

*Summary: Sequel to "Gestures." Janeway reveals more of herself to Seven during a tree-climbing lunch break planet side.*

## TREE-TISE ON A CAPTAIN

*by Lara Zielinsky*

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*Continued from "Gestures"*

Taking a deep breath, replete, Kathryn tucked the remainder of a second egg salad sandwich back into her lunch pouch. Then, careful to leave the land they way they'd found it -- couldn't have a Terran peach tree decide to spring up out here thousands of light years from Earth -- she collected up the pit from the juicy peach she'd consumed for dessert.

She rolled over Seven's thighs, where she reclined, and stretched out once more on her back, shading her eyes from the system's sun as she looked up into the strikingly Terran-like blue sky. At the horizon where the atmosphere was thickest, the color went almost white.

The river's current tripped over stones and created a hazy white noise that dulled her senses a little, and made her sleepy.

Seven's legs shifted. Kathryn nudged herself onto her elbows, tilting her head back to look up into the face she knew was looking down. "Sorry if I'm squashing you," she said, meeting cornflower blue orbs, and a slightly dimpled left cheek, signaling Seven's warm smile.

"Your weight is not sufficient to 'squash' me, Kathryn," Seven replied simply, her hands idly moving over the older woman's shoulders. "You may return to sleep."

Kathryn responded to the almost-massage and pushed herself up, dropping her head forward. "Oh that's wonderful," she said, her voice growing husky as her muscles gave up their knots to her partner's skilled fingers.

Seven applied her fingertips with greater intent on the captain's shoulders through the heavy material of the smaller woman's red-shouldered Starfleet uniform. "I could do more if you removed your jacket," she said quietly.

Lazily, Janeway nodded, and unzipped the tunic front, spreading her arms so Seven could slip the fabric off. When the young woman's hands strongly returned to her shoulders, she groaned in appreciation. After a few minutes, she realized she was beginning to curl up contentedly, having brought her knees up and resting her head and arms on them. "I think it's time to find that tree," she said, fighting her eyes that were trying to shut.

"Are you certain?" Seven asked. "The lesson could wait until another time."

"I've learned something, Annika," Kathryn said, turning into her young lover's arms and sinking into a lazy kiss as their bodies molded together. When she tore her mouth from Seven's, nibbling playfully at the full bottom lip, Janeway revealed her discovery. "We ought to take the times we can find and make the most of them."

Seven tilted her head thoughtfully then nodded, tucking Janeway under her chin as the auburn-haired woman sank in for another hug. "I find myself wishing for more time together as well," she admitted. "It is illogical, because I know how much we both have to do..."

"It's not illogical," Janeway explained. She pulled back and brushed her fingertips over the

## Tree-tise on a Captain by Lara Zielinsky

young blonde's smooth chin and angled cheeks. "Because captains are never illogical," she declared in a no-nonsense voice, and added with a smile: "And I feel the same way."

Seven's eyes brightened in a way that Janeway knew meant she was fairly bursting with happiness, though the former Borg was far from being fully aware of all her emotional capabilities. Loving the captain, with her load of idiosyncrasies, seemed to have given the blonde a wider understanding.

With expedience, Seven and Janeway stood, the captain brushing her uniform slacks clean and then turning to Seven. The Borg had contacted the ship by communicator and requested a beam out of their small pouch of trash.

"We should keep the food," Seven suggested.

"Good idea. Turn around, I'll brush off the grass bits," Janeway offered. The taller woman turned, watching the captain curiously from over her shoulder.

Presented with Seven's long lean back, Janeway started just above Seven's hips and brushed downward, then her strokes slowed, as she felt the woman's heat through the biosuit, and unconsciously she began caressing the young woman's rear and muscular legs. Both women indulged

the touch, enjoying the heightening sensuality filling the air around them like a warm blanket.

