had the monopoly on that. I wasn't proud of it, but then I was young. And stupid. Incredibly fucking stupid.

Nope, if she was going to get mopey about another guy, then it was time she heard a few choice things about herself, and I considered me to be the one to tell her.

"You're a fake, Deanna Troi."

That made her stop, bringing her face up to look into the mirror, her startled eyes meeting mine. Another time I would have laughed. She was dripping wet, her eyes, just as I suspected were already turning red and swollen from the scalding tears that mingled in with the water drops.

"What!?" she said, incredulously.

"You're a fake," I repeated, feeling a thickness fill the air that was new to both of us. The accusation clearly stung her because unbelievably, she began to cry harder, clinging to the vanity's edge, her fingers white with tension. But even so, her eyes never left mine.

I felt my feet move towards her without realizing that that was my intention. But then the need to comfort her always preceded everything else. I felt her tense as I moved my arms around her and for a very brief moment I thought she was going to fight me off. But my eyes, still held by hers in the mirror must have stilled the demon in her because she didn't move. She didn't relax her tension, but she didn't move.

I dropped my mouth to her crown and kissed her head, drinking in the flowery essence of her shampoo along with the natural smell of her - it was just as intoxicating, and I had to stop the flare of desire from surging through my body. Now was not the time to prove a point that she wanted me as much as wanted her. I hoped.

I met her eyes again as I straightened up, my arms completely enfolding her. I felt comforted that she clung to my forearms, her long, pearly-pink nails, stark against my brown skin. At least it told me that she wasn't as pissed off as I thought. Deanna Troi didn't like to be told that she was something that she was, which I guess really gave away her inner torment.

I thought I'd try apologizing. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that. It was inappropriate."

"For what?" she asked, her voice, clogged with tears.

"For the time. I shouldn't knock you while you're already down. You don't need to hear criticism when you obviously need comfort. I had no right." I said, and meaning it.

"It's alright," she murmured, "I understand your reasoning for it. I know you're only trying to help - to make me see that my relationship with Ben was shallow, and never likely to progress beyond what it already had." She paused as she considered what I'd said. "But why do you consider me a fake, Will?"

I moved my hands up to her shoulders, kneading away the tension that I felt beneath my fingertips. "Because," I whispered, "I know that underneath that cool facade is woman who is in terrible pain, but is too afraid to admit it. I see you hurting for a man that does not deserve your pain. I see a woman who will walk onto that bridge tomorrow morning for her shift and act as though nothing is wrong even though you are dying inside."

I watch as she absorbs my words. I watch her throat move as she swallows the lump that has reformed again, the truth bringing on another wave of inevitable tears - tears that she needs to shed to cleanse her heart. But I want these tears to be for her this time, and not for him.

"Do you love him?" I ask. I can feel my heartbeat begin to pound in my chest as I wait for her answer.

"Don't you think you would know if I did, Will? I can never keep anything from you." And then she frowned, her head tipping to one side as she pondered her own question, which completely threw me. "Why, do you love me?"

I had to make light of it, I just had to, for both our sakes. And then I retracted that thought. Honesty was the key here, and a chance. "I've loved you for years. Forever, actually." And I couldn't resist dropping my mouth to the soft curve of her throat, and my heart soared when she moved her head aside to accommodate me.

"I do always seem to end up here, with you, don't I?" She said, matter-of-factly, as though finally realising the truth was simplicity in itself. "You're always here for me. I tell you things that I tell no other, and you see me. The real me."

I dared to ask. "Do you love me?" The heartbeats stopped as I waited for her answer.

"What do you think, Will Riker?" she giggled as I nuzzled her earlobe, "Even when I was...with Ben, you were always there, in my head, getting in the way. Or giving me advice, or telling me off for being silly."

"You still haven't answered my question." I say, with a teasing growl, which emits another giggle from her.

"I'm obsessed with you." The humour taking the sincerity from her words, but even so, I see behind the humour and take the words for what they are; an honest, but lightened account of her feelings for me, and my soul soars along with my loins, the revelation bringing forth a powerful ego boost to my libido, finally allowing it to emerge without guilt.

