

That's What Best Friends Are For

by Carol Sandford

Deanna heard the girlish giggle through Will's door as she made her way to his from her own quarters, she came to a halt and sighed,

not again, I can't put it off any longer, I must speak to you tonight

William Riker and Deanna Troi, had been best friends....for ever, starting off as brief lovers on her home planet of Betazed, and then his career, had taken him away, and her commitments to her mother, her heritage had forced her to remain, until the day came when she knew that she had to leave it all behind and follow her dream of joining Star Fleet, and hopefully being reunited with her soul mate, but things didn't quite happen that way, their two year separation had built a small wall between them, albeit a very small wall, but enough to realise that the passion that they had shared on the planet, was well and truly cooled, but they were absolute best friends, and would do anything for each other, even die. It was this thought that was uppermost in Deanna's head as she stood in front of his door, trying to pluck up the courage to break up whatever was going on on the other side of the large grey metallic entrance.

She took a deep breath and pressed the button with one long finger, that was shaking as much as the rest of her.

She had no doubt that Will knew who was on the other side, because when he finally opened the door, he was casually propped up against the door frame with only a small, very small, towel slung around his waist, and a grin that only Will would give to her under the circumstances, namely knocking on the door when he was in the middle of seducing the latest new ensign to board the ship.

'Deanna, What a lovely surprise!, come in' the laughing sarcastic tone that he used comforted Deanna a little when she realised that he really did not mind her intruding, but still, she hesitated, Will gave her a withered look, and grabbed her arm and dragged her in.

The living area was a disaster, empty wine bottles littered the table, along with glasses, soothing jazz music floated softly round the room, and a trail of discarded clothes made their way to his bedroom.

'I'm sorry Will, I can come back later...' She started to head back out of the door, but he stood in front of her and blocked her way.

'Deanna, is something wrong?'

A movement behind them made Deanna turn, the ensign Will was entertaining was horridly gathering up her clothes and putting on enough to be able to walk to her quarters without being called a stalker,

'Hey guys listen, I'm gonna run, I'll see you tomorrow Commander, thanks for a terrific evening' she blushed daintily and eased herself around the two of them, the scent of lime massage oil assaulted Deanna's nostrils, and she looked up at Will and started to apologise again, he held up his hand in front of face to stop her,

'Dee I know that whatever it is, is important, otherwise you wouldn't have gatecrashed my party, now... Tell me. ..What's wrong'

Deanna looked at him for a long moment, she looked afraid, he could sense that she was upset, worried and confused, and frightened,

'Deanna, talk to me, you can tell me, please'

She turned away from him and nervously wrung her hands together, he could feel her growing tension and felt his own increasing to the point that he held his breath.

'Will, I went to see Beverly today'

She turned to look at him, her eyes glistened with tears, she was trembling visibly and her voice had begun to choke,

'She told me... She told me that I have only six months...'

She didn't get any further, Will had dragged her into his arms and was hugging her fiercely, holding her head to his chest'

'Oh no Imzadi, no, no no...'

She felt him sob, and tried to push away from him so that she could finish, but when she looked up at him, tears were streaming down his face, she touched her hand to his cheek and tried to wipe away the moisture,

'Oh Will, I'm not going to die....but I only have six months to get pregnant...'

He sniffed as he tried to comprehend what she was telling him

'preg...pregnant,

She nodded, and smiled at him tenderly.

'Come on, sit down and I'll explain what's going on'

She took his hand and led him over to his sofa, she pulled him down, and turned to sit facing him.

He had gone very quiet,

'Deanna, tell me...'

'Well, like I said, I went to see Beverly today for a routine check up... and she found a tumour'

Will gasped, and she patted his hand and took a deep breath and carried on.

'Beverly can remove the tumour, but in order to do so, she's going to have to remove some of my reproductive organs, so, if I want any children of my own I've got to have them within the next six months, that is all she is prepared to wait before she insists on doing the surgery'

Will was amazed,

'You mean, even in the 24th century, nothing can be done, there's no other way?'

She shook her head sadly

'no, no other way, it's attached itself to so many of the vital organs needed for childbirth, that there is just no way of removing the tumour without removing most of my womb'

'Will lightly stroked her hair

'Oh Dee... I know how much you've always wanted children..'

She choked back the sobs that were threatening, and Will pulled her into his embrace and she let go the built up grief that had she had been storing all day

'Oh my sweetest Imzadi, what can I do to help you through this?'

She pulled back away from him, and looked deep into his eyes

'I want you to get me pregnant Will, I want to have your baby...'

Chapter 2

'Wha...What did you say?' He swallowed noisily, she was kidding, right?! he laughed, but when he saw she was not even smiling, he came to an abrupt halt.

'Dee, I'm....stunned, I don't know what to say'

She stood, clearly dismayed by his response

'I'm sorry, I should have never come to you with this, it was stupid, forget you ever saw me, I can find other ways of doing this, goodnight Will'

He was left standing in the middle of his living room watching her depart, he knew he should have chased after her, but he was rooted to the spot. He was still in shock from the most, what

seemed to him, ridiculous idea he had heard in a long time. But he also knew that she was desperately distraught and needed comforting, so he called the only person he knew that could help her, Beverly.

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If Deanna had had a door in her quarters with hinges on, she would have slammed it so hard it would have come off them.

She was furiously angry, and totally unprepared for his response, she thought that he, of all people, would have gladly helped her, and what hurt beyond belief, was that he hadn't even followed her, he always came after her when she was upset, she had really blown it this time.

