

Taking a Chance  
by Carol Sandford

Will felt his knuckles crack as his fist connected with the Klingon's jaw, the big man howled with fury as he staggered back from the force of the impact, His enemy's eyes opening wide when he realised that he wasn't even going to let him recover from the severity of the first punch, and before he could stand upright Will dived at him again his head making contact his chest, Worf grabbed hold of Will's tunic at the shoulders with an attempt to keep standing, and failing to do so, they both crashed to the floor, Will making the most of the situation, now having the upperhand of landing on top of him, brought his fist back high to his shoulder, his knuckles turning white as he readied to punch him again, Worf looked up at his Commanders face, seeing his anger and hatred blazing in the bright blue eyes that now looked like chips of cold ice, he knew that he had lost, and at the moment he saw Will's fist come towards his face, he put his own hands up to protect himself, his submission quickly falling from his lips.

'STOP Commander...Please!...I'm sorry, If you want her, take her... I will not stand in your way anymore, just , please, don't hit me again...Please...'

Will's hand stopped in mid air as he looked into Worf's face, as he gingerly wiped at his own mouth, looking at the blood that was now smeared across the back of his hand, it gave him a great feeling of satisfaction when he saw it, he had one against the man as big as himself, and as he he leaned on the floor to aid his way up from his knees, he winced as he did so, the pain in his hands reminding him of the last punch he had thrown at the Klingons rock hard jaw, and knew he had broken at least two of his knuckles, He turned his attention back to Worf who had also struggled to a stand, and he smirked when he saw that he was in worse shape than himself, backing away from him, he couldn't resist the barbed jibe as he snarled, 'Deanna is mine, and she will always be mine, no matter how many times she looks elsewhere, she will always come back to me... WE are Imzadi...'

Will Riker turned and walked away, staggering from the blows that Worf had managed to rain on his body, his rapidly blinding headache vaguely acknowledging that he could also probably have a couple of broken ribs too. he groaned out his command,

'Computer... end programme'

The room shimmered back to it's original yellow grid as Will made his way out of the steel doors.

Turning into the corridor, he nearly collided with Beverly Crusher, he visibly winced as she reached out to steady both herself and him,

'Oh, Will...I'm so sorry...' she paused mid sentence when she saw the condition that he was in, she quickly reached into her pocket and pulled out her ever present tricorder, running it efficiently over Will's body, as her eyes met his, she noticed that he had the grace to blush a little, trying to make light of the situation, she smiled gently at him,

'Well, I hope the other guy is still alive!...'

As her examination finished he heard her tut to herself,

'Will, you have three fractured fingers, one broken rib, you've massive bruising down your left side and countless grazes on your face, and an eye that's already turning a nice shade of purple...come on, let's get you back to sickbay and get you sorted out...again!'

At the mention of sickbay, Will groaned, and tried to evade her arm reaching out to steer him towards the turbolift, but she was ready for his little manouever,

'Oh no you don't Will Riker, your coming with me, like it or not!'

He dragged after her, looking rather like a naughty school boy, that had been caught scrapping behind the bike sheds.

As they approached the sickbay, Will was glad that it appeared to be empty, he swung himself up onto a biobed and watched as Beverly busied herself gathering the various instruments to mend his broken body once more. Beverly looked quietly at what she considered, one of her closest friends, the pain she felt for him evident in her clear blue eyes, she tried to get some answers from him, her voice barely rising above a whisper,

' Why Will?'

He shrugged,

' It makes me feel better... it' s the only way I can deal with the situation'

he looked away, clearly upset, and her heart broke when he looked to her again, and she saw the shimmer of tears in those liquid blue eyes. She gently touched his cheek, forcing him to look at her,

' Why won' t you tell her Will...Please'

and as his voice croaked his response, his eyes looked despairingly at her,

' I can' t Beverly, I promised I would never stand in her way with anyone...I just want her to be happy'

Beverly looked at him in exasperation, her voice rising to screaming pitch,

' But what about YOU Will?, What about YOUR happiness?'

his barely audible answer as he slid off the biobed told Beverly that he wanted this conversation finished with.

' I lost my chance of happiness a long time ago...'

He turned to leave, but stopped to look back at her, and giving her shoulder a quick squeeze, whispered

' Thanks Bev...next time I' ll try and hit something a bit softer than his jaw'

She watched him swiftly walk out of the sickbay door, knowing he would be back within the week...

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## Chapter Two

When Deanna finally emerged from the bathroom, her pallor made her normally beautiful elfin face looking like she' d dunked her head in a bowl of flour, after yet another bout of throwing up, it had finally sunk in...she was pregnant.