"Good," I crow, not quite believing how things have escalated in the short time that she'd been in my quarters. I figured it was now or never. I figured that if she was letting me splatter tiny kisses over her neck and ears, that maybe, just maybe I could a little further.

Only one way to find out.

My lips searched for hers and found them. Actually, I think hers were searching for mine, because when I found hers, they were already apart, and waiting. Her eyes had already fluttered closed. I saw them go when I touched her ear a few moments ago.

I felt her subsequent sigh along with the heavy sigh of contentment her whole body seemed to take when my mouth finally covered hers. Oh, God, she tasted exactly how I wanted her to; Of coconuts, and rum, and something else. Something sweeter. Something infinitely more precious.

I tested the tip of my tongue against hers and found no resistance. I nearly died when it touched hers, the taste of her exploding against my own sensitive taste buds. Oh, God, I moan silently, before we both gave in and let our mouths do what our bodies wanted.

It was the next logical step. A step we had to take, even if it was just for old times sake. I wanted it as much as she. More maybe. It had been a while since I'd got laid, whereas she...well, I deliberately scrapped that image from my head before it even arrived. I didn't want to think of her doing that with someone else, while I was about to go the same route.

Only there was a difference with me. I loved her. With all my heart. But then I guess I should thank Ben. because without him being a jerk, Deanna wouldn't have come to me. I wonder what made it different this time? Perhaps I

was just feeling hornier than usual. Perhaps she was. I dunno, but I'm not going to complain.

I felt my hands begin to wander, but felt no resistance. I dared to go bolder, just lightly brushing finger tips across her body. She was exquisite. Admiring her form from a distance always warmed my blood, but touching her - like this - just made me burn, deep down inside. I had to try for more, even though I had a constant niggle at the back of my brain, whispering, *She's gonna freak it out any minute now*

But she didn't. Not even when I traced a path around her nipples that tried in vain to come through her clothing. Nor did she when I pinched each firm tip, emitting a gasp of stunned desire from deep in her throat as she continued to dance with my tongue.

And nor did she when I dropped my hands lower and lifted her skirt, finding that creamy patch of thigh that I'd spied earlier. And I just had to dare to try out for the black satin panties, and when I did I found them damp. Upon my touch, Deanna ripped her mouth away from mine, her moan pleading for more.

More what? I wondered. Was she inviting me to take her? Here? Now? I had only one way to find out. I slipped my fingers beneath the satin, seeking out the waiting bud, already engorged from need, and as I circled it with my thumb, I slipped my fingers into the dewy folds, cupping her mound, the soft downy hair covering her, slick with moisture. She moved her legs apart, and I touched deeper still. So hot, so ready. All I needed to do was slip inside her and we'd both find what we were searching for.

I felt her begin to tremble, her breathing becoming as erratic as my own, my own arousal began to hurt, needing freedom; to get out and explore long lost treasures. I didn't deny it any longer. Reaching down, I freed it from its confines and immediately it sought home.

Deanna must have felt it against her backside because she squirmed against me, her hands already finding the edge of the unit before her, nudging me back some so that she could bend over, her hips swaying with invitation, sending the scent of her arousal to my nostrils, making me groan.

But I didn't want to enter her yet. I had things to see. Things to do. It had been a long, long time since I'd first been intimate with Deanna Troi, and I wanted to familiarize myself with her body, and I knew that once I'd made love to her, I might lose the opportunity to see it again.

Bunching the skirt up to her waist, holding the fabric in place with not-so-steady hands, I devoured the sight before me. A tiny black triangle of satin encased her perfect derriere, and I couldn't resist releasing a hand and running my fingers over the smooth material, emitting a shudder from Deanna, her buttocks clenching with the effect that my touch was having.

I moved closer and allowed my pulsing member to experience the same thing. It was a totally different sensation, maybe it was because it was so close to home. So close to heaven. Just so close to feeling something that it had waited a decade to feel again. Maybe it was because love now came into the equation, and part of that love was the intimacy that made everything, 'so right'.

