

## your loyalty is not to me but to the stars above

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## your loyalty is not to me but to the stars above

by [pilcrowtudinous](#)

### Summary

Kathryn overdoes it with the coffee drinking. Unfortunately, her coffee card keeps the score.

DoMAYstic prompt c. shopping points

### Notes

title is from 'one more cup of coffee for the road' (heh)

The cafe is small, with brick walls, pleasant lighting and a fragrance that Seven would call *appealing*. There's a woman behind the counter who is quick to welcome her with a wide smile and cheery wave. 'Welcome!'

Seven inclines her head in response. 'Hello.'

'So, do you want the lunch menu or are you just after a coffee?'

'Just a coffee, I think. I may require guidance on making the correct selection.'

'Well, there's no *correct* selection, only a choice that's the best for you. What do you usually order?'

'I have only had black coffee before and didn't enjoy it. I've been told that I might prefer something with other components.'

The barista makes a sympathetic face. 'I don't like black coffee much either, I feel you! But you still want to try a different kind of coffee drink? You don't want a tea or something instead? We have a nice range.'

'No.' Seven is firm. 'I enjoy the scent of coffee. And I know people who enjoy the beverage immensely. I'm lead to believe that I merely need to find a configuration that works for me.'

'Well, let's do it, then. How about a flat white with vanilla syrup? Sweet but not so much that you can't taste the coffee underneath?'

'That may work. Does the 'white' in the name imply that it contains milk?'

'Sure does. It'll cut through the bitterness of the espresso beautifully.'

'Do you have alternatives to dairy milk?'

The woman makes her sympathetic face again. 'Lactose intolerant? Me too. I can do oat milk instead.'

'I am not *lactose intolerant*. My nano—I do not process the proteins.'

'Right. My bad. So, uh, oat flat white with vanilla?'

'All right.'

'Would you like to sign up for a coffee card?'

'A what?'

'A coffee card. Well, a digital one.'

'I don't understand – what is the purpose of these “cards”?'

The barista smiles brightly. 'To get stamps!'

'So what is the purpose of the stamps?'

'Well, when you fill up your card with stamps, you get a free coffee or pastry!'

Seven looks closely at the woman, trying to figure out if she's pulling her leg. 'But this is the Federation. Nothing costs the customer anything to begin with.'

The woman does a good job of trying to hide the way she glances past Seven to see if there's anyone else waiting – presumably to give her an excuse to hurry her along – but no such luck. 'It's just... a gimmick. It's what coffee shops used to do back in the day. We like our little traditions – and so do people who like coffee made the old-fashioned way instead of replicated, we find.'

'A gimmick,' Seven echoes. 'I see.'

'If you don't want one, that's okay!'

'As I said, I am not a frequent consumer of coffee. But my partner has spoken highly of this establishment, so I thought I would come here and,' she pauses, eyes flicking upward as if searching for her choice of words. 'See what the fuss is all about.'

'Well, if your partner is a regular, perhaps we have their card in our system.'

Seven tugs at the hem of her sweater, slightly uncomfortable with the attention that she knows will come. But if getting these *points* will benefit her... 'The surname is Janeway.'

The barista's painted-on smile transforms into a genuine one. 'Admiral Janeway?'

Seven nods. 'Yes.'

'Oh I *love* her. She's one of my favourite customers. It's so nice when celebrities are actually good people, you know?'

'She isn't a celebrity, she's a Starfleet officer.'

The woman shrugs. 'Well, she's definitely famous!' She looks at Seven closely. 'I didn't know she was seeing anyone.'

Seven straightens up. 'Well, she is. But Kit, I mean, Ka– the *Admiral* is very private.'

'I guess so. She does like to talk about her dogs, though.'

Seven softens. 'Yes, she does.'

'I can definitely add your points to her account.'

'Thank you.'

The woman taps at the padd in front of her. 'Wow, she's one more order away from hitting five hundred points!'

Seven blinks. 'Five *hundred*.'

'Yep! Must be one of our most impressive customer accounts.'

'How many points per coffee?'

'Just one.'

'One.'

'Yes.'

'That doesn't seem accurate. Is that a balance that has carried over since before her... absence?'

'Nope! We actually opened a few weeks before *Voyager* returned. What a day, huh?'