At long last, from behind, Janeway slipped her arms around Seven's waist, catching her hands across Seven's abdomen and pressing her face into the tapered spine, inhaling the indefinable, but clean scent of the younger woman. Seven's fingers stroked over Janeway's lower arms and they remained like that for a long undetermined time, absorbing the sun's heat along with their own.

"The tree," Janeway murmured finally. "Come on."

She pulled away from Seven's back and instead put out her hand, indicating with a nod that Seven should put her own in it. Now leading, Janeway walked toward the line of trees set off from the riverbank where they had indulged in lunch.

The river's burble faded as the wind's rustling of the trees' leaves grew closer. Seven cocked her head, listening to the wildlife noises within the small forest of trees.

Beside Seven, Kathryn studied the trees, gauging each for size and simplicity. The years seemed to drop away as she considered several, then discarded them for one reason or another. Finally she located a gnarled one, with a thick, sinewy trunk that spiraled upward; large branches shot out in all directions. Stepping away from Seven, she pressed her hands to the trunk, and gazed up into the foliage above, studying the leaf formation. "Let's just check for poisons first," she considered, stepping back. "Otherwise this is the one."

Seven reached up and snatched down a single leaf, turning it over and over in her left palm, sensors analyzing it in seconds. "It has a sticky secretion, but it does not match any criterion for being poisonous," she confirmed.

"Great!" Janeway stepped back and analyzed her approach for a brief moment. "Step back, Seven," she warned finally, and then rocked back on her heels, bouncing until she sprang for the low branch directly above their heads. With a smile Janeway seized the branch on either side and, hand over hand moved her body weight toward the central trunk. Finally she swung up and over the branch, straddling it, resting back against the trunk.

Kathryn gulped in a series of quick breaths, surprised at how much exertion her body had gone through. After a moment finding her balance, she looked down at Seven who studied her intently from below and said, a chuckle clear in her husky tones, "Do you think you can get up here?"

"Actually where you are at present would be in my way," Seven assessed. "I should try to climb up elsewhere."

Janeway agreed and turned, pointing out another branch spiraling out from the central trunk just on the other side of where she sat. It started a little higher than the captain's, but Seven's difference in height would account for that. "Why not use that one?" she suggested.

"All right." Seven moved over under the recommended branch.

"First, you'll need to build a little momentum," Janeway explained. "The jump's a good distance."

"I do not believe I will need to jump," Seven said consideringly. Then she reached up, stretching on her toes just touching the sides of the branch in question. "I believe I can pull myself up."

"Well, all right. I'll get down and spot you," Janeway said, starting to shift her weight in preparation for sliding off the branch and taking a controlled drop to the ground.

"No," Seven said, even as Janeway was starting to toss her leg over. The full firm voice gave Janeway pause. She watched in open-mouthed awe as Seven reached up, wrapping her large hands around the tree branch. No doubt it was the younger woman's enhanced upper body and arm strength that allowed her the capacity to perform the press maneuver where she levered her body half over the branch, feet still dangling, and then casually swung one leg over, like mounting a horse with a saddle.

"Did I do that correctly?" Seven asked, settling herself more comfortably, facing the central trunk and looking across (and slightly down) to Janeway on the other branch.

Kathryn was astonished. "You did that perfectly."

Seven dropped her gaze and resettled her position in the shadows of the tree. Kathryn could see the younger woman's pinkening cheeks. Janeway had to strain to hear Seven's soft words. "If I am successful, it is because of my teacher." Seven lifted her chin and met the captain's eyes with poise.

Kathryn felt pride and joy among other emotions fill her chest tightly. "You've been a wonderful pupil," she whispered back.

From her vantage, Janeway scanned out over the river basin, only able to see as far as the turn in the river that was rough with rocks as it carved a path through the planet's surface.

With a smile, she pointed out the mountains that curled away from the river; at first gentle sloping hills, then rough crags that sheared straight up out of the planet's mantle.

"This planet's geologic history was quite violent," noted Seven.