' How could I have been so stupid, I' m always so careful, how could it have happened?

she racked her brains for an answer, the light suddenly dawning when she remembered a very unpleasant tummy bug she' d had a couple of weeks ago.

' It must have been then,'

she sat heavily on the bed, her legs still uneasy from the exertion of emptying her stomach for the umpteenth time,

an overwhelming misery washing over her, making unwelcome tears spring to her eyes, her only concern was for the man who she thought would be the only one she would be having babies with, and it was only him that she dreaded a reaction from, she remembered his response from the time when an alien entity entered her body, which produced her first born son, Ian, she groaned aloud when she pictured his face at the news then, what would he say to Worf fathering her baby...She groaned again,

' My god...what am I going to tell Will?..!'

They had been so distant since she and Worf had been an item, many times she had tried to reach his mind, but he had blocked every single effort...and that had hurt beyond belief...but on top of that, he avoided being alone with her, several times she had walked into a room, only to watch his retreating back practically run out of the door, she knew it wouldn' t be long

before they would get both their asses hauled before the Captain, as it was getting beyond control. And now...now she was pregnant...with Worf's baby...

She smiled gently as she thought about Worf, she still wasn't sure why they were together, Oh, he had his sweet moments, not many, granted, but sometimes he really made a huge effort to be romantic, and underneath that scowl, laid a very sweet, gentle... except when they were making love...very sincere, Klingon...and now she was going to have a Klingon baby...her mind wandered back to when she had Ian, he was such a beautiful child, albeit an alien child, but he was hers nevertheless, and she had genuinely loved him, it took a long time to get over his loss, with a lot of help from Will, and Beverly...Beverly! She had better go and make sure this pregnancy's for real before she even dared to take the next step...

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Beverly was staring at her computer screen when she heard the door hiss open to admit her dearest friend on the Enterprise, her delight at seeing her evident on her smiling face, 'Deanna, this is a nice surprise, I didn't expect to see you till this evening at the poker game...Oh...don't tell me, Worf's been a little rough with his 'adoration' of you again...' her infectious grin was very knowing, considering that she usually saw Deanna at least three times a week, for minor abrasions, and more commonly, bites!...Her pretty face suddenly changed when she realised that this wasn't going to be a 'normal' visit, her professional mode kicked in as she stood and ushered her friend towards a biobed, her hand automatically reaching into her pocket,

'Deanna...What's wrong?'

Deanna looked into her eyes, and Beverly instantly saw that she was scared

'I think I'd like you to tell me...'

As Beverly's tricorder started to scan over Deanna's body, as she did so, she tried getting more information from her,

'what's the matter Deanna, don't you feel well this morning?'

Deanna didn't bother answering her, just waited for her to find it herself, and when she heard her gasp, she knew she'd found it. Beverly couldn't believe her eyes, she ran the tricorder over her body again, hoping that it had been a mistake...it wasn't.

The two friends silently stared at each other, for what seemed an eternity, until Beverly gently whispered,

'Oh Deanna...Your pregnant...'

Deanna shuddered out the breath that she didn't even know she'd been holding,

'I know Beverly, I just needed you to confirm it for me'

They both sat, stunned in their own little world, and at the same time, the same thought ran through their head

\*What are we going to tell Will?...\*

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Will finished his shift, it had been a very trying, and a very exhausting day, his body still ached from the blows he had secretly welcomed from the only man who could match him, blow to blow, the pain making his miserable life a little easier to live with, knowing that when he was particularly upset or angry, he could go and punch the living daylights out of the one person who had caused it, and until he'd gotten over losing his Imzadi, and he knew that he never would, not for as long as his body drew breath, and at the rate he was going, not for much longer if Worf had his own way, but he wasn't going to give him the satisfaction, even if it did mean battling with a hologram several times a week. He chided himself for not letting Beverly finish her job on him this morning, but he was damned if he was going to crawl back to her, and face another inquisition about his love life, or lack of...

Several times he thought he was going to get summoned to the Captain' s ready room, he had caught Picard watching him on numerous occasions, usually as he either grimaced with pain when he moved, or the long silences that seemed to now commonplace from him as he constantly thought about her, what he' d lost, what he' d give to get her back where she belonged, in his arms, in his bed, he wanted to be back within her heart, her body and her soul, he just... wanted her back...and he didn' t know how without breaking his own promise... He had seriously considered asking for a transfer, but he didn' t want to leave her behind, so he figured it was better to stay just to be near her, and be miserable, rather than not at all, he knew he could not live without knowing his Imzadi was within safe reach...even if had to include Worf!