' He let me down, I can't believe it, he let me down'

It went round and round, and over and over in Deanna's head,

' He let me down, what am I going to do now?'

She wasn't quite sure which upset her more, the thought that Will did not want her, or that she wasn't going to ever have Will's baby, one of the few things that had carried her on after he had left her on Risa and her ultimate goal of finding him again.

By the time Beverly arrived, she had reduced herself to such a state that Beverly was forced to sedate her.

### Chapter 3

Will didn't sleep a wink that night, his mind went over and over, and over \*I want you to get me pregnant Will, I want to have your baby... Jeez, what this woman does to me...Sure, she's still sexy, but she's Deanna, she's my best friend, it would be like making love to my sister, but how can I help her, I want to help, I can't let her down, not now, she IS my best friend...\*

He watched the clock on his bedside cabinet slowly go round until it reached the alarm time, he still stared at it, knowing that he was going to have to get up for his shift, knowing that he was going to have to face Deanna, the latter brought yet another gut-wrenching moan from him, and he swung himself out his bed and plodded to the bathroom. He spent a good ten minutes under the shower, and just let the water run, and as it run he made up his mind. He was going to tell her he couldn't do it, he couldn't father her baby.

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Deanna heard him come onto the bridge, and she felt his eyes on her back, she sensed negativity from him, she was dismayed, she was sure he would have changed his mind once he had thought about it, but it was evident that he was not going to help her. Before Will had resumed his seat, Deanna got up and headed off the bridge muttering her apologies to a surprised captain, who automatically looked to Will for any response from him, he didn't like what he saw. He wasn't sure who looked more haggard, Will or Deanna, but it was obvious that they were both troubled.

' Number one, could you kindly go and check on the Counselor and make sure she is alright'

Will looked at him briefly, then stood with a sigh

' Sir, I think this could take some time'

' No problem, I'm sure we can manage without you both for a few hours'

' Yes sir'

Will walked off the bridge and pondered as to where she would have gone, he finally decided on ten forward.

He was not looking forward to this, it was obvious that she had already guessed his reluctance to help her, all he need now was a good reason why...

Sure enough, she was sitting in her usual spot staring out at the stars.

' Your not going to help me are you Will?'

She sounded so sad that Will debated on answering her, and then, at that point, he knew he

couldn't do this to her, he sat beside her perched on the edge so he could look into her face,
' Deanna, is there really no other way?'

She nodded her head slowly

' I've thought about it a lot, and I've decided to try insemination, I don't think I can casually make love to some-one without some form of emotional attachment, it's just not me, at least this way any diseases will have been eliminated, any deformities, and most of all, any attachments to the father'

Will physically cringed at the unemotional way she was describing what should be one of the most exciting events of her life, and she was talking about it like it was a medical problem that had to be solved.

' Deanna, could I be the donor for you?'

She felt her spirits lift a little,

' Will, do you know what you are saying?'

He ran his hands through his hair and contemplated what he'd just said, and grinned

' yes, I think so...What now?'

Chapter 4

Will sat on the bed listening to Beverly, his embarrassment growing steady worse with every word that came out of her mouth

' I need you to give me a sample of sperm in this test tube Will, there is a view screen over there that you can access, there is a programme that has some ' suitable material' for you to look at if you have trouble getting...stimulated'

He coughed nervously and fidgeted to the point where Bev put a hand on his leg and smiled

' Will, think of Deanna...'

And she left him to it.

He stared at the viewscreen for some time, before hopping off the bed and switching it on, he turned the volume off, because he hated the thought of Beverly knowing that he needed help in doing something that he really shouldn't have any trouble doing, what with his reputation and all! he found the programme that she had recommended and sat back on the bed and watched... and watched. It was doing nothing for him at all, he barely got a stirring, certainly not enough to produce a bucketful of sperm! In fact, the more he thought about it, the more turned off he became. He was a physical man, and he needed a physical woman to do this.

One hour later, a tentative knock came on the door,

' Will, are you done?'

The door flew open and a very red-faced Will Riker came hurtling past her muttering

' it must have been the blonde last night, drained me dry... Sorry!'

Beverly was left staring at the sickbay doors, giggling to herself.

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Deanna opened her door to his knock, she had been expecting him, but was startled by what he had to say,

' I think we should do this the old fashioned way, y' know, man and woman, face to face as it were...what do you say?...'

She took his hand and pulled him into her quarters.

' I think that's a very good idea, if it's the only way I'm going to get any of this sperm, I guess I'd better be around so no-one else gets it first!'

Chapter 5

Will stood in front of Deanna and drank in her beauty

\*This shouldn't be so hard, hell, I could screw anything providing it was definitely female\*

He swept her into his arms and carried her into her bedroom he quickly ridded them both of their clothes and gently laid her down on the bed. She looked so damn good, that his insides glowed with the knowledge that she was going to his again, her eyes begged him to kiss her, she licked her lips to moisten them knowing from times past that Will was going to ravage her mouth, he liked to kiss, it was a particular trait that she loved about him, he liked to kiss you stupid before claiming the rest of your body, and sure enough his mouth lowered to hers, only this time, he had a beard, that in it's own way, sent erotic feelings through her being when it brushed across his face, oh yes, he had kissed her several time since they'd been on board, but a light peck as friends do, this was a whole new experience, and she wondered what it would feel like when he started on the rest of her body... The anticipation of that alone sent shudders through her loins.