"I think it's beautiful," Kathryn sighed. "It reminds me of home," she mused.

"You have spoken of Indiana many times," Seven commented. "Your sister still lives there?"

"Yes, and Mother."

Seven watched Kathryn's expression grow distant, focusing on something light-years beyond reach. Sadness crept into the cobalt blue, shading them gray. She knew without a doubt that no matter what was here, Kathryn's heart lay at that place Seven had never seen. "Will you show me someday?" she asked, suddenly wanting to know if Kathryn saw them together at that time, when "home" was within reach.

The captain didn't answer, shaking off her reverie. Likely, Seven thought, she had not really heard. Her surmise was further strengthened when Kathryn pushed to her feet and, pointing upward, asked, "Ready to go further?" Seven nodded her assent, content just to spend time, experiencing anything and everything with the compact woman for whom she cared so much.

## Tree-tise on a Captain by Lara Zielinsky

Directing Seven behind her, Kathryn moved from her branch to one across from Seven's. Muscles rippling in her shoulders, she swung up and crouched in wait as the branch stopped shifting.

"Now you," she encouraged the Borg. The boughs shook more under the taller woman's more considerable mass. Using her Borg-enhanced strength she was, however, able to join the captain on the interior of the next higher branch.

The boughs parted directly before them, affording them a view toward the valley where *Voyager* had been set down.

Sunlight sent sparkles across the duratanium hull, winking across the surface. Dark figures swarmed over her, effecting the last of the repairs.

Kathryn realized she'd been staring when Seven's hand slipped wordlessly over her shoulder from behind.

Unexpectedly she felt tears form and slide down her cheeks. Yet she turned her face to Seven's. Her voice was open and honest when she asked, "Will I ever get her home?"

"Her home is the stars, Kathryn. But her crew will reach Earth." Seven reached out with her right palm and cradled the captain's cheek, her touch the only thing she could find to convince the older woman just how deeply she believed. Captain Kathryn Janeway, no doubt soon to be a legend in two quadrants, would find a way back.

A desire to hug Seven filled Kathryn's chest and she nudged herself up on the branch and leaned across the small space, bracing herself against the branch with splayed palms. Seven watched her, in that completely absorbing way that made Kathryn feel like she was being consumed alive -- and the feeling was so strong, she reached out for Seven's subconsciously offered hand.

Instead of the woman's hand however, she closed her fist over air. For a split second she was suspended as her boots slipped from the branch below and her upper arm bent around the branch where Seven sat. But she could feel that hold giving way, the bark scraping her forearm painfully. She opened her mouth to yell something, anything.

Then suddenly, Seven's hand grasped the material of Kathryn's gray undershirt, just behind Kathryn's head, keeping the older woman from plummeting to the ground below. With care, the captain eased her other arm around the trunk and, with Seven's one-arm assistance, found herself scrambling onto the same branch.

There were tears in her eyes from effort, and then mortification came. "God, that was close," she gasped. "Thank you." Janeway wrapped her arms around her own chest when she realized she was trembling, from delayed fear she guessed.

When she glanced across to Seven she saw the young woman looking down at the ground, and her hands worked over the tree bark in spasmodic caresses.

"What's wrong?" Kathryn reached out and brushed Seven's full lips with her fingertips, drawing the woman's eyes, which were an astonishingly washed slate gray, up to meet her gaze.

Grasping Kathryn's hand where it soothed over her skin, Seven struggled. Janeway could see the intense concentration mar the smooth line of the former Borg's forehead, to define her reaction. "I... do not know. My heart is racing, yet I have not exerted my systems. My throat is tight," she worked out haltingly around the constriction. "And I have an image of you, crumpled on the ground below." She swallowed and examined that reaction against her experience. "I believe it is fear," Seven concluded. "But it is more disabling than the fear I felt when the Doctor helped me recall the attack by Kovin."