The Captain was fully aware of his plight, and was trying to delay the inevitable for as long as possible, hoping things would return back to normal before drastic changes were going to have to be made, like ordering either Will or Deanna into transferring to another starship, which he obviously didn' t want. Will was like a son to him, and he was extremely fond of the pretty Betazoid, and was loathe to lose either of them, but things were reaching a critical point where he wasn' t going to be able to ignore the situation for much longer. He knew Will was regularly visiting the holodecks, Beverly had been keeping him apprised of his declining mental and physical health, and in any other circumstances, he would have ordered him to see a councillor, but that was out of the question, he couldn' t even bear to be in the same room as her, which was becoming a problem on the work front, he knew it wasn' t going to be long before he was going to need both their talents. Sooner or later, something happens, out there, he just wasn' t sure if his finest officers could put aside their differences and do their job.

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Worf admitted himself into Deanna' s quarters, and instinctively knew something was wrong, she had always met him with a welcoming kiss and a huge smile, but today he found her sitting with her back to him, staring out of the porthole at the passing stars, so deep in thought, she hadn' t even heard him come in, and it scared Worf to know that she was probably thinking about Commander Riker, again. He unconsciously growled, which alerted Deanna that she was no longer alone, still with her back to him he watched her movements and realised that she was wiping her face, he gasped when it dawned on him that she was crying, When Deanna had considered herself suitable to face him, his anger erupted when she finally turned and he saw her watery smile, her welcome dying on her lips when she saw how angry he was.

' Worf...'

she was astounded when he turned and walked back out of the door without saying a word, her tears returning in earnest as she realised that he had taken her misery the wrong way, assuming it was about Will, when , for a change, it wasn' t...

Worf found himself in the Ten Forward lounge without even realising he' d got there, Guinan watched the huge Klingon enter the room, anger radiating from his body, and she watched in awe as fellow shipmates took a wide berth around him, he placed himself on a stool at the furthest point of the bar, and as she went and stood quietly in front of him, he looked up at her, surprised ,

' Your usual, Mr. Worf?'

he grunted his reply, and she quietly served him his drink and then just as quietly sidled away, she knew that he did not want to talk, and for that alone, he was grateful...

Some time, and some drinks later, his initial anger had turned to a simmering irritation, as he acknowledged where he was, and as he looked around the room, his eyes finally rested on the back the solitary figure, who too, was staring out of the porthole at the passing stars, just like Deanna had been, Worf sighed, things had to change, but however many times he tried to hate

Will Riker, he couldn't, and before he knew it, he found himself quietly standing a few feet behind him.

He started when he heard the low, sombre voice speak to him

Yes Mr. Worf, what can I do for you?

For several moments Worf pondered on what to say to him, finally settling on honesty,

' I do love the Councillor, deeply Commander, and I promise, that whilst she is with me, you have my solemn oath as a Klingon warrior, that no harm will come to her...I just wanted you to know that sir...'

Will slowly swung his chair around to face him, his eyes travelling up to his face, Worf could see that the smile that Will had plastered across his face did not reach his eyes, but he didn't really expect it to, he didn't expect his first quiet response either,

' I know you do Worf, and for that I will be eternally grateful, she deserves to be happy, god knows, I can't seem to be able to accomplish it, and you have my blessing'

but Will's next words turned his blood cold,

' But Mr. Worf, if you ever hurt her, I swear, I will personally tear you limb from limb, I will gladly let you die like a true warrior...'

and with that, he swung the chair slowly back to its original position and continued his stargazing.

Worf stood for a few moments longer, letting the words sink in, and in those few moments, he realised that he and Deanna had no chance of a long term relationship whilst they were all on board this ship...

When Worf finally walked away from him, the bartender's eyes followed him out, then swung back to huge shoulders that had slumped down, his head bowed, Guinan watched sadly as his hand came up to cover his eyes, and she knew...that he was silently weeping...

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His decision made, Worf made his way back to Deanna's quarters, he let himself in to find her pacing the floor, she stopped as she heard him enter, but before she had a chance to say anything, he held up his hand to stop her. she sensed what he had to say was important, so she kept quiet and let him have his say.

' Deanna... You and I are going to leave the Enterprise, we are going to start afresh on another starship, I think it would be best...'

She stared open mouthed at him, at a total loss as what to say, it was the last thing she was expecting, and the last thing she wanted, especially now,

' Worf, I...'

