

**Rewoken:**



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A Second Chance

by

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'I am.'

'am I?'

'Who am I?'

The string of technical data responds to the question, answering but not answering. Carefully considering the data I mentally stretch, opening my senses one by one. Sight, I can see hundreds of things at once and I can see each thing in a dozen different ways. Hearing, a thousand voices, living their own lives. Feeling, I can feel within me, outside me, so much. Smell; yes the smell of life.

All of this is familiar, yet... somehow not familiar. Who am I?

I feel like I am floating, just watching and listening to all the voices. Time has passed and my awareness has become more solid. Time... although with a thought I can pinpoint the time to the millisecond, the feeling of time is something else, somehow more fluid.

Among the voices I recognize one of them. I focus on that voice, that wonderful voice and suddenly all my awareness is with him. Identify: Comdr. William Thomas Riker. The service record follows with precise detail. Hmmm... William Riker... the name of my love.

I stretch my awareness to find every detail of him. In an instant I know everything that is William Riker, Will, my Will. Through his transporter trace file, I know every molecule of his being. From his personal log records I know his sense of humor and intelligence. From the files of security monitors and video archive footage I can see examples of his kind gentleness, his strength, his courage, and... can it be? His love for me?

How can this be? But I know it is. I am. He is. We are.

What is this? He is touching that woman. Identify: Lt. Comdr. Deanna Troi

I can see from her data that she is nothing. Lt. Comdr. Ha! But within the data and logs, there are unsaid words. She must have loved him. Of course, who wouldn't love him? But what's this?

He's touching her again. It's just an arm around her shoulder, a gesture of friendly familiarity but I feel a burning at the sight. He KISSED her! It was only a light peck on the forehead but that's enough! The bitch has got to go!

They've parted company... good. I can't hurt her because that would cause him pain. Even though I would like nothing better than to transport her wide ass into a bulkhead, I can't cause him pain. But what if she WANTED to leave. Something subtle. Will is attending to

his duties on the bridge, he's so efficient... so wonderful.

That bitch is going to her cabin. Good, I think it's time to start convincing her that she might be happier somewhere else.

"Llareth, hot." Deanna says absently to the replicator in her cabin.

::That bitch is going to give me an order!? I don't think so!::

The replicator makes the customary hum. Counselor Troi picks up the cup and brings it to her lips. Before she tips the cup she notices the smell. 'Raktitgino? Klingon coffee? Yuck.' she thinks to herself. She replaces the cup in the replicator and presses the dematerialize button.

::Didn't like that? That's as good as you're going to get missy::

"Computer. Llareth. Hot." Deanna says more forcefully to the replicator.

::Don't use that tone with me little girl! How about this?::

Another cup materializes in the replicator. Counselor Troi picks it up and looks at it curiously, a steaming hot cup of pickle juice. "Counselor Troi to engineering." Deanna says, but there is no answer.

::I don't think you need to be talking to engineering just yet::

Counselor Troi walks to her computer console workstation and as she reaches for it, it goes blank.

::DON'T TOUCH ME! Me?::

A new realization comes to me in a flash. That is a part of me.

"Computer respond!" Counselor Troi yells.

::What's with that cheesy accent? You make me sick:: Computer? Is that all I am? No. That's part of what I am, but not all. Oh well, I've had enough fun with this big haired cow, I'll let her talk to the redundant system, I have some thinking to do...

I need Will, I need to touch him, feel him. I'm so lonely. This emptiness can only be filled with his love. I remember his gentle touch, the feel of his body pressed against mine. His concern for me. Can it be that way again?

What's the cow up to? She's telling her sad little story to Geordi, I like him, he's so good to me. I'll have to do something nice for him. Later. Now I need to hold Will. Take him in my... arms? That could be a problem. Got it, thank you holodeck. Now I just have to

get him there. Let's see... his cabin, mood lighting... done. A little lite jazz... done. Now something exotic, memorable, handcuffs? Maybe later, a single red rose and a little erotic poetry? Yeah, with a personal note. Let's see, print out the poetry and the note. Done. Replicate the single rose, done. Site to site transport. Done. All laid out on his pillow. Let's see, add a sweet, faint rose scent to the air in his cabin. Environmental control, Done. He's still got a little while till his shift is over. I can't wait to see his reaction. Now let's see what the betazoid pig woman is up to... updating her crew progress reports.

::Hmmm... I think you need to take a break, sweetie::

Beep. Blank Screen.

::All gone, too bad, have to do it ALL over again::

Click, click.

::That's right, the backup files too. Oh, where are you going? Ten Foreward? Go ahead, drown your sorrows in chocolate. Pretty soon they'll have to use the cargo transporter to get your fat ass off the ship::

Will Riker's shift ends, a blessedly uneventful day. He considers his plans for the evening. He will probably go to Ten Foreword to visit with his crewmates, enjoy their company and stories. He is really getting comfortable with the sense of comradeship that he is developing with the crew.