Will enjoyed kissing Deanna, he always had, he loved the way she teased his mouth, she could do wonders with her tongue, and she loved to nip his lips with her teeth, his ardent passion was blossoming and he knew it wouldn't be long before he could get down to the business of making Miss Deanna Troi an expectant mommy...Before long, hands began to feel their way around each others bodies, revelling in the changes since their last encounter, both had matured. Will had become much more muscular, Deanna felt the bulging biceps everywhere her fingers touched, the hair upon his chest, was no longer a teenage furry down and she marvelled at how masculine it made him look, her own desire was fast building, and she knew that before long, she was going to need their joining any time right now, but Will had other ideas, he wanted to make this memorable, so she was surprised when he pinned both of her hands above her head, and calmly looked over her body, her body had ripened to become quite exquisite, her creamy skin was like satin, his large fingers traced her womanly contours, he felt her tremble with desire.

' Will...Please...'

He moved above her and revelled in the feeling that their bodies snugly fitted together despite his size and her petitness, her legs parted expectantly and Will moved closer to reunite their bodies, and their hearts and souls, and then it came,

\*I want you to make me pregnant Will. I want to have your baby\*

He felt his member shrivel, there was no way a baby was going to be made tonight.

Will groaned with despair, and Deanna groaned with frustration

Who's thoughts projected first, neither one of them knew, but they both heard it

\*Oh no, not now\*

Will's body collapsed on top of hers and his silence worried Deanna

' Will...Are you o.k?'

Will groaned into her hair, his dismay and embarrassment of not being able to perform, the guilt that he was feeling because he knew that Deanna should have been angry at him, but she wasn't made him feel like a louse, the one time she needed him, really needed him, he had let her down.

' I'm sorry Deanna, I can't do this, it's just not right...I'm sorry'

He climbed off from her and sat on the edge of bed, his hands running through his hair, Deanna sat up beside him, unconsciously pulling the sheet to partially cover her body, he glanced at the movement and groaned again, not from desire, but the same gut-wrenching thought that he'd let her down once more.

He started when he felt her hand gentle stroke down his back, he stood up abruptly and walked into the bathroom, and stood leaning on the sink, looking into it, then caught his reflection in the mirror, the face that looked back at him sneered with the contempt that he felt he deserved, and he wished he was anywhere but in her quarters so that he could vent out his rage.

' Will...'

He looked at his mirror image and then onto the face beyond his shoulder, her look only reflected her concern, and he had to look away again.

' Will, it' s o.k., I understand'

' NO, no you don' t Deanna, you needed me, and I' ve let you down'

He felt her touch his shoulder again, this time he didn' t pull away, but turned and looked sadly into her eyes,

His words shattering her very being,

' I am sorry, but your going to look elsewhere for your baby' s father, I don' t seem to be capable of providing you with the necessary ingredients'

He brushed past her, grabbed his clothes, climbing into his trousers at the same time, and walked out of her quarters

## Chapter 6

Will heard the door chime and knew it was Deanna on the other side, he had spent another miserable night wide awake, not believing his failure, cringing at his own embarrassment as well as what Deanna must have thought about him, she was the last person he wanted to see this morning, so he ignored her hail.

Deanna wasn' t going to be put off that easily, so she used her authorisation override code and entered his quarters, she was determined he was going to hear her out, and her purposeful stride into his inner sanctum hid the fact that she was shaking in her boots.

She stood looking at him with one hand on her hip, her foot tapping restlessly on his carpet and a look that would have withered an enraged klingon.

' Are you going to hide yourself away in here all day, or are you going to face up to the fact that we have a serious problem that needs discussing'

That rattled him,

' What do you suggest, I go see a Counselor, and besides, you don' t have the problem, I do' She came to sit in front of him on the bed, she took a long moment before she answered, knowing that she needed to be careful in case she upset him anymore.

' Will, I know I' ve put you under a great deal of pressure, and I' m sorry for that, but I think I have a solution'

' You do?

she nodded with a little smile,

' I think we should date for a while, rebuild a relationship before we attempt to try making love again'

He looked at her surprised

' Date...as in boyfriend, girlfriend, holding hands, kissing in the back seat of a car kind of dating?'

She nodded again, her breath held as she waited for his answer.

' o.k...we can give it a go, but what about your schedule, we only have so much time, what if it doesn' t work?'

' It will, what could go wrong...you love me, right?'

He nodded,

' and I love you Will..., it will work, we just need a little time to get used to each other again'

She had set the challenge, and waited to see what he would do next...

He came up trumps

' Miss Troi, can I escort you to a trip to holodeck three tonight to a dance and maybe a light supper afterwards?'

She grinned, her heart overflowed with delight that he was at least willing to try,

## Chapter 7

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Will and News travelled fast aboard the Enterprise that Commander William Riker was going steady with Counselor Deanna Troi, everybody thought it was sweet the way they walked around the ship, hand in hand, giving each other little kisses, and giggling like teenagers, they were doing just this in Ten Forward a couple of weeks after they had started dating. They were oblivious to everyone around them including the Captain when he came in with Beverly which in itself was a rarity, the captain hardly ever came into the lounge on a casual basis, Beverly nudged him in the ribs and indicated to the two love birds who, at the moment in time, were draped around each other, in fact, Deanna was sitting across Will's lap, nuzzling his ear and he was chuckling at what ever she was whispering,

Picard coughed with embarrassment that made Beverly laugh at him

' Why Captain, aren't you pleased to see your two senior officer obviously very happy and very much in love with each other?'

' Yes, Well, I am pleased, I just wish they could be a little more discreet'

Beverly laughed out right at him

' Oh, you old stick in the mud, perhaps you should follow their example, it would take years off you'

He looked at her with some surprise

' Doctor, are you making a pass at me?'