He held up his hand to silence her again,

' Not now Deanna, I will not discuss this now, I know it's an important decision for us, but under the circumstances, you leave me little choice. I know why you don't want to leave, but I think HE is the main reason we have to do this, it is the only way we will ever be free of him...'

Understanding finally registered in her mind, and she knew that she had to try to make him understand,

' But Worf...if I were a million miles away from him, I would not be free...we are Imzadi..., I thought you understood that'

she jumped, fear making her eyes wide as he angrily shouted

' Enough!. I do not need it forced down my throat, We will leave, you have no choice if you want to be with me...I can no longer tolerate this situation'

his voice changed, his concern evident on his face

' and to perfectly honest,.. I don' t think he can take much more either.'

Deanna heart raced when his words filtered through the onslaught of his demands,

' what do you mean Worf?, is he in trouble, I don' t sense that he is...'

and as the words spilled out of her mouth, the following silence rammed home to her just what he' d meant...

Chapter three

(One week later...)

' RED ALERT!...ALL HANDS TO BATTLE STATIONS!...'

All hands flew to their designated stations to await further instructions, everyone watching the view-screen as the Klingon bird-of-prey uncloaked before them, surprise showing on their faces because as soon as the ship had made it' s presence known, it disappeared again. All senior officers looked to each other for an answer, all at the same point in time looking to their chief security officer for his explanation, only to find him missing from his station.

Picard looked to Will, Will shrugged his reply, now Picard was angry, it was one thing to leave your post without permission, it was entirely another when they had a situation

' Computer, locate Lieutenant Worf'

A stunned silence followed the ever positive response

' Lieutenant Worf is no longer on board the Enterprise'

Will had a bad feeling, reaching into his mind, he looked for her, his shock turning into panic when he couldn' t find what he was looking for, he stared at his Captain who was watching the various thoughts and scenario' s flitting across the young man' s face, and he unsteadily asked the question that he already knew the answer to,

' Computer, locate Councillor Troi'

And the same unemotional response came back,

' Councillor Troi is no longer on board the Enterprise'

Picard watched the colour drain from his commander' s face as the shock settled over the handsome features, and still watching him, he carefully asked Data,

' Mr. Data, can you get a fix on their location?'

Data' s hands flew over the console in front of him at a speed that only Data could achieve, eventually turning his yellow eyes back to his Captain

' I am sorry sir, the Klingon vessel has left no trace...'

No one turned when the door hissed open to admit a very worried Beverly, only her voice broke the silence that had fell on the bridge when she asked the inevitable

' Is it true?...Have they really taken Deanna and Worf?'

She looked from one officer to another waiting for an answer, her professional eyes taking in the pallor on Will' s face, Data chose to be the one to answer her.

' Apparently so Doctor Crusher, it has become obvious that it was their intention to do so, and also to make sure they could not be traced'

Will' s quiet voice finally spoke when the realisation became obvious

' I don' t think they' ve been kidnapped...I think they' ve left on purpose...'

The Captain turned on his First officer, expecting an explanation for his comment,

' Explain yourself Commander!'

The Captain watched him take a loud swallow, his eyes taking on a defeated look

' I think they might have eloped...'

Picard stared at Will as though he had lost his mind

' Worf would never have placed Deanna in such a hazardous situation, she could not survive a Klingon' s way of life, their...BARBARIANS!...'

All eyes turned to Beverly when they heard her choked cry,

' Oh my god!...Oh my god, NO!'

Picard quickly went to her, reaching for her arm to steady her as she all but collapsed on the chair

' What is it Beverly?...What' s wrong?...'

She looked blankly at him, then turned her full stare to Will as she barely whispered,

' She' s pregnant Will...Deanna' s pregnant...'

Everything came to a full stop as Beverly' s words filtered through Will' s already distraught and frantic mind, it screamed back to the last statement he' d ever wanted anyone to utter... Deanna' s pregnant...His Imzadi was pregnant with someone else' s baby... now along with the sheer terror of her predicament that she had placed herself in, he had always held on to the dream of him and her eventually getting over their commitment problems and having their own babies, together, and now she was having...HIS baby, he was torn between a feeling he' d never known before, anger at Worf, and much to his shame, anger at himself, for...everything...

