

the exchange of goods and services

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by [Lysippe](#)

Summary

One time Naomi taught Seven something, and one time Seven returned the favor.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Naomi Wildman, why are you carrying a miniature cake?”

It’s an imprecise question, one that fails to cover the full range of Seven’s queries on the topic, but she has learned that it is best to proceed one question at a time with Naomi, or the answers become jumbled and largely nonsensical.

“It’s a birthday cake,” Naomi says, as though it’s the most obvious thing in the world. It might be. Birthday cakes are outside the scope of human knowledge that the Borg saw fit to retain during assimilation. “Well, a birthday cupcake. I *wanted* to give you a whole cake, but Mom said that was too much.”

Seven frowns. “I had informed the captain that I do not wish to engage in a celebration of my birthday.”

“Oh.” Naomi looks slightly crestfallen, her eyes darting momentarily down to the pink-frosted confection in her hands. “Okay. Sorry, Seven. I didn’t know.”

It’s an odd feeling, the pang of guilt that hits her, and Seven wonders if this is another occasion where the choice to participate is as much for the benefit of others as it is for oneself.

“Sit,” she says, deciding that must be the case. “We will share.”

“I want to come with you.” It’s not a request, not really. Seven isn’t in calling range often anymore - the Rangers keep her busy, far from Earth - but she always makes a point of calling Naomi when she is.

“Absolutely not,” Seven says automatically. “Your mother would kill me.

Naomi looks so tired, and Seven wonders when that happened. “I’m not a child anymore, Seven. Mom doesn’t get to make my decisions for me.”

That isn’t quite true. Twenty-one is still so young. Too young, Seven thinks, for the kind of life that Naomi would lead as a Fenris Ranger.

Naomi seems to mistake Seven’s silence for another refusal, because she raises her chin defiantly in an eerily accurate impersonation of the look Seven herself used to give anyone who tried to tell her no. It makes her look even more like a child. “If you won’t take me, I’ll find someone else who will.”

Seven sighs, wondering if Naomi actually learned to be this stubborn and bullheaded from watching her. “Fine. I’ll show you the ropes. But you have to tell your mother *before* you leave. Not after.”

Naomi glares at her, and it’s a wholly foreign experience. “*Fine.*”

End Notes

Prompt: Cultural Exchanges

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