

## Rain

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by [jamaharon](#)

### Summary

Riker laughed again and shook the water out of his hair like a wet dog. “Should’ve packed an umbrella.”

“And galoshes, and a poncho, and—” Troi dragged him to his feet and put his arm back around her shoulders. “—and a splint, for those of us who can’t keep their ankles unbroken.”

“I did say sorry. And I’m pretty sure it’s just a sprain.”

“Walk on your own, then,” said Troi, but she was grinning, and she squeezed his hand tight so he wouldn’t pull away.

“Sorry,” he said again, half-laughing.

“Don’t be sorry! Just stop—” Troi’s feet slid out from under her, the wet grass and mud nearly tossing her head over heels. Riker slammed to one knee and dragged her down with him, but this time, it was because of her lack of balance, not his. “—slipping,” Troi finished. “Ow.”

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“And galoshes, and a poncho, and—” Troi dragged him to his feet and put his arm back around her shoulders. “—and a *splint*, for those of us who can’t keep their ankles *unbroken*.”

“I did say sorry. And I’m pretty sure it’s just a sprain.”

“Walk on your own, then,” said Troi, but she was grinning, and she squeezed his hand tight so he wouldn’t pull away.

“Counselor Troi, who knew you could be so cruel?” But he leaned into her and let her support him as they walked. It wasn’t far to the camp they’d set up earlier, with waterproof sleeping pods and cozy blankets waiting for them. Only Troi suspected they’d run through a week’s supply of towels trying to dry off. The rain was a torrential downpour, and they’d already fallen three times into ever-deeper puddles. She could carry Riker’s weight just fine if she stayed focused on what came next: fresh clothes, warm blankets, soft pillows, hot tea, and—

—and was it her thoughts, or his, that suddenly veered toward a possible future where they shared that sleeping pod, their body heat turning it into a veritable furnace, her head resting on Will’s chest, his heartbeat slow and soothing in her ears — the sleepy kisses, the softness of his hair between her fingers, the taste of his skin — the lazy comfort of waking up in someone’s arms after a long, hard, bone-chilling day—

“I can walk on my own,” Riker said softly. He pulled away from her and tested his ankle out. It was still too weak to hold his weight, but he hobbled forward without her, using it just enough to prove it wasn’t broken, and Troi stood in the rain and watched him go. Drops of water caught on her eyelashes and trickled, cold and wet, down her cheeks.

“Will,” she called. There was an apology in her voice, but he ignored her. Maybe, over the roar of rainfall, he really couldn’t hear. *Will*, she said, softer now.

He looked over his shoulder and shot her a grin. *It’s fine*, he said. He pictured a blisterpack of painkillers and a soothing ice roll so clearly that Troi could see them too.

*I didn’t mean—* she started.

He made a good-natured face and waved the apology away. Water streamed down his face just like it streamed down hers. His emotions, whatever they might be, were locked up tight. There was nothing Troi could do but jog to catch up (it didn’t take long) and hook her arm in

his.

In camp, she dried his hair for him, his head ducked, his face hidden. In return, he dried hers, as gentle as could be. He didn't ruffle her hair like she'd ruffled his; he used the towel to squeeze the water from it, his grip soft enough that he never tugged at a single strand, never hurt her scalp. When he was done, he wrapped the edge of the towel, the only dry part, around his hand and cupped her cheek.

His eyes were soft. He was almost smiling.

He wiped the water away.

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