I

Cerberus is an organization that stands with humanity among the stars. A group that believes not in the supremacy of mankind, but that it is in humanity’s best interest to hedge their bets among the intelligent, imposing, and immense population of non-human species that populate planets between mass effect relays.

Though the young species’ time in the inky black abyss is comparatively short, there is nothing—*nothing*—that Cerberus wouldn’t do if it meant giving humanity a leg up in the not at all metaphorical survival of the fittest.

Reviving Humanity’s greatest savior.

Creating the perfect woman.

At the end of the day, it didn’t take an Illusive Man’s resources to learn how one might have been able to better sway the other towards their cause.

“…you want me to *what*?”

“I think you heard me the first time.” The orange glow of her boss’s cigar burned in the coals of his striking blue eyes, “Your ears were designed for—”

“I’m well aware of what I was *designed* to be; *battle-ready*.” Miranda put her hands on her hips as she turned from the distant planetary display, “A biotic. Reflexes at peak human capability. How many times have you gone on about the fact that I am the genetically perfect human? And you want me to throw it away? And for—”

“For the good of your mission.” He cut her off with a smoky exhale, “And ultimately, for the good of humanity.”

“I highly doubt that indulging our very own Lazarus in this sort of thing is going to benefit humanity*.*” Miranda scoffed as she held her arms over her chest defensively, “I don’t understand why I’m being chosen for this. We have an entire crew under our employ—Yeoman Chambers is much more of a part of Commander Shepard’s day to day life than I am; perhaps *she* could—”

“And therein lies the problem.” The Illusive Man took another puff, “You were assigned to the *Normandy* for a reason. And in falling out of Shepard’s good graces, you have put that reason into jeopardy.”

“I don’t like what you’re implying.”

“I wouldn’t either.”

A moment of silence passed between them.

“I’m not doing this.”

“And is that your… *final* answer?”

The biotic brunette narrowed her eyes at the Illusive Man. He didn’t flinch. He never flinched. His icy blue eyes with valence artifacts simply looked past her. Towards the great planet in front of him. As though she weren’t really a person. As though she were a tool for his great cause.

Which, ultimately… she was.

“I thought so.”

A small smile and what passed for a chuckle left in the smoke as it trailed from his lips as Miranda silently threw up her hands and walked away from the briefing. Her heels clicking against the floor of the Illusive Man’s office as he took a celebratory inhalation from his cigar, her boss once again looking through her and towards the realization of yet another long-term goal.

“I thought so.”

—

*“It’s only Nine kilos.”*

Miranda had been repeating this to herself for the better part of a few weeks now as a way to sort of rationalize it to herself. The extra meals, the skipping out on patrol, the neglecting of her gym habits. The *Normandy* had all of these facilities literally designed to keep her in perfect shape and in perfect nutrition and in perfect health.

It seemed so strange for her to be actively neglecting those sorts of things for the first time in her life—let alone for an official assignment, straight from the Illusive Man himself.

*“Just nine measly kilos, Miranda. You could drop that weight in a few weeks’ time.”*

Sergeant Gardner’s meals weren’t exactly the most filling. Or the most appetizing. But Commander Shepard’s fairly recent liason to the Citadel to pick up better ingredients for the crew provided the perfect cover story for a widening waistline. Secluding herself in her office for these extra meals, delivered by various members of the crew rather than heading down to the cafeteria and burning precious calories, helped to sell the illusion that Miranda had decided was the best course of action for this little act of espionage.

*“The Perfect Woman going Soft… I’d almost believe it myself if I didn’t know any better.”*

Intentionally stuffing herself was something that didn’t come naturally to her. Her stomach cultures and intestinal routines were too much of a well-oiled machine. After eating just *one* of Sergeant Gardner’s meals she normally felt bloated and logy. But adding an extra portion on top of her regular was something that was going to take some time to get used to. As was the sensation of *heartburn*.

*“The Perfect Woman shouldn’t be able to get heartburn…”*

If this was her assignment—the way that she would ultimately serve Cerberus until the Reapers were dealt with—Miranda would follow through. Plenty of operatives had sacrificed far more than the firmness of their figures for their cause; and no one would say that Miranda Lawson wasn’t just as dedicated as the next person.

The framing of it all just had to make sense. The rationale, the motive, the pageantry—all necessary parts to the machine that was undoubtedly going to be one of her most challenging missions yet.

After all, on a ship full of biotics, aliens, assassins, and Humanity’s Savior, the *only* thing that Miranda had aboard a Cerberus ship was a connection to the organization funding the SR2 Normandy’s very existence. She was effectively the ship’s proxy to the Illusive Man.

Why else would any paramilitary operation keep an operative that was beginning to get a bit plump aboard?

“Oogh… my stomach hurts…”

Leaning back in her office chair, flecks from one of Gardener’s MREs dotting the corners of her lily-white cheeks as she clutched at her protruding stomach, Miranda Lawson somehow felt that this was going to wind up being far more troublesome than she bargained for…

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Over the coming weeks that the *Normandy’s* mission continued, it was hard for Commander Shepard to *not* hear the rumors about one of his operatives beginning to get soft.

