

Janeway goes through the five stages of grief, er, coffee. Not beta'd.

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## Denial

When Janeway had found out that Neelix had recycled all her coffee beans she refused to believe it. Who would come on to a completely alien vessel and dispose of a vital part of another species' vital nutritional intake because they found something unpalatable. *Unpalatable?* This was rich coming from that orange fuzzball. *His* meals made the items she had been forced to eat on a survival course seem practically gourmet.

There had to be some kind of mistake. Surely. No one could expect her to get 150 people across the galaxy on replicated coffee or, god forbid, tea. That was plainly absurd.

Her new first officer had taken the news very well, which just made her worry that she'd chosen the wrong man for the job. Where the hell was his sense of proportion?

On the other hand, her new chief engineer seemed equally put out after she'd been looking forward to a nice raktajino after her shift. That small Talaxian rat bastard had managed to piss off the ship's captain and a Klingon in his first week. Even Tuvok had been impressed.

## Anger

Out of rations. Out of fucking rations and that little whiskered rodent in the Mess Hall refused to listen to her very specific description and essential features of coffee.

If Janeway heard the exclamation, "I know *just* how to improve on that, Captain," one more time, she was going to throttle him. Even someone of her infinite patience was tested by the multicoloured tribble-ish chef. Every day this week she had visited the Mess Hall before shift and every day the little weasel had greeted her with a "better than coffee" coffee substitute.

"Neelix, I just want coffee."

"And I want you to have the *very best* beverage I can make, Captain."

She hated that he was so eager to please her and completely outraged that she was actually starting to like the polychromatic dust bunny. It was beyond irritating that he went to so much trouble and only produced a toxic sludge and she couldn't even bring herself to phaser him. It'd be so much more satisfying to just blow the little walking rug out an airlock.

She'd seriously considered giving him to the Kazon after one particularly gelatinous effort, but Chakotay had just looked at her like he was disappointed when she thought about it.

It was really infuriating that not only could she not get a decent cup of joe, but that her first officer was a fucking mind reader. As if Tuvok and his eyebrow of doom wasn't bad enough.

## Bargaining

It seemed that things weren't improving on the beverage front. The kaleidoscopic soft toy in the Mess Hall had consistently presented her with a daily concoction that not only never tasted the same two days running, but also managed to be almost completely *unlike* coffee in every way. It didn't even have caffeine in it which just went against the laws of nature.

So Janeway had discovered that if she choked down a meal a day in the Mess Hall, she would have enough rations to manage enough (enough? Who was she kidding there was *never* enough) coffee for three of the four weeks of the ration roster.

During the final week, she would wheedle some rations out of Chakotay, who despite thinking the ongoing coffee dilemma on board was somehow amusing, nevertheless let her swipe some of his rations in the interests of the safety of the ship. Smart ass.

## **Depression**

It wasn't bad enough that that stupid bullet headed muppet Arturis had dangled, and then snatched, a quick way home in front of her. Oh no, the ensuing damage that Voyager had obtained during the slipstream attempt had further whittled down her allowable coffee rations.

And, of course, they'd ended up in the most boring section of space since...the previous boring section of space on this voyage of the damned. Until they'd recovered from the damage, she'd have to stay in her quarters and try not to think about a ristretto until full rations were available again. Chakotay didn't help. Every time he visited her he failed to bring any sort of beverage to lure her out of her quarters.

It made her sad that it never even occurred to him to bring her a lungo, despite his assertion of being her best friend. Heartless idiot.

## **Acceptance**

Janeway had come to terms with her exile into the Delta Quadrant. Once they'd reached the Alpha Quadrant.

She was pretty sure that the D in DQ really stood for 'decaffeinated', which explained the almost total lack of attempts to explore the region before Voyager got ship-napped.

After much willpower and fewer rations, she had reduced her coffee intake to a mere 12 cups per day by the time they'd reached the Borg hub. And if that wasn't taking it for the team, she didn't know what was.

What she found truly shocking after meeting the future version of herself, however, was that it had only taken 24 years for her to change over to tea. After ten years of nothing but darjeeling, it was no wonder her older self turned into a bitter old shrew with only a shaky handle on the temporal prime directive.

Now that she'd successfully got the crew and ship back from arabica-less hell, she could concentrate on more serious matters, like getting her next single origin espresso. Or two.

Home at last.