

all the people we've been

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by [Lysippe](#)

Summary

Seven asks Raffi a question that throws her for a loop.

Notes

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

The question takes Raffi by surprise, the way a lot of Seven's questions do, full of things she's never had to think about. Her own humanity and her experience of it have always been largely accepted without question. It's easy to forget that Seven has had to take a much more circuitous route to most things in her life. That her path to self-discovery has been mostly self-guided, and frequently *misguided* when not.

"There wasn't anything to figure out, really," she says, absently stirring her glass of iced coffee with the metal straw she's been sipping from. She prefers it hot, but southern California may as well be located on the surface of the sun for how hot it is today, and she's not here to torture herself. "I don't remember ever learning about it, I just knew. You know?"

"Not really," Seven says drily.

"Oh. Right."

They don't get a lot of opportunities like this. Or a lot of opportunities at all. Chances to actually sit down and talk about *themselves*, or each other, or themselves in relation to each other - several of Seven's least favorite topics, Raffi is learning - tend to be few and far between.

"The Borg apparently didn't believe that particular piece of information about human sexuality was a useful thing to retain after assimilation," Seven continues, eyeing her appraisingly.

Waiting, Raffi knows, for her to react.

She doesn't, though. This isn't the first time Seven has issued this particular test, and Raffi hasn't failed it yet.

"Surely there were people on Voyager," Raffi says, half to herself. "I know a hundred and fifty people isn't a huge sample size, but there's no way there was *no one*."

"Oh, there were. I found that out later, when we got back. But I wasn't paying attention at the time." Seven takes a long sip from her own glass, grimacing as the steam hits her face. She's opted to suffer through the heat-on-heat. Apparently iced coffee is a particular revelation she cannot abide by, and she is utterly immovable on this stance. "In a lot of ways, I was a bit like a wind-up doll in those days. Someone told me I needed to do something to properly experience what it meant to be human, pointed me in the direction of how they thought I should do it, and I gave it a go."

The distaste is glaring.

"Sounds exhausting."

Seven frowns, and Raffi wonders where she misstepped. "They were doing their best. It's not like there was a manual for how to teach a fully grown adult to be a person again after spending most of their life as a Borg drone."

Raffi doesn't say anything, just meets Seven's gaze head-on, allowing the silence to stretch between them. She isn't going to be the one to argue with Seven about her own life.

"But yes," Seven says at last. "It was exhausting."

“It’s just strange to me,” Raffi says, choosing her words carefully. “You had no idea?”

“I knew it was an option. In the hypothetical, at least. I did research on the subject, but I never had any reason to think it applied to *me*.” Seven shrugs, her cheeks turning faintly pink. Normally, Raffi would blame the blazing summer sun, but Seven’s research into the various facets of humanity has always been a sensitive topic, something she finds more embarrassing than anything else. “Every time romance came up, it was presented in very specific terms.”

“Heteronormative terms.”

“Yeah.”

“So how’d you figure it out?”

Seven groans, taking another long sip of her coffee. She swishes it around in her mouth, holding it there in what Raffi has grown to recognize as a stalling tactic. “Don’t ask me that. It’s way too sordid.”

Raffi gestures around them. “We’re sitting outside the trailer where I’ve spent the last decade of my life languishing in disgrace. I love sordid. I *live* sordid.”

Seven laughs, low and throaty and genuine, as far as Raffi can tell. “Another time, maybe.”

“I’ll hold you to that,” Raffi promises.

Seven sighs dramatically, but Raffi doesn’t miss the beginnings of a smile tugging at the corners of her lips. “I know you will.”

End Notes

Prompt: Queerness

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