

## Eyes

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### Summary

The wedding was full of humans from Starfleet, but only one of them respected Betazoid traditions enough to show up naked.

Deanna was determined to learn his name.

Most human visitors to Betazed did not attend the weddings. Those who did typically wore clothes and awkwardly avoided eye contact with any of the naked locals. It was always amusing to Deanna; she liked to sample their embarrassment and arousal as she walked by. Human emotions ran hot — they practically screamed their feelings into the open air — so weddings with human guests were always delicious.

Only this time was different.

She felt his amusement before she saw him. And then she felt the shock and embarrassment from his friends next. She knew he was naked — whoever he was — and that was enough to intrigue her, to look for the only human from Starfleet's team to follow Betazoid custom. Even more intriguing: beneath his amusement and his confidence, beneath his arousal, there was a roiling knot of anxiety, a dark cloud that leached into every positive emotion as he strode into the wedding gardens.

Then she saw him and understood why. He was tall, handsome, clean-shaven, with impish eyes and a crooked smile that just grew larger when he saw her watching him. But there were also pale scars beneath his pecs, and between his legs there was a prosthetic, recognizable because the attachment point left a seam. He saw Deanna staring and shifted his stance, hands on hips, false cock on full display. It really was a handsome model, Deanna noticed with some affection for this stranger. Beautifully made, it matched his skin tone perfectly, with just a hint of natural blush at the head.

"Like what you see?" the stranger asked. "I can make it jump."

"I'd like to see that," Deanna said, and the stranger grinned and flexed his abs a little, and his cock rose on command. "Great form," Deanna said, like it was a sport.

"Thanks. I've been practicing."

Beneath that flirty tone, he wanted to crawl under a rock and die. His smile had become a little fixed.

"You could have worn clothes," Deanna said softly as she approached him. She took his hand to comfort him — this stranger — and he bent to kiss her knuckles, his lips warm.

"I didn't want to miss out on all the fun," he said, heart pounding.

"Sit," Deanna insisted.

She had to grab him by the elbow and lead him to the nearest chair. Only when he sat down and the table halfway hid him did he start to tremble, eyes darting to his crewmates. A flush stole over his cheeks and he lowered his eyes, jaw tight.

"They didn't know?" Deanna asked him.

He half-smiled, then rubbed his chest, just above his heart. As if it ached. "I wanted to surprise them," he said a bit breathlessly. "A Betazoid wedding seemed as good an opportunity as any."

“Plenty of panache, that’s for certain,” said Deanna, and the humor in her voice lit him up and washed some of the anxiety away. He liked to joke around, then — that was fine by her, if it put him at ease. “You know, I’m getting more than a hint of jealousy from them,” she said with a wry smile.

“That’s par for the course,” he said, puffing his chest out. To make her laugh, Deanna knew, not out of any real pride. “I mean, look at me. Who wouldn’t be jealous of this?”

When he flexed his biceps, Deanna choked out a laugh and hid her face. It was so childishly macho that she was half-embarrassed he’d done it in public. But the irony and the softness in his eyes made it better, and instead of embarrassed she felt... she felt...

Well, her face was hot beneath her hands, and she wasn’t sure what she was feeling. Her own emotions weren’t as clear as his.

“Will,” he said while she wasn’t looking. “Will Riker.”

She took his hand as her blush faded. “Deanna Troi. You’re stationed here?”

“For now,” he said with a lopsided smile. He was better than most humans at hiding his emotions, Deanna thought. Those puppy-dog eyes, the relaxed shoulders, the open cheer on his face ... you’d never know his legs were trembling. And you’d never know how fast his heart was beating, either, unless you could touch his mind and see it for yourself. She slid into the seat next to him, still holding onto his hand, and he flashed her a grateful look when his comrades weren’t staring.

“They’re just surprised,” Deanna told him in a reassuring murmur. “That’s all. Not all of them are sure what it means.”

“Oh,” he said. And that was all. He glanced back at his crewmates and squeezed Deanna’s hand.

“Mostly they’re embarrassed that they weren’t brave enough to do the same,” Deanna said, and it was the truth. She grinned at Will when he finally looked her way again. “Notice that none of *them* have captured the attention of a pretty girl.”

“That’s par for the course, too,” said Will easily enough.

But he was flattered. And he was comforted. And intrigued. And eager to spend more time with her, and desperate to be alone, or to dance where everyone could see them. And confident enough to show off for real now, without so much bluster or that painful desire to run and hide, to slip back into the closet.

And a little bit in love already.

Deanna could tell. Even if she couldn’t read his emotions, she’d know.

Just from looking in his eyes.

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