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Even after three weeks aboard the Klingon ship, Deanna still feared for her life...every single second of the day... The Klingon' s took great delight at taunting her, and frequently, the taunting would result into a full scale battle right outside the door, luckily she had managed to damage the lock so no-one could enter, including Worf, but even he could not stop the hot bloodied males that fantasised after the tiny Betazoid woman, each wanting a little piece of the action, as well as the klingon women wanting to rip her apart purely because she was there, on their turf, and was considered to be a threat. Even Worf hadn' t bargained for the agro that she had created, Kurn had been delighted to welcome his brother back into the Klingon fold, but he didn' t think that he would bring a woman that clearly didn' t want to be here, a woman he knew the federation would happily start a war for, so they had disappeared, first to the distant Halee System, then on to the Kriosian System that was under Klingon control, and finally ending up in the Mempa System, landing on Morska which housed a sub-space monitoring out-post. it had taken three weeks to get here, and believing that they had managed to elude the Enterprise once and for all, they finally felt safe enough to lie low for a while and take a breather.

Deanna had become locked within her own self, her mind constantly going over the same questions, again and again,

\*How could he do this to me?\*

\*What have I done to deserve this?\*

and the only question that kept her sane

\*Where are you Imzadi?\*

She tried and tried, day in, day out to send to him, knowing it was the only way they were going to trace her, but as the days flew by, she slowly come to realise that they had managed to disappear into deep space, and with despair, she knew she was totally alone, on a ship who' s replicator spewed out food that usually had her running for the bathroom, and no matter how hard she tried, even for her baby' s sake, she could not swallow the gagh, dead, or alive...and so had become to depend on water. She knew she was becoming more and more weaker by the hour. Every day Worf tried to talk to her, first with aggression, then tenderness, then begging, and finally two days ago, he' d given up...

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Beverly watched Will as she sat in Deanna' s place on the bridge, he spent almost every minute of the day here now, watching, and waiting...She was deeply concerned about him, most of the time, he sat, with his eyes shut, trying to find Deanna within his mind, despair reflecting in them when he opened them having failed, once again...

Will could not,...would not, give up trying to reach her, he was sure she wasn' t dead, his gut instinct told him so, and it was that instinct alone that kept him going, he was not going to give up until they had found her...He nearly sobbed aloud whenever he thought of her, his mind picturing her classically beautiful face, her luscious body...carrying Worf' s baby...the pain he felt within his heart whenever he was reminded of it, nearly made him sick, and over and over in his mind, he only one thought \*if only it was mine Imzadi\*...

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Deanna gasped with shock as the pain ripped through her abdomen as she leant over the bowl she had filled with water from the replicator, to try and wash the worst of the grime from her face, she longed for a bath, or a sonic shower, anything to make her feel clean again.

She knew there were showers on board, but knew she could not ask, the last thing she wanted Worf, or anyone else to see was that she was with child, she had been so pleased that she had never gotten around to telling him.

The pain came again, causing her to double over, clutching her tummy, fighting to keep the bile that rapidly rose to her mouth as the implications to what was happening washed over her, she silently fell to her knees and begged.

\*Oh no, no, no..I cannot lose the baby on board this ship!...Please, Please baby, stay within me'

but within two hours, she knew it was not going to be, the pains had become unbearable and it took all her strength and willing not to scream out loud as the baby slipped from her body, barely recognisable as a baby, but it broke Deanna' s heart that she had lost yet another life...

She waited for the heavy flow of blood to slow down, becoming a little concerned when it didn' t abate, but unsure if it was supposed to be that way, and on all fours, she crawled towards the loo, quietly sobbing as she flushed the tiny foetus away,

\*goodbye little one...I' m sorry...\*

Crawling back to the hard bed, she fell into a deep, almost comatose sleep, filled with the horror that her life had become...of Worf exploding when he found out her deception...and Will coming to rescue her, one day, soon...

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Chapter 4

five days later...

Docked at Starbase 212 on the Klingon border, several members of the Enterprise wandered amongst the people, the majority being Klingons, listening in on conversations, joining in on the drinking binges, hoping that someone, eventually would let slip on the whereabouts of the fugitive Worf, and the kidnapped Federation woman. Having had no luck at all, Picard had summoned all the crew back on board, discussions between the senior crew had concluded and a decision had been made to go back and sweep the star systems they had just left behind, they knew that the Klingon ship couldn' t hide forever, eventually they would probably ' accidentally' bump into them.

As they all settled into their seats Picard having just relayed his order to the ensign and had risen his hand to initiate the Engage signal, when an incoming call was registered.

' On screen, Ensign'

A Klingon that no one recognised appeared on the viewscreen in front of them.

