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"A Touch of Pudding."

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Harry and Seven sat across each other on top of a soft blanket in an autumn field of tall, swaying wildgrass, a picnic basket between them. Two plates riddled with bread crumbs lay together when Harry leaned over the basket to retrieve desert.

A sweet smile appeared on his face as he pulled out two sealed cups.

"Which one would you like?"

She paused a moment before choosing. "The brown one."

"Chocolate pudding it is then," he said handing her a teaspoon with the pudding.

Picking up the second cup, he stopped short of opening his to look at Seven's reaction to the pudding. Her usual, efficient, non-descript facial expression brightened to curiosity as she took in the aroma of her desert.

"Have I done something amusing?" Seven asked as she caught Harry's quiet chuckle.

"No," he said with a smile.

He didn't qualify his answer so Seven returned to her pudding. At first she simply dabbed at it, apparently observing the physical characteristics of the sweet confection. She looked enthralled at the growing peak of pudding she was creating as she dabbed deeper into the cup, pulling out with increasing care to avoid causing the mound to curl at the top.

"Are you going to try it?" Harry asked before scooping a spoonful into his mouth.

She seemed to only respond to his voice. "This fluid has a unique consistency."

"It's pudding," he clarified. "Wait until you feel the texture."

His comment prodded her curiosity and she put a spoonful in her mouth. The pudding did indeed have an interesting texture. It seemed to cover the surface of her mouth, blanketing her tongue, coating her inner cheeks.

"It has the tendency to disperse itself within my mouth," she said, the pudding gooing up her words.

Harry choked down his pudding trying to hold in his laughter.

"Now I have done something amusing," she noted clear mouthed.

"Well, generally you don't talk while you eat pudding. It's consistency has the property of...inhibiting your ability to speak."

"So I gathered from your response."

Harry gave a final high-hearted sigh before asking, "So, how did it taste?"

"It is acceptable. However, consuming excessive quantities is inefficient."

"You only had one spoonful."

"That 'one spoonful' contained 55 calories. Given my limited need for solid foods, I do not require as high a caloric intake as the rest of the crew."

"But the point is to enjoy it."

"Perhaps there is an alternative means to...enjoy it?"

"You know, you're right," he replied as he dumped a spoonful of his vanilla pudding on to his empty plate. He swirled it around with his spoon, and then paused to stare at Seven's cup.

"May I?" he asked.

Seven allowed him to take a scoop of her pudding, only to find him splatting the mound in the middle of his vanilla covered plate.

"What are you doing?"

"It's called 'playing with your food,'" Harry said with a boyish smile on his face.

"And this is fun?" Seven asked with disbelieving look.

"Why don't you try it and find out?"

Oblivious to the point, she complied, plopping a mound of chocolate onto her empty plate. As if poking a dead worm, she dabbed at the pudding, pushing the mound flat to something resembling a star shape.

Harry saw Seven's robotic motions and decided she needed something bigger

to work with. Reaching into the basket he took out a large platter that had previously been used to carry an array of Terran fruits. He pushed the basket to the corner of the blanket and placed the dish in the centre.

Taking both cups of pudding he dumped them both onto the plate. After scooping out the excess and licking his fingers of the sweet mess on his hands, he said, "Go for it."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Play with it--use your hands."

"But they will become sticky."

"We can worry about that after. The point is to not think. Just do."

"What should I 'do'?"

"Anything you want. We only have two colours, but we can still do something with it."

"Perhaps you should begin."

"If I did that you'd start analysing. No, *you* have to do it."

Seven became worried and uncertain, her hands open above the pudding, but not moving. "Seven," Harry said softly. "Trust me."

With that he put his hands over hers and motioned them over the pudding.

She seemed surprised when her palms touched the cool consistency, but her fear was quenched with Harry's touch.

At first the two of them just pushed the pudding around the platter, half of it covered in the vanilla, the other half in chocolate. Soon enough Seven was playing around on her own, intrigued by the shades of swirls she was developing all over the plate.

"They look like tiny galaxies," Harry said.

"Perhaps..." she uttered, carried away in her own creation.

Seven's pudding universe became increasingly crowded, a variety of swirls of different sizes, different shades of vanilla and chocolate filling her glass canvas. One final swirl and she lifted her hands away to gaze at her creation.

"It's beautiful," Harry commented.

"Thank you," she replied, feeling a sense of youthful pride.

"Now the fun part begins," he said as he took her pudding covered hands in his and started to taste. Opening her human hand, he put her palm to his lips and licked the centre. Her hand closed slightly at the tickling sensation, putting a dab of pudding on his nose. She smiled at the sight of a shiny brown spot on his nose. Using a clean finger, Harry wiped the pudding mark off his nose. Seven took the initiative and moved closer to lick the pudding off his finger.

Together, their arms intertwined, they cleaned each other's hands of the pudding, sharing a moment of sweet delight.

THE END.