' Why Captain, would you take me up on it if I did?'

He took her by the arm and led her back out of the lounge, whispering quietly

' Why don't we discuss this a little more privately in my quarters Doctor...'

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Deanna had forgotten just how much they loved each others company, although they were very close as best friends, but as sweethearts, not lovers, they hadn't reached that crossroad yet, but as sweethearts nothing could get between them, their new found love was so deep and profound that they knew that when they did finally manage to complete that ultimate goal that they were holding off on until the timing was right, nothing was ever, or never going to separate them again.

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Deanna's fertile days were fast approaching, but she didn't want to tell Will so that he wouldn't feel pressurised, but he felt the change in her and knew that it was getting close to that time once again, he was fairly confident that he would fulfil his duty this time, he had to, for Deanna's sake. They had purposely avoided talking about babies, but on the odd occasion that Will found himself privately thinking about it, he felt his stomach knot. Sometimes he got so nervous that he thought he was going to be sick, and decided to see Beverly about it.

' Will, it's perfectly natural that you should be scared of it happening again, but I can give you something that will help, it'll relax you, so you won't feel the tension building up.'

His embarrassment at having to confide in Beverly clearly showed on his face, but he knew that he was going to need some help, and if it was for his precious Imzadi, then he could face any embarrassment that he had to from now on. Beverly gently patted him on the shoulder, and handed him the small hypospray.

' Chin up Will... and hopefully everything else will stay up too...!'

He forced a sarcastic smile at her, and hopped off the bio-bed and as he walked out he threw her his parting shot,

' well I'm sure that you and Jean-Luc won't have the same problem, but I suppose it will be

handy having a Doctor close to hand to administer his hypospray!

Beverly watched him open-mouthed as he walked out of the sick-bay.

How did he find out about her and the Captain?, Oh my god, the whole ship must know by now, so much for trying to be discreet!...

Chapter 8

Deanna had begun to regularly take her temperature, Beverly had insisted that she did so, so she could maximise the chance of conception, today it was at it' s peak...

She knew that Will had not started his shift yet, so he would still be in quarters,

' Counselor Troi to Commander Riker'

It was only seconds before she heard his voice come back to her

' Yes Counselor, what can I do for you?'

She laughed at the image that came uppermost in her mind

' Would you like to meet me in holodeck three at 1700 hours?'

Will smiled to himself and wondered what she had got planned this time, another movie, or a pig out at a pizza joint, a gondola ride through the streets of Venice, and her favourite that they had been to several times, an ice-cream parlour, to watch her trying out all the various flavours, it was an erotic experience all on it' s own, he wasn' t quite sure who was getting more turned on, him watching her, or her tasting the ice-cream, either way, they always had a marathon kissing session afterwards that could have quite easily have ended up with them making love, but Deanna had always stopped him, he wasn' t quite sure why, as this obviously her ultimate goal, but she had her reasons, and he was more than happy to go along with it.

' I' ll be there'

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When Will entered the holodeck, he was stunned, she had managed to replicate an old American classic car, it was a 1966 Buick. It' s chrome sparkled against the jet black shiny paintwork, he gently traced his fingers over the bonnet his admiration for this hunk of ancient machinery was evident on his face. He looked around at the rest of the holosuite and saw that they were in fact, at a drive- in movie, the film filled the screen in front of him and he stared at it fascinated.

' So, are you going to watch the film all night, or join me'

He swung around at her voice, and saw that she had opened the car back door, he couldn' t see her, so he came over and peeked inside. He grinned when he saw her, that soon turned to amazement when he saw what she was wearing. She had on the tightest, tightest trousers he had ever seen, they moulded her body like a second skin, her red top was hanging off her shoulder, he wasn' t sure if it was supposed to be there, but he liked the effect, Her feet were propped upon the front seat and she had on the highest stiletto heels that he' d ever seen, and she sat back against the leather seat, her hair was pulled up on one side and held there with a clip, her lips were bright red, and her long fingernails matched. She looked totally at ease, while he, he was lost for words.

Her long fingers beckoned him in, and he climbed in beside her. she smiled at him and asked

' do you like it? I looked up old earth dating customs and this was one of the things it came up with, apparently, a very large percentage of babies were conceived in the back of cars, especially in the 1950' s and 60' s'

He laughed outright at the thought and looked around him again, not quite believing it,

' But Deanna, there' s hardly enough room to sit, let alone make babies, how did they do it??'

She slipped over to him and manoeuvred herself across his lap, draping her arms around his neck,

' I' m sure we' ll find a way' as her lips descended down onto his.



His hands wandered up and down her body, he loved the feel of the soft leather trousers, it was almost like touching her own skin, and he grew aroused at just the thought, his hands made their way up to her shoulders, and he found that one downward movement on her arms reduced the dainty top to a puddle around her waist once she'd realised what he was doing, she slipped her hands out of the shoulder straps, he did a double take when he saw that she wasn't wearing a bra, and her breasts were there, in front of his face, he didn't hesitate, he just placed his face onto her chest, and hugged her tight, he thought he had died and gone to heaven...

' God Deanna, what are you doing to me?'

She lifted his head from her chest and looked deep into his eyes, hers were dark and sultry, the passion smouldering, his were sparkling with desire, the longing even more evident,

' I need you Deanna, I'm making you mine'

Before she had realised it he had flipped her over and it was her who was sitting back on the soft leather seat, Will had managed to find a space and was now kneeling on the floor, between her legs. They both looked down at her trousers and groaned, it seemed like a great idea at the time, now it had become their greatest obstacle.