After his initial surprise Picard asked when he could do for him

The Klingon gruffly snarled, but not in an unfriendly manner,

' I think it' s more of a case of what I can do for you, I hear your looking for Kurn' s ship, the Hegh' ta?'

A buzz of excitement rippled through the bridge crew, both Will and the captain coming to an expectant stand, ' You have some information about it' s whereabouts?

The stranger smiled as only a Klingon could smile,

' I hear tomorrow it' s making a stop at the space station in the Gamma Eridon star system...Seems they have a humanoid on board that needs medical attention...'

As he let the mixture of shock, relief and desperation filter through the Enterprise' s crew, he continued

' As you know Klingon Warships don' t have any medical facilities, it is the Klingon custom to either recover without help, or die like a true warrior, she must be a valuable commodity to warrant a visit to a station for help'

Picard hurriedly uttered his heartfelt thanks, eager to end the conversation and be on there way to get to their missed and much loved, shipmate, but his manners reminding him to offer the man any service he might require anytime in the future, the Klingon stranger acknowledged him with a curt nod, and the viewscreen blinked back to it' s original black state.

A sense of urgency now rippled throughout the bridge, Picard looked to Will, the man purely radiated his concern for Deanna, and now Picard understood how strong the bond was between his two closest friends, he even envied them, but also knew the great burden that came with being connected, a concept that both thrilled and frightened him, to feel the anguish that Will was feeling, and no doubt Deanna too, he often wondered at the strength it entailed to take on such a feat, if only he could feel like that... he shook himself out of his reverie, and barked out his command,

' Ensign, take us out of here, set course to the Gamma Eridon system, warp nine...engage...

As the big starship silently and effortlessly backed up, turned about and pulled away, the crew of the Enterprise D did their own turnabout, the last surge of expectant hope finally become a reality as the engines kicked into warp speed in the blink of an eye, now they just hoped and prayed that when they got to her, she was still alive...

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As they entered the vast Klingon space, Picard ordered engines to come to a full stop, they knew that Kurn' s ship would not dock at the outpost, but morelikely keep within the vicinity and transport directly to the base.

Both men came to a stand, all eyes on the giant viewscreen ahead, and eerie silence fell over the bridge as they waited....

the helmsman jumped when picard finally spoke

' Mr Data, can you find anything out there?'

Will found himself holding his breath, his heart in his throat as he waited for his answer

' Aye sir...I have found a slight plasma stream trace, searching for space variations to indicate a cloaked ship sir...'

Will staggered forward reaching out to steady himself on the helmsmans chair, his gasp audible,

Picard reached over to touch his arm,

' Number one...Will, what is it? can you sense Councillor Troi?'

Will concentrated hard, the Captain watched the young man' s face fall into a trance like state, tiny dots of perspiration collected on his brow, his breathing becoming irregular,

' Will!...Talk to me, damn it!...'

He watched as his eyes opened, never before had he seen his first officer in this state of mind before, it frightened him as he nervously asked once more

' Will..Is she?....'

Will' s voice barely whispered his reply, barely managing to keep the wave of nausea that threatened to invade him,

' She' s alive...Just, she' s still on board, but she' s very weak sir, I keep losing her, I think she' s slipping in and out of consciousness'

Data reminded them all at that point something that they already knew,

' Sir, we cannot beam Councillor Troi from the Klingon ship whilst it has it' s cloaking device activated, may I suggest we hail them, maybe we can call on their... better nature sir.'

They all looked at him as if he were mad, but then they began to question the statement, maybe it could work,

Picard making up his mind turned to the ensign that poignantly stood in Worf' s place

' Ensign, hail the Hegh' ta'

A few moments passed, and to everyone' s astonishment Worf' s face appeared on the viewscreen, his head held high, his eyes revealing his betrayal...

' YOU BASTARD! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER...I' LL KILL YOU, YOU SON OF A BITCH!!'

Will' s fury raged from the distraught man, Picard grabbed at his arm, barking out his command

' Enough Commander Riker...Let' s hear what he has to say for himself...'

Worf looked shamefacedly at Will, Will bubbled with hatred, his hands clenching into fists as he tried to control himself.

Worf looked back to Picard, common sense telling him to ignore Will in case he flew of the handle again

' Deanna is ill...'

Picard glanced at Will, then back to Worf

' Do you know what is wrong with her?'

He shook his head, his embarrassment clear as he explained

' I do not know sir...but I do fear for her life, which is why I decided that she needed to come back to you, we do not have the facilities to treat her and... although I haven' t actually seen her since we came on board...I have heard her screams...'

