

The Step
by Carol Sandford

"I kiss you, and you say, YUK!!"

I couldn't help but burst into a fit of giggles as I pushed Will out of the door, leaving him open mouthed, indignant and incredulous. It made me laugh even harder as I turned away. Oh these were magical times, I am so glad we decided to come here and dig into the mysteries surrounding the planet. And boy, what mysteries were unfolding.

Not only did we have the chance of immortality, we had the chance to get our true feelings out in the open. But it was happening so quickly neither one of us really realised what had hit us. One minute we were comrades, the next we were flirting with our fingers, and the next we were fighting to keep ourselves out of bed.

But why?

Why can't we just 'let go'. Why can't we just take another step - the final step, towards a relationship? Why can't we just love each other like 'normal' lovers do?

Because we are not normal that's why. Becoming Imzadi has put us in an impossible situation. Both of us have feelings so deep, so intense for one another we are too scared to break the status quo, and that's the problem.

We're both too scared to move away from our comfortable little niche that we've built for ourselves. When we want to talk, we always seek out each other. When we need a shoulder to cry on, we seek out each other. When we need an escort for whatever function, we seek out each other. When we need just a little bit more than all of that put together, we seek out each other. Do we really need to go that other step?

A few months ago I would have said, 'No, probably not.' Five years ago I would have said, 'No' Ten years ago I would have howled into your shoulder. But today...today I'm prepared to say 'Possibly'

But that depends on the man on the other side of the door. Oh, I knew he was still there. Too indignant, proud, and yes, too stunned to move away. He was as scared as I was, but like me, he was willing to see if we really could take that final step.

Was it really time to try. It really was 'Now or never' The planet that spun beneath us had given us an excuse to possibly make fools out of us. And, give us the chance to back off and laugh about it if it didn't work when we left orbit.

But then again, this could have been our moment, our time. Our chance to step into each other's arms and remain there for the duration. Hopefully for the rest of our lives.

All I had to do was open the door.

If I had opened the door and Will had been propping up the door jamb looking like a cocky son of a bitch, I would have hit him. But he wasn't. And if he'd made some smart-ass remark about keeping him waiting, I would have hit him.

He was standing there, his heart on his sleeve, a tender smile upon his face which turned into a relieved heart-warming grin as I punched the mechanism to open the door. As he watched me intently for a sign, any sign that I had changed my mind. That I wanted him.

Oh God, of course I wanted him, I always had. But before, I was content with Will Riker, my best friend. My saviour. My hero.

But not now. Now I wanted Will Riker, the man of too many dreams to remember, some so erotic they made me blush at times. I still remember his magnificent body, even after all this time. I remember the dimple on his chin, now obscured by the whiskers that adorned, and I might add, enhanced his face. But I did miss that dimple. I remember the hair on his chest, the way it tapered down below his waist band. I remember his hands. Oh God, his hands. What they did to me back then. What they can do to me now, if I wanted him to.

And that was the question; Did I want him to?

He seemed to be reading my mind, for no sooner had the image of his hand running along my naked body did his own hand reach out tenderly towards me, inviting me. Wanting me.

Will wanted me.

And that was all it took for me to take that final step into his arms. Well, launch actually. As he swung me around in the center of the room, we were laughing with joy. With acceptance. Without fear.

And as my lips found his, as I drank in his love, I found my fingers gently tracing his face for that dimple.

I found it.