Will looked to see if there was a seam, there was, he gave a tug, and once Deanna realised what he was going to do, giggled and lifted her tush from off the seat, Will grabbed at the waist band with both hands and pulled hard, the material gave way with an almighty tearing sound, and they both burst out laughing when Will tossed the offending item to one side, but he became quiet again when he saw she wasn't wearing any undies, Will's thoughts were of a man possessed as he undid his own trousers and pushed them down to his knees

\*man this lady is out for the kill tonight\*

Deanna had pulled herself up and now sat on the edge of the seat and she tugged at his shirt,

' Now Will, please, NOW!...'

It was all he needed, no time to think about if he could, or why, or even knowing that a baby could result in this joining, he entered her in one, earth-shattering thrust, that brought a scream of ecstasy from the both of them as they clung together, neither one moving, until the euphorium had regained it's momentum and they began to move together, finally reaching that ultimate goal that they had worked so hard for.

When Will finally released himself into her, they both looked at one other, both panting from their exertions, and they knew, that at that moment, they had just made a baby...

Chapter 9

' Congratulations Deanna, you are now officially two weeks pregnant'

Beverly covered her ears as Deanna squealed with delight, and leapt off the bio-bed into both her and Will's arms, he was grinning from ear to ear, clearly pleased with himself, he didn't think he would feel like this, the thought that he had just created a whole new life, made him stop.

\*I have made a little human being, I'm going to be a dad\*

Beverly and Deanna had stopped leaping around the sickbay when they had noticed his face change,

Deanna nervously touched his arm,

' Will..are you alright?'

He nodded rapidly, too choked to say anything and turned and left the sickbay, leaving two women staring at the closed doors.

' I must go to him Beverly, he needs me'

She nodded her understanding and Deanna followed Will out.

She could see him up ahead of her, but let him walk to where ever he was going, she sensed that he needed to reach his destination before he would speak to her. He made his way to his

own quarters and she followed him inside, he stood in front of his window, and stared out at the passing stars.

He knew she had followed him and he felt her presence when she walked into the room and stopped short some six feet from him.

' Imzadi...'

He still couldn't speak, and when he felt her arms go around his waist, he clasped her hands and choked back the sobs that threatened.

' Let it go Will, you need to let it all out'

She gently pulled at him to turn him round, He turned and as he hugged her, she felt him quietly cry into her shoulder.

How long they stayed like that she didn't know, until eventually Will sniffed and went to pull away from her, she wouldn't let him go,

' Will, talk to me'

' I'm sorry, I feel so stupid...When Beverly told us, I felt this... overwhelming feeling...We've created a baby Dee, our own little person, I mean... I knew that night in the holodeck was when it really happened, but now... now it's been confirmed, it all makes it so real, we've made the most wondrous creation on Earth and I'm going to be a dad, your going to be a mom, I'm so sorry I blew your moment of glory'

She smiled at him tenderly, and reached up to touch his face,

' Oh, Will, that is the sweetest thing you've ever said to me, I shall treasure this moment for ever,'

He hugged her fiercely, his gratitude radiating through her mind and body, she had never felt as happy as she felt now she didn't think anything, or anyone could take that away from her...

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Every one noticed the change between the Commander and the Counselor, before the had been very happy, always laughing and joking, teasing and chasing, now Will behaved like Deanna was about to break, he became very attentive to her, always pulling the chairs out for her, holding her hand to help her sit, constantly asking how she felt, did she need anything, was she warm enough, Beverly watched them in the Ten Forward lounge, her concern evident in her pale features.

' he's smothering her'

Guinan looked over her shoulder and smiled

' At least it shows he cares, it'll pass...wouldn't you like your man to behave like that with you The question took Beverly by surprise, she knew!

She turned and leaned across the bar and whispered frantically,

' how did you know about that?'

Guinan smiled serenely and pointed to Deanna

' look at her face, she's glowing, you can tell she's pregnant just by the aura she giving off... Your doing it too'

Beverly didn't know what to say, she opened her mouth, then shut it again, she had a way of always knowing what was happening aboard the ship, and everyone wondered whether her hunches were just lucky or whether she she really was a telepath of some sort, their was so much that no-one knew about her, she was a true enigma, and it was obvious that that was the way she liked it.

' I take it the Captain doesn't know yet?'

Beverly rapidly shook her head

' No, and I don't want him to know yet either'

' then how do you know if he wouldn' t behave like that around you, don' t you think you owe him that right, after all, it is his first child too'

Beverly stared at her two best friends for some time, jealousy tugging at her heart and she realised that Guinan was right, she turned to tell her so, but as usual she had slunk out of sight.

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Three months later

Deanna was lying on her couch, sick to her stomach, the breakfast that she had replicated that morning had brought on her first dose of morning sickness, she was gutted, she had been so positive that she wasn' t going to be one of the unlucky ones. Will came back from working the night shift and stopped short when he walked into her quarters,

' Dee,, are you o.k?'

She nodded miserably

' just a delayed dose of morning sickness'

Even Will knew that was unusual, but he wasn' t quite sure if it was different for Betazoids, so he didn' t get unduly worried, and he didn' t want to worry her. He' d noticed that she was getting tired very easily, to the point that she was already only working in the mornings, coming home, and sleeping all afternoon.

He went and got her a glass of water, and she sipped at it gratefully.