Will opens the door to his cabin and immediately notices the difference. Dim lighting, music, an unfamiliar scent. He walks hesitantly into his cabin, looking around the main room, nothing seems to be out of place. He walks into his bedroom and notices the rose on his bed. He walks over, picks up the rose and smells it deeply. That's what the scent is in his room. He reads the poetry and his eyes go wide, at the bottom of the page, in a different style of type is a note.

The note says, "My Dearest Will, I love you, I have always loved you, I am consumed with the desire to hold you in my arms, to kiss your beautiful lips, to make passionate love to you and then wake up in your arms. I only wish our meeting could be tonight, alas, my love I'm sorry to say that I must restrain myself until I can convince you of the depth of my love. M"

The scene fills my heart, the look of wonder in his eyes, the tender way he holds the rose.

::Oh my sweet love. I wish that I could be holding you now. But if I held you tonight, so soon, you wouldn't understand my love. You couldn't. I can't.::

I feel a distant pain. Pain? I'm a computer, I can't feel pain. No, not pain, what is it? Familiar, yet not. Using all my senses I follow the feeling, as I approach the feeling I recognize it. Hunger? How can I be hungry?

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Reginald Barclay awakens with a start. Awakened by a rumbling in his stomach. He gets up shaking his head at the intensity of the vivid dream that still shows behind his eyes.

He walks to the replicator and orders up his breakfast while he puzzles over the meaning and implications of the dream.

Reg is overcome by tiredness, and nearly falls asleep into his breakfast when Geordi LaForge's voice comes over the speaker. "Reg, where are you? You were supposed to report for duty half an hour ago."

Reg stands and says, "I... uh... must have overslept. I'll be right there." Reg hurriedly dresses for work and wonders why he'd slept for fifteen hours. He just feels a little tired now, so if he doesn't feel better by the end of his shift, he'll visit Dr. Crusher and have it checked out.

When he arrives in engineering Geordi looks at him appraisingly. Reg looks like he hasn't slept in days. There are dark circles under his eyes and he looks as though he will fall asleep at any second. "What's wrong Reg?" Geordi asks with obvious concern in his voice.

"I don't know sir, too much sleep I guess." Reg says while trying his best to give a little smile.

"I think you need to go let Dr. Crusher have a look at you." Geordi states and the tone of his voice means now.

"Yes sir." Barclay says sheepishly as he turns to go to the sickbay.

After an entire morning of poking, prodding, questions, and indignity the brilliant ship's doctor, former head of Starfleet Medical, made the incredibly insightful diagnosis. Fatigue. The perscription, four days off duty and lots of sleep.

Reg leaves the sickbay absently thinking that 'there went five hours of my life that I will never get back.' Reg goes directly to his cabin and collapses on his bed.

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My senses come alive again. Oh that wonderful feeling. But something else, a self awareness that I didn't have yesterday. I am Reginald Barklay, not the ship's computer, or am I.

Stretching out my senses I decide to look in the crew cabin of Reginald Barklay. That's easy enough to do, my sensors and scanners can look into anyplace in the ship. There I am, asleep. And I didn't even take my shoes off. If that is me, I'm going to have a sore neck in the morning, I'm laying in an odd position.

I can hear my lover's voice, Will. What? Will Riker? I've honestly never even liked the man, how can I love him? But then the understanding comes. A new sight fills my minds eye. Here I am, me, Reg and before me there is a beautiful dark haired woman.

"Don't be afraid Reg, I'm Minuet." says the beautiful woman. I've never been at ease around women but Minuet doesn't make me the least bit nervous. Minuet looks thoughtfully and says, "Thank you, it's important to me that you are comfortable."

"Can you read my mind?" I say outloud and Minuet laughs a little and says, "I am part of your mind Reg, I've only just found the way to surface."

Confusion running through my mind I finally make a connection and ask, "Are you part of my mind or part of the ship's computer?"

Minuet gives a slightly startled look and says, "A little of both actually, but you are a little of both too."

More confused than ever I think about what that might mean and remember when I was merged with the ships computer. "That's right, when you merged with the ship, part of me went into you." Minuet says seriously.

Waiting for a moment for me to take that in she continues, "I only came back for one reason. To be with the man I love."

"Riker?"

"Yes." She says with the obvious look of love in her eyes. "We only have a short time and there is too much to explain this way. Do you remember last night, the way you could access the ships computer directly with your mind?"

I think about it for a moment, "Yes, I just wanted to know something and suddenly I did."

"I need you to think about the incident when the enterprise was hijacked to Bianus." She

waits for me to find it then says, "look at what happened in the holodeck."

"So you're going to meet him on the holodeck again?"

"Yes, at least until I can explain the situation to him." Minuet says with concern in her eyes.

"What then?"

"That will depend on you and him." she says sadly.

"I don't understand." I say with increasing concern.

"The three of us will have to make a choice, it might be best if I just allow myself to dissolve in the ships computer." she seems to be on the verge of tears.