I smiled when Deanna's hand reached back and pulled aside the panties and encouraged me to continue its exploration. Time for a tease, I think.

"But I'm not ready yet," I say, trying to inflict that lost puppy dog look into my tone. I fail miserably when she meets my eyes in the mirror, laughter lighting up her features. That was until she dropped her eyes again and spoke.

"Will, you were born ready. Now for God's sake, fuck me, will you?"

Well, that took the wind out of my sails, I can tell you. Profanity, from Deanna Troi!? But even so, I found myself manoeuvring my stiff member towards her waiting entrance, made easier from the slick dewy moisture that my own body released along with hers. "Pick that up from your last squeeze, did you?" I ask, and then suddenly wondered

why, because I didn't want to hear her reply.

I felt her stiffen, waiting with anticipation as I began to nudge inside her heat. Her voice changed as she answered me. "No, I just want you, Will. All of you, and you're playing with me. We're too old for games, and I want to get laid, by you."

"What about Ben?" I ask, cringing as I did so, feeling myself getting deeper and deeper inside her, feeling her tighten about me, adjusting herself to my size, which I might add, is considerably larger than when we had our first fuck. But even so, it's still not deep enough, and I push down upon her shoulder blades, and she obliges by stooping lower, her legs opening wider.

Oh, God, I almost died as I made that one, final, last plunge into her depths, my breath coming out in raspy, awestruck gasps along with hers. I began to move slowly; rocking back and forth, each time, sure that I was losing myself.

I guess she remembered that I'd asked her a question even though with the euphoria of the moment I'd forgotten about it, and now I wish she'd forgotten about it too.

"You care how I feel about him?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I never really cared who you slept with, it just used to rattle me that you might have had feelings for them. Him"

And of course I got the answer that I didn't want to hear. "Of course I cared, Will. I can't make love without some form of attachment. It just isn't me. Of all people, You should know that." She protested.

Of course I did. "I know, Babe. I'm sorry I even asked." I submitted, pulling at her arms so that she was flush against my body. Kissing the top of her head again, my eyes met hers, and I was happy to see that she was smiling at me. Forgiven again.

And then I decided that the woman I loved deserved a more romantic setting for our reunion than a poky Starship bathroom, especially when I realized that my member had gone a tad flaccid when those nasty suspicions had filled my head.

Deanna shrieked with delighted surprise when I swung her up into my arms and headed for the bedroom. But she soon went silent when I kissed her, hoping and praying that I knew my way from my bathroom to my bed blindfolded, because that was what I was doing.

By the time we'd successfully reached the bed without mishap, Deanna was clinging to me as though I was about to run. I lay atop of the coverlet and quickly pulled off my clothes, my eyes never leaving her face. She watched me as I fell on all fours and crawled towards her open legs, the triangle of black satin, stark against her pale skin.

I guessed she thought I would climb right over the top of her and resume what we had been doing before. But instead I found myself nuzzling that piece of satin with my nose, wallowing in its scent, its texture and what lay beyond.

She giggled as I attempted to suck the aromatic moisture from the material, and I chuckled along with her, relieved that laughter had joined our relationship once more. It was good to hear. It was wonderful to hear. It meant that when all this was over, it wasn't going to end up in long, deep, heart-felt discussions about us. This. The future. I wasn't going to allow her to analyse our relationship. And I wasn't going to let her go, ever again.

But then as soon as that thought entered my mind, the laughter disappeared. My mouth went still, the panties that I still held firm in my teeth sprung back against her, but only for a moment. When she lifted her head and looked down at me, desire surged through us again, and as I began to move up to rejoin our bodies, I watched as her hand snaked down and pulled aside the black satin, revealing her sex to me. It was just as I remembered it, and I don't know why, but it pleased me no end that she hadn't changed.

I met her body at the same time that our mouths fused together, but I'm sure I heard her whisper, "Fuck me, Imzadi" before I touched her tongue with mine, and I wondered if I would ever get used to this new, free-spirited Deanna that lay beneath me, with her ankles knotted around my waist, pouring everything she possessed into my soul.

I think I will.