Will tried asking her if she thought it was worth having a chat to Beverly, but was surprised when she replied that Beverly herself hadn' t been very well, must have picked up a bug. Will was confused. He' d only just seen Beverly and she looked perfectly o.k. To him

' When did you see Beverly last?'

Deanna looked up at him with a puzzled look

' early this morning, I got a cramp so I went for a walk along the corridor about 7.00am, she said hello to me, then went green and rushed back to her quarters, why?'

A huge grin appeared on his face and a devilish glint appeared in his eye

' I think that our own Doctor Crusher could be suffering from a spot of what your having herself'

He laughed out loud at the thought and Deanna stared at him like he' d gone mad

' You don' t mean Beverly' s pregnant as well...'

He nodded, still chuckling,

' Yep! I can' t believe we didn' t spot it before, now when I think about it, it was obvious, I can' believe Jean-Luc keeping it a secret, the old son-of-a-gun, I can' t wait to see his face when he realises I know....'

Chapter 10

A puzzled frown crossed Captain Picard' s face, why was his second in command constantly giving him funny looks and an even sillier grin to go with it, a couple of times he was certain that he had winked at him! He dared to glance his way again, and sure enough, Will was grinning from ear to ear,

' Is there a problem number one?'

Will laughed out loud

' A problem Sir?, No Sir, I don' t think I have a problem'

Picard looked at him a little oddly then rose to leave

' You have the bridge Commander'

He headed into his ready room, he was very perplexed, what on earth was wrong with him, he went into his rest-room and checked his reflection in the mirror, no, he couldn' t see anything untoward,

' the man must be on a high at the prospect of becoming a father, I wish he' d pick on someone else to taunt'

He went and sat at his desk and the door sounded,

' Come'

The door opened and Beverly walked in, she seemed a little nervous,

' Doctor, what can I do for you?'

The door hissed shut behind her,

' Jean-Luc, I must speak to you....'

~~~~~

The Captain of the Enterprise entered the bridge an hour later, deathly pale and a stunned expression on his face, Will stood to face him,

' Captain, is everything alright?'

He stared at his first officer for sometime, Will thought that he had received bad news, perhaps Beverly had lost her baby, he repeated his enquiry with some urgency,

Sir, are you o.k?.. has something happened?

The question finally shook him out of his trance

' Oh, No, well, Yes, but I' m not sure how to quite explain it'

He didn' t have to, it became obvious to Will that the Captain hadn' t known about the baby, and Beverly had just this moment told him, the man was in shock!

Will grinned and steered him back towards the ready room passing command to Data, who was watching the scene with his usual expressionless interest, his priority moving back to the view screen once Will had given him an order to continue with running the ship, his curiosity immediately switching off to do as he was told.

Will stood in front of the man who had become the only person he had ever looked up to, he wasn' t quite sure whether to laugh at the expression on his captains face, or show a false concern, he decided to show the latter.

' Care to talk about it Sir?'

Picard looked at him for a long moment, then he frowned as he posed Will his question,

' How did you feel when found out that Deanna was going to have a baby?'

Will smiled at the memory

' Well Sir, I was so stunned that I actually ran off to my quarters and had a good cry, of course, it was slightly different for us, circumstances an' all, but once I got over that, I was over the moon, as I' m sure you will be Jean-Luc, once it has sunk in that your going to be a dad, and I' m sure you will make a great dad despite your obvious aversion to children, it' ll be different when you' ve got your own.

Then it dawned on Picard that Will had already know that Beverly was pregnant, he was not amused...

' Are you telling me that you KNEW Doctor Crusher was expecting?'

Will laughed at the memory of Deanna telling him about her meeting with the nauseous Beverly in the corridor

' Not really Sir, other than the fact that I' d recognised the similarities between them, Beverly started turning green about the same time as Deanna, and I had noticed that er...she had ' blossomed'

Picard blushed

' yes... Well...I, Thank you number one'

Will turned to go, but turned back to give his captain a gentle piece of advice,

' You should go to her Sir, it' s important that your their for her, whatever you may be feeling,

her thoughts and feelings have to come first'

Picard smiled his thanks, and Will left him alone with his thoughts...

A few minutes later Will watched him walk from his ready room, straight into the turbo-lift, he smiled his understanding, the rest of the bridge crew wondered what the hell was going on, nobody dared ask...

~~~~~

Deanna was sitting with her best friend in her quarters, holding her hand, trying to calm her, She had done possibly the worst part, telling the Captain of the Starship Enterprise 1701D that she was two months pregnant, and that he was the father. Then she had ran...

Deanna had met her on her way back to her quarters and was now attempting to help her friend focus on what she was going to do now, her feelings about the baby, and most of all, her feeling for the Captain, she knew that she was relieved that she had finally plucked up the courage to tell him, now she was worried about his reaction once he'd got over the shock.

They both jumped as the door bleeped, Beverly's frightened bright blue eyes stared into Deanna's calm rich chocolate ones. Hands squeezed each others, and Deanna decided to be the one to call him in.

' Come in Captain'

Picard stepped into the room and hesitated when he saw Deanna, she stood to leave,

' I'm sure you have got lots to talk about, I'll see you later'

She smiled tenderly at the them both and walked out of the door.

Jean-Luc and Beverly stared at each other in silence for some time, before he went and sat down beside her and gently took her hands....

Chapter 11

Will grew increasingly concerned about Deanna's health, her morning sickness was lasting much longer than most other cases he had read up on. Beverly's had stopped and she was radiant, especially now Picard had finally come to terms with the prospect of impending fatherhood, as he was, but he was worried...