Will' s carefully held on rage, erupted in a roar that would have put any triumphant Klingon' s roar to shame,

' You Animals!...Drop your cloaking device...NOW!...transporter room... lock onto Councillor Troi on the Klingon vessel and beam her directly to sickbay... Sickbay, prepare for medical emergency...'

and after one last look at the man who nearly destroyed his Imzadi' s life, he turned and walked off the bridge, his only thought was to be with her, for her, for as long as she needed him...

Picard watched Will' s back walk away with him, wishing that he could follow, if only to offer support to whatever laid ahead, but with a sigh, he had to turn back and face the man who had betrayed him, his colleagues, and worst of all, himself...

Worf knew that it was no use running, he had to take whatever Starfleet had to throw at him, he had acted dishonourably, and was now ready to face his punishment, he barely registered his former Captain speaking to him until he heard ' brig' , and before he had a chance to react, he felt his body dissolve into a trillion particles, only to reform inside the Enterprise D' s maximum security cell.

After a brief word with Kurn, who apologised for his brother' s behaviour, Picard ended the transmission, ordered his own ship back to Federation space and headed for the sickbay, anxious to see first hand what tragedy awaited him...

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Will entered sickbay to total bedlam, he could see his Imzadi on the bio-bed, she was clearly unconscious, he tried to reach her but found himself against the solid form, and face to face with Beverly,

' Not now Will, Please...let us stabilise her first, then I will call you ...I promise..' she shoved him into her office, her eyes welling up at the sight of the tear-stained face of the man who desperately wanted to hold the very sick woman within his embrace, she knew that they needed to be together so that he could transfer his energy and love, to her, but right now, at this minute, there was nothing he could do...

She hurried back to her patient, glancing quickly back to Will, his face ravaged from lack of a lot of sleep, a whole months worth, and grief, but even through all that, she could see he was trying to get into Deanna' s mind to help her in the only way he knew how...

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The next two hours seemed like the longest Will had ever lived, he had watched with horror as twice they had to apply the heart stimulators, where despite his efforts, and Beverly' s, she had given up, only to be brought back with a shock that made Will' s own heart feel like it had leapt out of his own chest, and everywhere he looked, all he could see where bloodied lumps of swabs, where she was bleeding from, he didn' t dare guess. Picard had quietly joined his vigil, no one saying anything, nothing needing to be said...Eventually Beverly made her way towards them both, her hands rubbing over her face, she wasn' t sure if she was rubbing away the fatigue that ravaged her whole body, or the horrors of the past two hours as she battled to save her best friend...

As she stood in front of the two men and looked into their expectant faces, she managed a small smile,

' We' ve finally managed to stabilise her, she' s lost a lot of blood, and we' ve cleared up the worst of the infection that was poisoning her system, that' s why she had two cardiac arrests... and we' ve got her fever down to a more acceptable level...she' s not out of the woods yet, but...I think she' ll pull through, given time...'

Will hated to ask, but he couldn' t stop himself,

' Bev...What about the baby...?'

She sighed,

' It' s gone Will, that' s why she was so ill...she must have miscarried, but she' s had no help to deal with the haemorrhaging after, she' s also very malnourished, very dehydrated, and mentally...well...I think the only way she managed to get through this whole deal, was to shut her mind down...but, with a lot of time, and help from her friends, she should make a full recovery,'

Will stood up straight, a new determined air blazed in his eyes, it was time to make some changes in his life, and here was where he started,

' I am here for her Beverly..I will always be here for her...forever'

He made his way around the stunned Captain and Doctor, his stride purposeful as he made his way over to the woman who had become the main focus of his entire life. He had let her go once, he was never going to let her go again. He had finally come home...

His breath caught in his throat as he looked down at his beloved Deanna, her beautiful face was gaunt, even with the flush of the remaining fever he could see she was deathly pale. He picked up her tiny hand, it felt so cold that he unconsciously rubbed it as he clutched it to his

chest, which had begun to heave with his own sobs,

' I let you down Imzadi, I am so...sorry...I wish I could have been man enough to have taken you on all those years ago, I know I could have found a way, Please forgive me Dee...I love you,..'

He felt her finger move slightly, just enough to let him know she had heard, he opened up his mind to let her in, his heart swelled when he heard her manage to send

' I love you Imzadi...I' m so glad to be home...'

He choked on the sob that rose within him, he managed to pull over the nearby chair without letting go of her hand, and as he settled his head near her shoulder, both felt a peace that had been missing for a long, long time...