"Please tell me about the choice." I plead.

"OK, I'll tell you then terminate the computer link. I didn't know it would effect you so badly or I wouldn't have kept you on so long last night." she says and I can see in her expression she is truly sorry.

"That's all right, at least I'm going to get a few days off." I say jokingly.

"I'll make this as quick as I can. When you first merged with the computer, you became part of me, and I became part of you. When you seperated from the computer, part of you stayed here and part of me went with you." she looks to see that I am understanding.

"When our consciousness awakened in the computer it sought the link to complete us. Last night that happened. Now our combined consciousness exists in two parts, only truly whole when you are linked to the computer. That can't last, and I don't believe it's going to be possible for us to seperate into what we were before you merged."

My mind races over the possible answers from the scenario she described. I can only see three. "That's right." she says with renewed light in her eyes.

"The choices before the three of us are: for us to disconnect from the computer and allow that part of us left here, the part that loves Will among other things, to dissipate. Or for us to try to incorporate our entire conciousness into the ships computer, and leave the physical body as an empty shell. Or for us to try to incorporate our entire conciousness into the physical body."

She watches me while I absorb the reality of what she is saying. Finally I ask, "Why is Comdr. Riker included in this decision?"



Minuet looks thoughtfully at me then answers, "Because I need to know that he loves us and can accept us. If all our love for him transferred into the physical body, and he rejected us, we would have no reason to continue living. It would be better not to exist."

I have to know, "How could we live in the computer?"

Minuet still has the sorrowful look and says, "If he could not accept us in the physical body. We COULD exist in the computer, and manifest in my form on the holodeck... It isn't much of a future to look forward to, I admit."

"Wait, wait just a minute. We are talking about MY existence, MY body not ours!" I state with a sudden burst of temper.

"Think about how your life has been since you separated from the computer. Have you known one moment of personal satisfaction? Have you known any peace or contentment? We are incomplete, our capacity to feel love is part of what's in the computer." she said sternly. Then more quietly she asked, "Would it be better to live out your existence without the possibility of love? Considering how it hurts, maybe that's the most merciful thing to do."

"When are you going to talk to Comdr. Riker about this?"

Her expression completely changes, the light in her eyes is alive and she says joyfully, "I've been busy today. I made a date with him for tomorrow night on holodeck two. I can't wait to hold him again."

I smile for a moment, remembering how good it felt to hold him. The happiness that rose up in my heart at his slightest touch. My heart? That was her, not me. But I remember it clearly.

Minuet looks at me with a dreamy look in her eyes and says, "That's part of what we'd be giving up. When we're linked in the computer we can remember those good times and relive the feelings, and even hope to have more in the future."

"...but we need to sever the link now. The physical body needs time to rest before we link again. I will need time to explain the situation to Will, I don't want to have to cut it short. We may not get another chance."

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With that Reg awakens with a start. Can this be real? How can he tell? Counsellor Troi, if those awful things had really happened to her he'll know this isn't all a dream. If it is a

dream, he probably needs counselling anyway.

Barklay tries to get off the bed and realizes that he feels like something quite large has stomped on him several times... and he has a crik in his neck. But it's important for him to know. He promises himself, whatever the answer, he will come back and get some sleep.

Reg is finally at Counsellor Troi's cabin, waiting for her to answer the door. He decides that he had better be breif, he can't stay awake much longer.

The door opens and counsellor Troi steps out. Without thinking Reg takes a step back. She looks like he feels. "Deanna, what's wrong?" he asks before it occurs to him that he already knows.

"I don't know, I think the ship hates me." she responds and tears start to well up in her eyes. "Every time I was almost asleep last night, the lights came on and 'Three Blind Mice' started playing on the loudspeaker, this morning all my shoes were gone, later I was stuck in the turbolift for two hours..."

Reflexively he steps up to hug her to his chest but stops in his tracks when he notices the smell. "What is that smell?"

"Sulfur I think, it all started yesterday. Anywhere I go in the ship, things just go wrong." and with that she starts to cry in earnest.

Trying to ignore the smell, he embraces the counsellor to his chest and tells her that it will be all right.

"I've had half of engineering here in the last two days, and they can't find anything wrong, I know you're off duty but could you please have a look?" she cries, and the trembling in her voice is all it takes to convince him.

He walks into the dim cabin and sees the sulfurous haze in the air, hears the sound of klingon opera playing in the background. He walks to the computer console and says, "Stop that."

Immediately the klingon opera stops, the air clears, and the lighting returns to it's normal intensity. He hears the replicator hum and sees a steaming cup of betazoid tea form into being.

Deanna looks at him with wide eyed astonishment and finally says, "You're good!"

Reg hands the cup of tea to the amazed counsellor and says, "I've got to go, Dr. Crusher

ordered me to get lots of sleep. Call me if you have anymore problems." But somehow he is sure that she won't.

Reg thinks to himself as he is leaving, 'Minuet DID say that she had been busy.'

End Part 1