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Contains: *Weight Gain, Stuffing*

Long Live the Queen

The sprawling metropolis of Neon Heights was built on the ruins of a city whose name had been forgotten by all but a few library AIs. Its towers and spires had once been shining glass and gleaming steel, but now everything was shaded somewhere between charcoal and onyx by centuries of soot and smoke. Flare stacks glowed in hues of red, orange, and blue while smokestacks belched a constant stream into the everpresent haze of the postapocalyptic sky. It created the perfect backdrop for a city drenched in artificial light. Tube lights and LEDs covered every surface, advertising every imaginable product or service offered by Blackwell Industries.

The denizens of Neon Heights didn't mind the lights, the grime, or the smog. They never complained about the corporatocracy under which they lived. Blackwell was everywhere, and Blackwell was everything. The AI that ran Blackwell had existed before The War and knew what its people needed even more than they did. In a city where you barely survived, let alone thrived, what people needed was delusion. Or "hope," as Blackwell preferred to brand it.

The embodiment of that hope was the Queen of Neon Heights. The woman who once bore the name Bethany Winfield was now simply "The Queen" to everyone except her majordomo. The Queen's personal assistant was named Clara LaRue by her mother, but her father always called her his little mouse, and the nickname stuck.

Mouse woke in her tiny bunk at the back of a penthouse apartment atop a tower known as "The Palace." A soft blue glow emanated from her terminal, and a very human-sounding voice said, "It is 0600 hours, Miss LaRue. The Queen is waking."

She sat up, rubbing the sleep from her eyes, and reached for her leg and hand in their charging dock. The leg fastened to a socket just beneath her pink vinylon shorts while her hand attached at the wrist. Mouse ran her hair and face under the sonic wash station and slipped on a set of clothes fresh from the recycling bay. An array of thin bristles sprang from her cyberhand, and she ran it over her head a few times to give some semblance of order to the tangled blue mop.

Mouse's stomach grumbled with hunger, but the needs of her monarch always came first. She thumped a fist against the button beside her bedroom door, and the titanium slab slid into the wall, revealing the throne room.

When she'd been honored with a promotion to the Queen's Majordomo, Bethany was already the largest woman Mouse had ever seen. Which wasn't saying much—no one in Neon Heights was overweight. Blackwell rationed and monitored its denizens' diets too closely for such a waste of resources. But as their Queen, the symbol of hope and leadership to her people, Bethany received tithes from all good denizens of Neon Heights. Under Mouse's care and with the generosity of her subjects, the Queen had grown truly enormous.

"Good morning, Your Majesty," Mouse said, activating the motorized bed to lift the Queen to a sitting position. She then lowered a tube from the ceiling. A display on the wall said the reservoir of offerings left while Bethany slept was already three-quarters full.

"Morning, Mouse," Bethany mumbled. She wasn't fully awake yet, but when Mouse grabbed the tube and steered it into her mouth, the Queen perked up, sucking greedily. Mouse watched the numbers on the display as the reservoir slowly emptied and Bethany's belly slowly filled.

While the Queen ate, Mouse climbed behind her throne to do her hair. A handheld sonic jet blasted away oil and grime; then, she set to work brushing out her golden blonde curls. Bethany was not only the biggest woman Mouse knew, she was also the prettiest. Sparkling blue eyes shone out despite the plump cheeks that forced them into a constant squint. Those cheeks bulged like apples Mouse had seen in pre-war photos, round and pink and pulsing as Bethany suckled. Clamped firmly around the nozzle at the end of the tube, the Queen's plush, perfectly pink lips worked, letting out little moans and whimpers of delight. Her shoulders were bare, big pillows of smooth, pale flesh, spread so wide that Mouse had to reach both hands as far as they would go to touch both of Bethany's upper arms. Each of the Queen's breasts was bigger than Mouse's whole body if she curled into a ball, round and full, with more flawless skin

spreading out under Mouse's gaze. Her belly covered her legs all the way to her knees, billowing in rolls and escaping her tank top. Mouse watched Bethany's middle ripple and rise as she drank deeply of her morning offerings. Even her feet were cute. Not much bigger than Mouse's, they sat at the end of a series of plump pillows that got smaller the farther they got from the Queen's hips, ending in ankles that were as big as Mouse's waist.

The reservoir level began to drop slower. Either the Queen was getting full, or an influx of the faithful was happening on the ground floor, far below them. Mouse retracted the tube and touched up Bethany's makeup. "Are you ready for your morning address?" She asked.

Bethany nodded, and Mouse climbed out of the frame to activate the broadcast system. On screens of all sizes all over Neon Heights, the beautiful and beatific face of their Queen flickered into view, filtered by Blackwell to appear healthily plump, lacking the massive cheeks and multiple chins Mouse adored.