Miranda had made sure of just as much. Coming and going out of her office just enough to arouse the rumors amongst the crew, specifically waiting to adjust the size of her fatigues so as to maximize the amount of fabric that could cling to her subtly softening physique, and making sure to stay out of Shepard’s way *just* enough so that the rumors would be enticing, but not immediately noticeable.

She wanted him to seek her out. For her to dance on the tip of his tongue.

Because certainly, if he could see her in person as often as he would have normally, there would have been no mystery to it. Those nine kilos were as plain as the nose on her face.

“What can I do for you… Commander Shepard?”

And in regards to things bulging against the skin-tight spandex that the Cerberus crew wore while on duty, Miranda’s extra nine kilos were only the second most obvious thing on display.

Sure, she was laying it on a little thick. But then, Shepard liked things a little thick… didn’t he?

“I, uh… just wanted to check in with you, Miranda. It’s been a while.”

“It most certainly has. I was beginning to think that you’d forgotten about me, now that we have so many powerful biotics on our side.”

Miranda turned her chair to face the commander, steepling her fingers and planting her elbows on the armrests of her office chair. She had been hiding her stomach when at all possible out of embarrassment to the changes that she had rapidly undergone, so showing the small pot that had been budding underneath her grey and white uniform was almost freeing in a strange sort of way. Here she could gauge Shepard’s reaction and see just how good this intel that the Illusive Man had really *was*…

Or wasn’t.

But judging by the fact that his eyes had widened and that his breath had quickened, to say nothing of the steadily pitching tent that was beginning to gather just below the desk, Miranda found herself rather pleasantly surprised.

Even after weeks of stuffing herself, she was rather surprised.

The great Commander Shepard—Vanguard, Savior of Humanity… chubby chaser.

Whoever could have guessed?

“I, uh… I could never forget about you, Miranda.” The usually stoic and unflappable Commander said after clearing his throat and the briefest of pauses, “You’re part of the team. Part of the, uh… resistance against the Reapers.”

“Of course. That’s why we’re all here, isn’t it?” Miranda unsteepled, allowing her fingers to brush ever so delicately against the softness of her stomach as it squished against the skin-tight bodysuit, “Of course, I wouldn’t mind getting a few more assignments.”

Here Miranda raised a curious black eyebrow, positioning her hand against the swell of her modest pot while Shepard’s eyes were locked on the now asymmetric hexagons on her bulging Cerberus uniform.

“I’ve been hearing rumors that I’m beginning to get a little soft.”

PARAGON: “Perhaps just a little… Miss Lawson…”

RENEGADE: “I’m definitely not soft, if you know what I mean…”

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If you can believe it or not, Miranda did not have a very active sex life.

That isn’t to say that she was a virgin by any means, but Miranda’s tumultuous life before and after joining up with Cerberus had kept her from having the ability to fully stretch her libido’s legs, so to speak.

“Haaaaaaahhhh…”

Sure, she had her dating profile. There were plenty of singles in the galaxy, and at least a few of them were good for a night between the sheets. Plenty of people would have cut off an arm for just one night with the Perfect Woman. How curious it was that Shepard only really seemed to pay her attention when she was decidedly less perfect—about twenty pounds of imperfection settling along her waist, thighs, and hips…

Twenty pounds of imperfection bulging between Shepard’s fingers as he gripped her closely, shifting and throbbing inside of her as Miranda’s legs hung off of the edge of the bed.

“You’re… far better than I would have thought you to be… being… being dead and all…”

She couldn’t help but talk. Normally, when she had sex, she was the one in charge. She was the one who was calling the shots. And in a way she still was here. The only reason that she was in the Captain’s chambers at all was because of the weight that she had intentionally put on. The only reason that Shepard had wanted her was because she had gone the extra mile and agreed to put on those pesky nine kilos…

But at the same time, Shepard was very much in control of the *physical* situation. Something that had genuinely taken Miranda by surprise.

“I see someone… haahh… someone likes a little softness…”

Shepard didn’t talk. He thrusted hard and held her close. His strong features furrowed and stony as sweat dripped down from his forehead. He was smiling, though—it was a far different sort of pleasure than the sort that he derived from the battlefield. Sex was clearly something that they had missed in Shepard’s key stats when Cerberus had sought to reviving him…

“Ohhh… too… too hard…” Miranda winced before Shepard’s minor course correction, “That’s… *hahhhhh…* that’s it… k-keep… keep going…”

Miranda released the man’s strong shoulders and leaned fully back on the bed, her arms resting in lazy haphazard as she allowed the control to slip from between her fingers. To feel Shepard vigorously pound in and out against her tight walls, her perfect blue eyes fluttering and crossing as the corners of her mouth began to turn stupidly into a smile.

“Ohhhhhh *Shepard…*”

She was… laying it on thick. Exaggerating. But not lying.