Janeway and Seven leaned together, very carefully, for a shared fortifying hug. Seven

inhaled and, mingled with the scent of the surrounding nature, smelled the sharp tanged scent of Kathryn, a musk she had identified solely with the captain, and which made her stomach fidget and her loins run hot. She buried her face in the captain's auburn hair as she felt Janeway nuzzle into her own throat. Their arms around one another squeezed more firmly. "I believe I would like to get down from here," Seven suggested more calmly than she felt.

Separating, Janeway backed up against the tree trunk and, in tandem, they both slipped around the branch and dropped to the ground. Seven landed on her feet, however, Kathryn slipped on a patch of fallen leaves and unceremoniously fell on her buttocks.

As Seven helped her up with a strong grip of her right hand, Janeway looked up at the towering tree, recalling the hours during her childhood that she had enjoyed up up in many an old Indiana oak. "Maybe I am too big to be climbing trees," Kathryn said sadly. "I'm sorry, Seven."

"There is nothing to apologize for, Kathryn," Seven said, as they tucked their arms around one another and started to walk back toward the river.

"I wanted to share that with you. I wanted to see you discover the enjoyment I had as a child," Kathryn said wistfully.

"We share many things already which I enjoy," Seven replied factually. "Velocity, working in Da Vinci's studio, our sexual interaction..." She trailed off, having felt the sharply pleasant hardening of her nipples that always preceded such interactions with the captain. "I find I wish to share the last with you... now," she murmured, beginning to caress the captain's right hip with the intent to arouse, moving up and cradling the side of the woman's breast in her palm. "Would you agree?"

Kathryn found her answer in the touch of Seven's mouth slipping over her own, a heretofore unaccented hunger lacing the kiss. Seven's teeth grazed her jawline on the younger woman's way down the captain's throat.

Impatient hands worked from her hips, up under her shirt, to caress her. Kathryn's head fell back and her knees weakened, causing her to sag in Seven's steady grip.

"Oh God!" her voice closing on a short gasp as the blonde completely surrounded her, lowering them both to the ground. "Right here, right now?" It almost wasn't a question, but a sharply felt plea as Seven's touch rapidly drove away any coherent thought.

Her fingers slid, without conscious volition, into Seven's hair, finding the pins and setting the spun gold locks free around her hand. All the while she and Seven nipped at each other's lips with tongue and teeth; passion expelling the vestiges of fear for one another.

Surrounded and warmed by Seven and sun, Captain Kathryn Janeway lost her sense of time and place, succumbing to the experience of making love out of doors -- something she had never done. Instead she fell completely under the spell of the willowy woman rapidly raising her heart rate and making her throat constrict in delirious pleasure.

"Sev...en!" she gasped when the long slim fingers found what they sought beneath the waistband of Kathryn's unbuttoned uniform pants. "Oh, God... Seven."

She opened her eyes and met her lover's, watching the beloved face intently. The woman's left brow, shaded by the gray curvature of a remaining implant, lifted in question. "Kathryn?" The blonde's body went stone-still, eyes moving away from Kathryn's and fixing on some point above the captain's head. The young woman's hand stilled against the rounded curve of Janeway's lower belly.

"Yes, darling?" Janeway caught her breath with a large inhalation. She tried to caress Seven's cheek to draw the woman's eyes back down.

## Tree-tise on a Captain by Lara Zielinsky

"We are being observed," the Borg replied succinctly, in a low husky warning. "A predator is poised at the edge of the river."

Janeway's passion was instantly doused by icy cold fear. With the heat of Seven's body against her, she rolled onto her hands, to assess the situation.

"Do not move, Kathryn." Even as Seven's voice sounded low and hot against her ear, Janeway saw the slight movement about fifty paces away from their present position.

*Oh dear God*, she thought, absorbing the sight of a muscular predator crouched to attack and baring canines longer than Kathryn's hand. A low growl issued from jaws massive enough to take an arm clean through. The gray-black furred animal resembled a picture the captain had once seen in primary school, of an ancient cat called a Saber-tooth Tiger.