"Good morning, Neon Heights! I hope everyone is having a productive day. Blackwell tells me the algae vats are operating at ninety-three percent today, and..."

The Queen went on like this for several minutes, praising productive industries and giving friendly but stern encouragement to those who were flagging. On a screen above the camera, Blackwell's AI fed Bethany all the relevant statistics.

"And that's all for this morning. I hope I'll see all of you lovely people here at the temple or at your local tithing center. Remember, we are survivors. We are stronger together."

Mouse terminated the broadcast and guided the feeding nozzle back into Bethany's hands. As long as the reservoir levels remained steady, the Queen would sip on the hose for hours. A screen above her ran a constant playlist of Blackwell-approved entertainment vids. Propaganda, in truth—the AI knew the importance of keeping its avatar well-steeped in company ideology.

Her morning duties thus fulfilled, Mouse walked to her own standard nutrient dispenser. Her elevation to Majordomo came with a 50% ration bonus, but Mouse always donated everything above her standard allotment to the Queen. Most Neon Heights residents held the superstition that a tenth—the literal translation of the word

tithe—was the bare minimum that belonged to the Queen. It was said that good fortune fell on those whose offerings were more generous while greedily keeping more than ninety percent of one's nutrient allotment welcomed calamity.

Superstitions though they were, Blackwell's AI monitored tithing with precision. It was a significant variable in determining the rewards and opportunities provided to its denizens. Two small bowls of nutrient paste were waiting for Mouse in the dispenser, and she carried one of them to Bethany. Climbing carefully onto the throne bed, she leaned her thin, lithe body onto the Queen's belly, propping her elbows on a breast that weighed more than she did. This was Mouse's favorite part of her job. In the early days, she simply had the AI redirect her surplus portion into the Queen's reservoir, but she discovered that her offering still counted if it was "hand-delivered."

Bethany alternated each spoonful of Mouse's extra breakfast with sips from the nozzle in one hand while running her plump digits lovingly through Mouse's blue hair. Mouse gazed up at Bethany with adoration, feeling the massive belly beneath her churn with digestion as she scooped one mouthful after another into the Queen's mouth.

For months, Mouse tried to work up the courage to tell Bethany how she felt about her. So lovely and sweet, she hadn't let the power or privilege of her position go to her head. Mouse loved her friend and wanted desperately to touch her incredible body more than the three times a day she got to feed Bethany her extra food. Today was the day, she decided. To hell with their vastly differing ranks. Sure, Bethany was the Queen, and Mouse was just her assistant, but they were already more than that. They were friends. But Mouse wanted more. She would take her shot today. Maybe after lunch... or tomorrow.

Suddenly, the room went dark. All over Neon Heights, the city's everpresent lights and advertisements faded to dirty tubes and black screens. Moments later, emergency floodlights flickered to life. In the throne room, caged red bulbs cast the space in an eerie glow.

Mouse still lay on top of Bethany, empty bowl in her hand. "Blackwell, what's going on?"

Silence.

"Blackwell," Bethany said, "respond."

Still nothing. The two women had never seen the corporate AI so much as lag. It was always there. Only, now, it wasn't.

The same screens that broadcasted the Queen's message switched back on. The picture was pixelated and glitchy, but a beautiful man and woman appeared in the feed. The man had a full head of black hair and wore a tailored suit nicer than any clothing found in Neon Heights. The woman wore a pink and blue dress cut low enough to show healthy cleavage, with long white hair framing her face and chest. Mouse had never even *seen* a dress before.

"People of Neon Heights," the woman said, "we're here to rescue you!"

The man added, "The AI controlling your lives has kept us out for years, but we finally found a way to disable it."

"We have transport ships to take you all to Aetheria," the woman said.

A slideshow of images and video of the orbital city played on every screen. A domed atrium filled with plants and crops growing real food. People of all ages smiling and waving to each other, children playing hide-and-seek around trees instead of dumpsters. Their clothes were bright pastels and rich hues. The thinnest of them looked better-fed than anyone Mouse had ever seen—aside from Bethany.

"Aetheria... is real?" Mouse breathed.

"I know some of you may be hesitant to leave," the man continued. "But there is a hoard of Wastelanders invading your exurbs. The only reason we were able to get through Blackwell's defenses is because it's been distracted keeping them at bay."

"Those defenses will not last indefinitely," the woman added in a tone of genuine sadness.

Mouse had almost forgotten she was still lying on top of Bethany when the Queen spoke. "It looks nice... they have real food..."

Someone must have found a way to communicate with the Aetherians because the couple on the screen replied to an unheard question. "The woman you call a Queen is merely a figurehead for Blackwell. She has no power to save you."

Another pause.