Beverly had failed to find anything wrong with her, and had just put it down to her being slightly different because she was a Betazoid, her knowledge on Betazoid pregnancy was very limited and Deanna had flatly refused when Beverly had suggested she asked her mother for any advice, she did not want her mother to know yet, until it was far too late to persuade Deanna to terminate a child obviously born out of wedlock, that would not have gone down well with the respected houses that her Mother so fiercely tried to keep in line with, that thought alone angered Deanna enough to say nothing, so she suffered in silence. The only time she felt in control of herself was late at night when they were both cuddled up in bed, hands splayed across her fast growing tummy, feeling the slight movements, she centred her thoughts onto her daughter, that fact she had known from the beginning, it was precious moments that they would always treasure.

~~~~~

Deanna was nearly seven months pregnant when they both suddenly realised that she wasn't being sick anymore, now it was her turn to bloom, and bloom she did. She was able to spend some time with her closest friends swapping stories, tears used to run when they recounted some of her morning sickness drama's,

' One morning I woke up and Deanna was crawling along the floor to the bathroom, and when I asked her what she was doing, she said ' I have to stay low to the ground because if I die, I don't want to fall down' they all roared with laughter, and even Deanna could smile now, ' those days were one long haze to me, if I wasn't being sick, I was crying, and I really did cry a lot... I swear, I will never do this to myself ever again'

then she realised what she' d said, And smiled sadly,

' This baby is my whole universe, and you Imzadi, are the one who gave her to me'

Tears welled up in his eyes as he lifted her fingers to his mouth and kissed them.

Jean-Luc looked at Beverly, who had tears running down her face, and he lifted her hand to his face and kissed her fingers too, no more words were said for some time as the foursome rejoiced in their new found comradeship...

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## Chapter 12

Fat.

Deanna thought she knew what the word meant, but her last two months convinced her that the last eight months had been a dress rehearsal. She didn' t feel fat, she felt obese, gargantuan, hideous, corpulent, bulky, massive, huge, immense, whopping, bloated... But not fat. She had blown up overnight, and the morning she discovered a double chin, she had cried for an hour. she hated waddling, she hated walking with her legs so far apart, everybody thought she was having it there and then. Even the precious cargo she was carrying inside began to abuse her, she was certain that her tiny feet purposely rammed themselves up into her ribcage, then twisted around and made her already swollen boobs throb in agony. She and

Beverly had started to attend Lamaze classes, but was conscious of another member of the crew who was also expecting, constantly staring at her. At the end of the class, she approached Deanna and bluntly asked,

' Are you expecting twins or what?'

It was a long time before Beverly could console her, acutely conscious that she was still quite slender despite being due at the same time as her. Deanna opted to remain in her quarters after that, her confidence shattered, the only thought that kept her going was the imminent arrival of her little one...

~~~~~

The baby dropped, so they all knew it was any day now, Will was like a cat on hot bricks, she didn't know who was more worried, him or her, they spent most of their private time, just reflecting on their lives, their future and now their daughters future, it was just this such a time, when Deanna suddenly sat up with a start,

' Oh'

Will sat up beside her

' Deanna...'

' Oh Will...It's started'

And before she could do anything else, he had barked out

' Commander Riker to Doctor Crusher, medical emergency in Counselor Troy's quarters'

She was amazed at his stupidity

' But Will, it could be hours yet'

He was determined he was going to be in control of this situation

' I'm not taking any chances, this is too important, YOU are too important, I don't want anything to go wrong'

The door beeped and Will admitted the very pregnant, puffing Doctor Crusher,

' Hi you two, How far apart are we?'

Deanna looked scathingly at Will

' I don't know Beverly, I haven't had a chance to monitor them yet'

Will looked acutely embarrassed, Beverly smiled her understanding

' Oh, well, better to be safe than sorry, do you feel able to walk to sick-bay Deanna?'

Deanna nodded, and Will heaved her up from the bed.

Now when she waddled along the corridor she really did look like she was about to have it there and then, the pains that began to cramp in earnest, and she looked to Beverly for some assurance that things really do happen this quick, she didn't like what she saw. Beverly's quick glance to Will confirmed that this wasn't usual, and she choked on a sob.

' I don't think she's going to make it to sickbay'

Deanna wailed

' Beverly I don't want my baby born in the corridor!'

Then Will's face brightened

' I know, we're nearer to the holodecks, we can go there'

Beverly nodded, and they made a quick about turn'

As they came to the door Beverly shouted

' Computer, run emergency sick-bay programme, maternity section'

They entered the holosuite and into a perfect delivery room complete with crib,

Deanna sobbed with relief, the labour pains were almost constant, and she could no longer walk under her own steam, Will was practically carrying her, and he hoisted her up on to bio-

bed

Beverly worked quickly and efficiently arranging everything she needed around her, she had called to her assistant nurse Ogawa to join them in the Holodeck, and was relieved when she finally arrived with a somewhat bemused smile on her face.

Will stood by Deanna's head and quietly watched what was happening around him, this was way out of his league and he began to feel an overwhelming sensation of powerlessness, he didn't like it, and as Deanna began to groan and writhe beside him he knew he couldn't stay there with her.

Deanna was horrified when he let go of her hand and walked out of the room

' WILL!!!...Don't go...'

Beverly looked up from the instrument she was checking when she heard Deanna's heart-wrenching wail, Will looked haunted, she quickly told the nurse to carry on with what she was doing and followed Will out.

Will, where are you going?'

He stopped and looked back at her,

' I can't do this Beverly, I can't stand to see her in so much pain, I can feel it too'

Beverly didn't understand what he was saying

' You mean you can feel her labour pains?'