It sniffed the air and saliva began dripping from its maw in anticipation.

Keeping their mutual profile very low, Kathryn, with Seven crouched over her, tapped her comm badge. Sharply but softly, she contacted the ship, praying for expediency. "Janeway to *Voyager*. Emergency. Two to beam out."

With only the acknowledgment of sparkles before their eyes and the tingle that signaled transport, *Voyager* whisked them out of harm's way as they both saw the predator's muscles flex.

Warm spongy green earth was suddenly replaced by sterile bright, hard white. The change unsettled both Seven and Janeway enough that Kathryn collapsed to the transporter platform, momentarily crushed by Seven's greater mass.

"Captain?" Ensign Jenkins, manning the console, looking up in shock at the two officers.

Seven rolled off, her position shielding the captain from view. Collecting herself, Janeway sat up as her heart rate slowed. "That was close," she said to Seven.

The blonde studied Janeway critically. "I'm fine, Seven," Kathryn shrugged off the concern she could see. "Really." Seven nodded and Janeway came to her feet. In perfect tandem, maintaining her position between the captain and the transporter operator, Seven also rose.

Annoyed, Kathryn ducked around Seven, issued a "Thank you" to the ensign, then proceeded out into the corridor.

Seven's voice paused her on the way to the turbolift at the far end. "Where are we going, captain?"

Turning around and stepping backward into the turbolift, Janeway both commanded the computer and supplied the answer to Seven. "Bridge."

The young woman stepped quickly into the 'lift. As the doors closed, eyes forward, Seven casually tucked her hands behind her back. "Perhaps you should change first?"

Janeway looked down at herself ready to argue but then blushed hotly and ordered, "Computer, halt turbolift."

Catching her reflection in the side of the 'lift, she sighed. Sheepishly she straightened her short sleeve top, realizing that she had appeared like this -- utterly ravished -- on the transporter pad.

When she went to tuck it into her pants, she flushed hotly again. Her side buttons had been undone as well. The only thing keeping her decent being the fact that she'd been reasonably blessed with a slim waist and good hips.

It was a mistake, when she was finishing, however, to look at Seven.

The young Borg was unable to hide the fact that she found Janeway attractive. "Better?" she asked the intent looking young woman. Kathryn felt her own blood surge once more. *God*, she thought. *I want her again. Now.*

Seven was even more disheveled looking, simply because the immaculate young woman never wore her hair down, and right now it was loose and flowing against the top of her shoulders. Janeway felt her fingers begin to itch.

She pulled her body into Seven's, driving the taller woman against the side of the car and ravished her lips with eagerness. When she felt the weakness sag Seven against the wall, she pulled back, a smile of satisfaction shaping her lips. "Computer, resume."

In another moment, the turbolift opened to the bridge. With a grin over her shoulder, Janeway exited, instantly changing the grin to all-business when she met Ensign Harry Kim rising to attention from the command well.

Harry had started to his feet but was puzzled to see Janeway, clearly dirt-covered, in her undershirt. "Is there something wrong, Captain?"

Shaking her head, Janeway slung herself down into her command chair, draping her wrists over the armrests. "Not a thing, Ensign. Not a thing." She flipped open the righthand console and requested, "Status report."

Harry responded, "The last repair team just reported in, ma'am."

Keying her communication, Janeway called. "Bridge to Engineering."

"Torres here, Captain."

"All work complete, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, ma'am." "Good work, B'Elanna." Turning to Kim, Janeway ordered, "I want all personnel recalled, Mr. Kim. We're breaking atmosphere at 1700 hours as planned."

"Yes, ma'am."

Blood running hot, Janeway concluded the flurry of activity with anticipation. She sent a key to Seven to alert the Borg to check her messages, then sent the following note: "My quarters, 1900. K." Closing the console she allowed a smile.

*Life is good. Unexpected at times, but very, very good.*

**THE END**