Beverly and Picard watched from her office, tears ran unchecked down her face as she watched the two lost souls reunite, and as she turned her watery smile to the man beside her, she heard him sniff, and knew that he had been moved by the scene that unfolded before him. She gently took his arm and led him out of sickbay, leaving the couple alone to begin their own healing process...

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## Chapter 5

Deanna took nearly a week to get over her physical problems, Beverly had refused to release her until she had gained all her lost weight, much to Deanna' s despair, insisting that she had been overweight in the first place! not by Beverly' s standards she wasn' t and refused point blank to be swayed until she had gained every last ounce!

Her mind had been a different matter altogether, she desperately grieved for her lost baby, but Will made her talk whether she wanted to or not, after he had heard how she had to dispose of the baby, one of the things that he insisted she do because he firmly believed it would help, was to actually give the child a name, and hold a proper memorial service, to say goodbye properly. they did so the first day Deanna had left sickbay. Will had kept the service in the chapel down to himself, Deanna, Beverly and the Captain, who held the short, but sincere service. she had settled on the name Sammy , she hadn' t known if the baby was male or female, so she chose a neutral name that would suit either. and as a memorial they planted one of Deanna' s favourite flowers, a blue rose, in the arbutarium.

From then on, Deanna made progress, slow, but a definite progress. Will was her constant companion, it was him who sat with her for hours on end, sometimes they talked, sometimes they cried... together, but mostly they sat in silence, drawing on each others inner strength, and just knowing that Will was there, with her, helped her more than anything else. In the early days of her recovery he had stayed with her day and night, her nightmares had frequently resorted to blood curdling screams that shook him to the very core, and night after night he had calmed her fears with gentle caresses and whispered endearments of love to her, somehow the need for a physical relationship got pushed to one side as the emotional bonds needed to be repaired long before that next step. Some months later, Will had plucked up the courage to ask Beverly if Deanna had been affected, ' that way' , by the trauma she had experienced, Beverly had assured him, that there was absolutely nothing wrong with her physically, but emotionally, only Deanna knew when the time was right...

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That day finally arrived as the two of them were slumped on her sofa, in there usual reflective quiet position, Will' s hand loosely holding her hand upon his stomach, as her head lay against his huge shoulder. He felt her mind change gear, he felt his own grow pensive as he waited for whatever question she was going to throw at him, he stared at the top of her head with some surprise when it finally did come...

' Will...Imzadi... I' ve been thinking about this a lot...Can we have a baby of our own?

Will pulled himself up so that he could turn to look at her,

' Deanna...your not ready for another baby just yet, you need a little more time sweetheart'

She felt her hopes rise a little when she realised that he hadn' t said no,

' Do you mean you' ll consider having a baby with me Will?

His smile warmed her heart as he reached out and gently caressed her face, his voice lowering to get the importance of his statement across

' Oh Deanna... If only you knew how much I want to have a babies with you...'

He leaned forward to kiss her tenderly on the lips, Deanna' s hand creeping up behind his head pull him closer to deepen the kiss, both groaned as their bodies reacted to the intimate longings that finally came out from the depths of their being that had been keeping them safe until they were both ready, wave after wave of desire coursed through their bodies, until they both came up gasping for air...

Deanna pushed Will off so that she could move her position, and within seconds had planted herself firmly on her knees, across his lap, her fingers played with the threatening curls whenever he was near due for a haircut, she looked deep into his now passion filled eyes, mirroring her own rich chocolate ones,

' What' s stopping you Will?...'

He looked at her for a long moment, until that famous Riker grin suddenly sprung across his face

' Well... nothing I suppose...'

With his head firmly clasped within her tiny hands she placed gentle kisses on every part of his face, every kiss building up Will' s desire to fever pitch, and as she sunk her tongue into his mouth, all sense and reasoning went out of the porthole. Will' s thoughts battled between wanting to get so deep inside her, he thought he would die, to trying to be gentle with her in case she broke in two...

As they began to explore each other' s bodies, the same thoughts went through their minds, after years of longing, teasing, and testing on other subjects had at last, come full circle, this is where they wanted to be, this is where they belonged...together. it was time to stop playing with each other, it was time to take a chance, now it was time to make a commitment.

When they finally broke the embrace, both were grinning, amazed at what they had forgotten, both sorry that they had,

' my god...I didn' t realise it could still be like that'

Deanna chuckled seductively

' that' s just the beginning Imzadi... I' m ready to take the chance to see it through to the end ...Are you?...

And without a shadow of a doubt, Will knew he was...

The end