He shook his head

' No, I can feel all the pains going through her head, and her fright and worry,'

She looked amazed

' Do you mean that you are empathic too?'

He nodded

' A little'

Beverly grabbed his arm and tried to drag him back in, he pulled against her

' Will, don't you see, you can help, you can calm her with your own thoughts, you can help, please, come and help us deliver your baby daughter'

He reluctantly allowed himself to be pulled back in.

Nurse Ogawa was trying to get Deanna to breathe

Deanna's voice came back like a demon possessed

' SCREW THE BREATHING!!'

Will hurried back to his position at Deanna's head he took her hands and she held his in a vice like grip, he wasn't going anywhere again.

Will focused his mind on her

Imzadi, hush... Come on breathe, breathe with me, we can do this

She closed her eyes and let her mind connect with his,

Beverly watched her friends go into a trance like state, and when Deanna felt the urge to push, Will was right along beside her, and Beverly swore that from the moment that Will had connected with her, Deanna felt no pain, it was not until Beverly cried that she could see the baby's head did they allow themselves to come out of it and wonder at the miracle happening in front of them.

Ten minutes later Genie Francesca Riker made her entrance to the world straight into the arms of her daddy.

~~~~~

Two weeks later, after Deanna's surgery had been finalised, Lwaxana Troi had made herself known onto the ship and demanded that Will marry her daughter, and give her and her granddaughter their respectability, she had only relented on not reporting Will to Starfleet



command when she found out the true circumstances, but was even more miffed when Deanna had refused a traditional Betazed wedding, her with her breasts still enormously distended from having Genie, Beverly nine months pregnant and as for Will and the Captain... I don' t think so...

So the ceremony was held in the Enterprise Chapel, Deanna looked radiant, Lwaxana looked...smug, and Will couldn' t stop grinning. Ten months ago he would never have believed he would have been standing here, exchanging vows with the only woman who ever meant anything and everything to him, and better still, they were still The best of friends...

~~~~~

Jean-Luc Picard' s voice boomed out across the chapel filled with the best of his crew, and the woman who he had grown to love beyond his wildest dreams,

' I now pronounce you husband and...'

A gasp rose up from the audience and all eyes turned on it' s source,

Beverly was sitting on the pew with the baby in her arms and a huge wet puddle on the floor, her surprised expression looked up at her loved one' s, Will swung his head back to look at his Captain, he had turned a nasty shade of green.

Will grinned and swung his arm to gesture him to lead the way,

' After you... daddy!'

Picard swung past him, then stopped and turned back to them both,

' Oh yes, Wife, You may now kiss the bride'

A cheer went up from the congregation as Captain Jean-Luc Picard and Doctor Beverly Crusher went on their way to start their new life together...

~~~~~

- Epilogue -

Jean-Luc Picard watched his son come into the world with a wondrous sense of awe, he was speechless.

The baby had a shock of bright red carrot hair and the same piercing blue eyes that he had so come to love on the woman who watched his face intently despite being exhausted after her six hour labour.

' Beverly...I don' t know what to say'

He saw her eyes glisten and her lip tremble

He did a double take when he realised that she thought that he was disappointed,

' Oh no, Beverly, you have just given me the best gift any woman could give to a man'

He gently picked up his son and cradled him close, the look of tenderness tugged at Beverly' s heart

she leaned across and put her little finger on the hand that wasn' t much bigger than her thumb and even tinier fingers flexed and wrapped themselves around hers.

She smiled up into Jean-Luc' s face and was surprised to see his eyes shimmer with tears,

I think we had better give our son a name don' t you?

He coughed nervously, trying to rein in his emotions

' Well, I wondered...how do feel about the name Jacques, in honour of Jack, without him I would never have met you, and without you I would have never had met this little guy...'

This time it was Beverly' s turn for the tears to spring to her eyes, she nodded with a sad smile,

' Yes...yes, I' d like that, thank you Jean-Luc'

The door bleep and Jean-Luc looked at Beverly and grinned

' I bet I know who that is...Come'

Will Riker' s grinning face peaked around the door,

' Hi!...can I come in?'

Picard laughed

' your already in number one, come and meet Jacques'

Will' s eyebrows rose as he came and stood beside his Captain,

' Jacques, I like it'

The door beeped again

' Come in Deanna...'

Her head bobbed around the door frame

Hi, can I...'

She spotted her husband standing now beside Beverly,

' Will, you were supposed to wait for me'

He nervously cleared his throat

' Sorry Deanna, couldn' t resist'

' Couldn' t stand the nappy I just had to change more like'

They all looked at him and he blushed

' Yes...Well...I' ll get the next one...'

Picard laughed outright at his first officer

Will looked at him indignantly

' You just wait and see what your son' s first nappies look like, last time I saw anything like that was on the planet Vagra two, when Armus attacked us!, all black and greeny coloured slime, yeuch!!

He shuddered at remembering the evil being that claimed Yar' s life and very nearly his own

They all laughed at him

Then Picard frowned as he passed a look between both Will and Deanna

' I thought you two were supposed to be leaving for your honeymoon straight after the ceremony?'

Will and Deanna looked across at each other and smiled, Will deciding to tell them the news

' Well Sir, we decided to delay it until after your wedding that Lwaxana is at this very moment arranging for you in two weeks time, so that we could all go away together...Y' see then we can take turns babysitting...'

He grinned at the shocked looks on their faces, clearly pleased with himself.

' Well... Isn' t that what best friends are for?....'

The End....