If these extra kilos meant getting a vigorous fucking like this every now and again, she might have been far more inclined to suck down those MREs a lot sooner… It would certainly make the duration of this assignment far more bearable if she had known that *this* would have been a regular part of the deal.

The Perfect Woman puddled on the commander’s bed, a twitching pile of sensation and satisfaction as Shepard slid out of her. Miranda huffed and puffed haggardly into the Captain’s Quarters, with the strong and sturdy shape of Shepard joining her not long after as they lay on top of the blanket. Normally, she wasn’t one for post-coital cuddling. But after an outing like that, it certainly felt like the most natural thing to do, given the situation…

“You didn’t strike me as much of a cuddler, Miranda.”

“Normally I’m not—but when it comes to *you*… well, I guess I really *am* going a little soft.”

Cringe-inducing dialogue, yes. But not so much so that it should have raised any eyebrows in Shepard. He might not have been the dumbest man in the galaxy, but he had always been a shoot and ask questions later sort of operative. A Vanguard through and through.

And boy, had he shot tonight…

—

Leaning back in her office chair, Miranda was almost contented with the fit of her newest bodysuit. One a little less constraining but not in a way that left her looking all that bigger than when she was squeezed into her old one. Sure, the hexagonal pattern stretched a bit more than she would have liked, but she wouldn’t have said that she looked *bad* in it. The least that she could do was to sort of lean into this whole bureaucratic angle that she had spun as the central cause for her weight gain.

Not that she couldn’t put any other undue inches on the suddenly daily visits of one Commander Shepard—something that had long gone the way of the dodo after other, more compatible crew members had started lining up in the Normandy’s chambers…

“Well you certainly didn’t have to get me anything while we were docked.” Miranda took the small box from the overly affectionate Vanguard, “You know me, Shepard. I go out and get what I want.”

“Well, for those things that you won’t pull yourself away from work for, I’m always happy to oblige you.” He said in a way that was almost charming, “Let me know if I can still expect you for dinner tonight.”

“Such a charmer.” Miranda curled an eyebrow, “I’ll be sure to let you know if you can expect me.”

“Please do.”

What passed for Shepard’s clumsy flirting was actually a nice little distraction from the work that she had to pretend to be doing. While there was always more work to be done, not going out on the field and helping to complete this illusion for her story’s sake was dreadfully boring. Having him pop by her office now and again to fawn over her like a puppy was actually quite nice. Everyone likes a good ego boost now and again…

“You can’t say that the man doesn’t have good taste.”

Miranda lifted the lid off of the box that Shepard had left with her, revealing an assortment of fine chocolates. A luxury that was quite rare on a paramilitary campaign against a deadly race of ancient beings. One that she certainly had to embellish too much on when she had name-dropped them to Shepard on one of their dates last week, and one that she certainly wouldn’t stop herself from enjoying after another stressful day pushing data pages around.

Lifting one piece between her forefinger and thumb Miranda raised it delicately to her mouth and popped it past her lips, allowing it to run sensually along her tongue.

“You can’t say that *I* don’t have good taste, rather.” Miranda said with a little chuckle as she readied another one, nestling back down to work and ready to graze idly from her premium package, “He might just make this shift bearable yet…”

It wasn’t like Miranda didn’t have enough reason to enjoy Shepard’s company beforehand. He was capable, in a chaotic sort of way. He commanded leadership, but not in an overbearing sort of way. He was strong, and fit, but not overly muscled or especially meat-headed…

Certainly his thickheadedness was made far more bearable by the fact that Miranda had learned that he was *killer* in the sack.

“And a newfound willingness to splurge on silly things like chocolates…”

The weeks of indulging on a whim that Miranda had undergone in order to put on those pounds that had so thoroughly convinced Shepard that she was “going soft” had made it so that she hardly thought of idly grazing through her workday on sweets. She had sort of been forced to take it on as a second nature—training herself to play the part she needed to in the same way that she would have practiced her biotic abilities.

Speaking of…

The small chocolate treat levitated up from the box, coated in a whitish blue glow, and floated expertly towards Miranda’s mouth. A satisfied look on her face as she chewed and swallowed, making a mental note to try something like that the next time Shepard was around.

Commander John Shepard—Humanity’s savior—and he had a weakness for former soldiers gaining a nice spread of office ass?

They certainly didn’t make men quite like him anymore, did they? If they did, then perhaps she wouldn’t have been roped into this silly little espionage mission that had effectively taken her *off* of the battlefield.

Still—another bonbon lifts up with a wiggle of her finger and lowers itself in her awaiting mouth—it wasn’t like there weren’t things to enjoy on this little assignment of hers. And ultimately, ensuring Shepard’s loyalty to Cerberus could only further humanity’s presence in the stars, right? Who was to say that she couldn’t enjoy the benefits of playing her part in Shepard’s little fantasy?

“A girl could get used to this…” Miranda lifted another bonbon and opened her mouth wide…