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Do Holograms Dream of Photonic Mutton?

“Some more spaghetti, *mia bella?*”

Lieutenant Lisa Evans opened her mouth to protest.

“Oh I really shouldn’t...”

But Fernando was already making the mound of gorgeous golden noodles rise in her bowl once more. He ladled on thick, rich, red sauce, and topped it off with meatballs almost too big to eat in one bite.

“Nonsense *Amore*, you are so thin, have-a some more, I insist.”

The dark-haired man sat in the chair beside her, his grey wool blazer, pale blue shirt and plum necktie setting off the vibrant blue of his eyes. Lisa knew almost nothing of ancient Earth fashion, but the computer had told her Fernando’s outfits matched a style called “Gucci” from the late twentieth century.

Fernando reached out a hand to Lt Evans’ face, brushing a strand of her long blonde hair back behind one ear and tracing the line of leopard-like spots down to her jaw. The spots ran from her temples down the sides of her face and neck, and down into the little black dress she was wearing.

Lisa had replicated this dress particularly for the way it showed off her cleavage. Lightly tanned skin, slightly larger than a decent handful, and framed by the same line of spots just inside the thin straps of the dress. Ordinarily, while on duty, or even off-duty, Lt Evans maintained conservative dress. She was not ashamed of her body, but far too self-conscious to show it off to other people.

With Fernando however, it was different. She'd been through half a dozen holo-programs, she'd even tried one that presented as female, and none of them had the personality and "real-ness" of Fernando. The Ferengi who'd sold it to her said he was designed by one of the Ensigns who worked with Barcalay himself. Lisa didn't know whether that was true, she only knew that Fernando made her feel like no real person ever had.

Even if he did seem obsessed with feeding her.

Not that that really mattered in the holodeck. The food here wasn't even real. If Lisa was being honest that was part of the appeal. She got to be wined and dined by this Italian human hologram, and indulge her taste buds with all the rich, carb-filled foods of that region of earth, consequence free. Once she finished this bowl of spaghetti she would change the scene to a bedroom, and tomorrow she'd be back in the arboretum spending her day with her plants. Plants that never talked back, or asked her about the symbiote she didn't have, or try to awkwardly flirt with her.

It was a perfect system.

The next morning, Lt Lisa Evans was getting dressed for her shift, and found the cups of her bra uncomfortably tight.

"Computer, is this garment the correct size?"

Garment, brassiere, black, sized for Evans, Lieutenant.

"Why is it so damn tight then?"

Working. Internal sensors show garment is undersized by two point seven-three centimeters.

“Two point seven... Computer, please replicate this garment in the correct size.”

A new bra materialized in the replicator bay, and Lisa dropped the old one in its place to be dematerialized. Fastening her uniform she left her quarters. She had a stop to make on her way to the arboretum.

A dark-skinned human woman waved a scanner over Lt Evans' body.

“I don't understand it, Doctor. My rations have stayed the same for weeks but I'm somehow gaining weight?”

“What about snacking off-hours, in your quarters?”

“Never. Well, even when I do it's still measured into my daily calories.”

“You know a lot of women would be thrilled to gain a few cm up front just by eating a little too much.”

“This isn't a joke, Sam. You know my body is sensitive to Earth food, especially carbs. That's why I watch my caloric intake so closely.”

“Well you can't just gain weight magically, Lisa...”

“The only other time I eat is once in awhile in the holodeck, but that doesn't count.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well it's just photons, right?”

“Oh Lis, you really are better with plants than machines, aren't you?”

“What?”

“The stuff you see in the holodeck is photonic, but the computer uses the replicator system to create consumable things.”

“You lost me.”

“Holodeck food is real. Or at least, *replicator* real.”

Lt Evans groaned loudly.

“Well at least we solved your mystery grams!”

“Yeah yeah, thanks Doctor.”

“Any time!”

Lieutenant Fred Viale reviewed the log of Lt Evans’ interactions with his holodeck program. He knew he shouldn’t, that he should just talk to her himself, but he knew how shy she was, and he was pretty damn shy himself.

Unfortunately the urge to spy on her, to do what he absolutely should not be doing, was too strong. How in the stars was his plan to seduce her by proxy going to work when she found out he was a creepy voyeur?

The console readout was in text. He could have had the computer show visual playback of Evans’ most recent date with “Fernando,” but he had to draw the line somewhere.

“More pasta? Maybe using so many Italian stereotype subroutines was a mistake.”

Fred was sure he’d find Lt Evans beautiful at any size, but he’d certainly not planned on his hologram making her fat. Maybe it hadn’t been such a good idea to take romantic advice from his socially awkward mentor.

Lisa Evans looked herself over in the mirror. The little black dress stopped mid-thigh, and she admired the way her spots ran down her long slender legs to the black pumps she wore. Her blonde hair was in a messy “up-do,” exposing the spots near her ears as well. She looked good. The only problem was, the dress was too small. Lisa was busting out of the bodice, breast flesh muffining out of the neckline of the sexy-simple garment.

The situation was untenable. Could she really afford to keep going on “dates” with a holodeck program who seemed hell-bent on stuffing her with carbs until she was outgrowing bras and uniform tops after every other date?

Lisa thought about the way Fernando had touched her the night before, the way he adored her, worshiped her, and she decided she didn’t care. She spent most of her day with plants, what did they care if she had abnormally large breasts for a Trill?

“Computer, replicate this dress again in the correct size.”

The console chirped and a new dress appeared.

Lt Viale caught the barest hint of his golden-haired crush in a stunning black dress as she darted down the corridor and into the holodeck. He had to break his own rule, just this once.

Back in his quarters, Fred loaded up the logs of the last Fernando date again, and tapped at the LCARS controls on his console to render a still image of the scene.

He saw his holographic doppelgänger brushing a strand of hair over Lt Evans’ ear, a maneuver he hoped to execute himself someday soon.

Fred had never been overly focused on Lt Evans’ looks, she wore the same uniform they all did, but often with a large apron because of the soil and plants she worked with. Even off duty she wore fairly loose and shapeless clothes, but it turned out

she was hiding a stellar body under her normal garb.

“Computer, replicate garment file Viale Seven Six.”

A pale grey blazer materialized in his replicator.

The large holodeck doors opened to reveal a table on a balcony, on a hillside overlooking a sea the humans called the Mediterranean. A tall, dark-haired man was pulling out a chair for Lisa.

“It’s so good to see you again, *Amore*. The tortellini is almost ready, have a seat and I’ll pour you some wine.”

Lisa sat, and her breasts bobbed in her new, slightly larger dress.

“Pass me the bread, would you my dear?”

Fred set a basket of warm, buttery garlic bread on the table.