Seven flaps her hand in a way she's seen Kathryn do when wanting to redirect the conversation. 'Yes yes. That was barely a year ago.'

'Yeah! We've been quite fortunate. I think that seeing the Admiral come in and out so regularly has definitely helped our popularity.'

'Based on the timeframes, she has been coming in at least twice most days.'

'Yeah, that'd be right.'

Seven takes a deep breath. 'I see. Please let me know when my coffee is ready.'

'Uh, sure.' The barista seems to sense that the conversation is over and moves to the machine. Seven takes a seat at a small table, just as the bell over the door jangles to herald a new arrival. 'Hi Gabby! Brisk out there today, isn't it?'

Seven swivels to narrow her eyes at Kathryn. 'Hello.'

She sees a series of emotions dart across Kathryn's face as she notices her. She's become very adept at identifying them over time. Surprise, happiness, guilt, and back to happiness with a slight edge of uncertainty. 'Seven! This is a surprise.'

'It's a surprise that I would be interested in trying the cafe where you spend so much of your time?'

'Well, I don't know about "so much", Sev.' Her steps towards Seven slow slightly.

'Twice a day. Three, sometimes, if my calculations are correct.'

'How do you—'

'I earned a "stamp" for your coffee card. She mentioned your exorbitant point quantities.' Seven gestures at the barista – Gabby – who is busying herself with cleaning the steam wand. 'You're drinking too much coffee.'

'No, I'm not. Not really. Promise.'

'At least two before you go to work in the morning, one when you get home? Two here, possibly some from the replicator during the day?'

'Well, sometimes it's deca—'

'Do not try to convince me it's decaffeinated. I know you too well for that to work.'

Kathryn lowers her voice and leans in closer to Seven. 'I drank more coffee when you first met me.'

'When I first met you you were dealing with the Borg in the Delta Quadrant. You're currently planetside and inundated with paperwork. The situations are not comparable. And during your physical, Doctor Pulaski advised you to cut back.'

'Seven,' Kathryn hisses. 'Stop. We're in public.'

'Do you have an issue with my speaking in public in a manner that suggests the nature of our relationship?'

Kathryn's face softens and she takes Seven's hand. 'No, my darling. I *do* have an issue with you broadcasting my medical history in public. Or, well, drawing attention to the monotony of my job.'

'I apologise. But you really must take better care of yourself, Kitty. If not for you, then for me?'

Kathryn is never, ever able to avoid melting when Seven is at her most earnest. 'I'll take that into consideration.'

'Um. Excuse me.' Seven and Kathryn both turn to look over at the counter and at Gabby behind it. She holds up a cup. 'Oat vanilla flat white?'

Kathryn looks at Seven approvingly. 'That's a good gateway coffee.'

'I assume that if I become as addicted as you that you'll intervene before I ever get to detrimental levels of consumption?'

'Of course. I can't drag you down with me.'

'Well, in other circumstances you can, but—'

'Seven.'

'Similar criteria apply to sexual innuendo as to medical matters?'

'Yeah. Luckily I think we can trust in Gabby's discretion.'

They both see the flush in Gabby's cheeks when they look her way.

'Um, definitely, um, Admiral, ma'am.'

Seven considers her critically as she moves to pick up her coffee. 'You have excellent hearing for an unenhanced human.'

'Uh. Thank you?'

Seven nods and takes a sip. 'This is *delicious*.' She turns to Kathryn with an accusatory glare. 'Why didn't you tell me coffee could be *good*?'

'Oh, I'm not going to begin to touch that,' Kathryn says, hands up. 'Anyway, Gabby, I'll get—'

'No,' Seven interrupts. 'Gabby cannot get you anything. You have had three coffees today. You can hit five hundred points tomorrow. And if you come down here a second time in a day, Gabby will only give you decaf or tea.'

Kathryn laughs. Seven does not. 'I'm serious, Kathryn.'

'Oh, I'm getting *Kathryn* ed now, am I?'

Seven turns her attention back to the barista. 'Will you comply?'

'Sorry about this, Gabby.'

'Maybe she has a point, Admiral Janeway?'

Kathryn blinks, incredulous. 'Excuse me?'

'I just... it's quite a lot of coffee.'

'She's just scarier, isn't she?'

'Um...'

'Oh, you have *no* idea.'

Seven tucks her hair behind her left ear, implant catching the ambient light. 'Indeed.'

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