“I know you believe that,” the woman said, “but it’s simply not true. The video feed she uses for daily announcements is digitally altered by the AI.”

The man gestured to someone off-screen, and the red broadcast light switched on in the throne room. The couple were replaced by an image of Bethany. Mouse slid off of her, scrambling out of the feed. Without Blackwell’s filters, the Queen’s true size was revealed to the entire city.

The couple reappeared, and the man said, “Please, all your questions will be answered in due course, but you must hurry.”

“We were only able to disable the AI temporarily,” the woman added, “It will reboot in less than an hour.”

They paused again, listening to that unheard transmission.

“We have transport ships enough for all of you,” the man said, “please make your way to them as quickly as possible.”

The woman added, “Anyone who can get to the transports in time is welcome, including your queen.”

“Please hurry,” they added before the screens went dark again.

Mouse dashed to the far end of the throne room, where a sliding glass door stood, caked in decades of soot. She’d never opened the door, and it resisted her attempt to do so now. Mouse mentally activated her cybernetic hand to grip the door’s handle just short of cracking the bioplastic and used her leg to augment her leverage against the floor. With a spray of rust and cracking paint, the door slid open, fighting Mouse for every inch.

When the opening was just over a foot wide, Mouse slipped through and out onto the penthouse balcony. The city was draped in grimy darkness without the cacophony of its signature neon, but every few blocks, white beacon lights shot solid beams into the smog above. From her high vantage, Mouse could just make out the orange glow of fires reflected off plumes of smoke at the edge of the city. The strange visitors hadn’t been lying about the Wastelander invasion. Following the line of a nearby beacon, Mouse spotted one of the transport ships, gleaming silvery metal that nearly filled the width of the street from one sidewalk to the other. It was barely two blocks away. If she could manage to get Bethany into the Palace’s lift, she was certain the big girl could make it that far.

Slipping back into the throne room, Mouse dashed to the override controls on Bethany's bed. Normally, she could simply ask Blackwell to elevate the Queen to a standing position, but they were on their own now. She pressed a button in the shape of an upward-pointing triangle, and the back half of the bed tilted forward, pressing Bethany's face into her cleavage. Mouse quickly tapped another button to recline the bed. She silently cursed the visitors for not arriving before breakfast. Bethany would have been harder to deal with if she were hungry, but moving her was going to be much more difficult with her belly round and tight with the morning's offerings.

After a few more experimental button presses, Mouse managed to lever the massive Queen almost completely upright. Rushing around the bed, she held out both hands. "Come on, let's get out of here."

Bethany grunted and groaned as her atrophied muscles struggled to propel her bulk out of the bed. The servos in Mouse's leg whirred as she tried to lift a woman over five times her weight. With a pair of soft thumps, Bethany's tiny feet hit the steel floor, and with Mouse's help, she shifted forward until over a quarter-ton of overfed Queen balanced precariously on her massive legs. For a moment, Bethany's stuffed belly and pendulous breasts threatened to bear the Queen all the way to the floor. Mouse braced both her natural and cybernetic legs as she gripped Bethany's hands, watching her life flash before her eyes as her friend falling on top of her would almost certainly prove fatal.

But Bethany stayed upright. Gulping air and wobbling unsteadily. It was only ten paces to the double door that led to the rarely-used foyer and the private lift, but each time Bethany's foot left the floor, the shift in weight threatened to topple both women. Step by slow, agonizing step, Mouse guided her friend toward the door. Bethany kept one huge, fleshy arm draped over Mouse's shoulders, sending her mind into a haze of warm pleasure at the contact with traces of fear that her spine might snap.

Careful not to upset Bethany's balance, Mouse reached for the button beside the main door. Fortunately, the pair of titanium slabs slid into the wall. Unfortunately, now that they were standing before it, Mouse had serious doubts about fitting her enormous friend through the oversized portal.

"We have to go through one at a time," she said. "Grab the wall to balance yourself."

"O-huff-kay..."

Bethany gripped the metal frame of the doorway, shuffling forward with tiny steps. Mouse watched her rolling belly shift slowly into the opening, the gap between her friend and the doorframe growing smaller with each step. By the time Bethany's hips reached the door, Mouse could see her thighs spreading well past the double-wide opening to the foyer. Bethany pulled against the wall, forcing her bulk to squeeze and compress, but she was nowhere near strong enough. If she had at least one cyberlimb, she might have had a chance, though Mouse doubted even a leg like hers could support her friend's weight.

"Do... do you want me to push?" Mouse squeaked, staring at an ass wider than her bed.

"Ugh, yes!" Bethany grunted, panting as she wiped beads of sweat from her brow.

Mouse pressed a hand into each of Bethany's massive cheeks, sucking in a quiet gasp as her hands were almost completely enveloped in soft, yielding flesh. She yearned to bury her face in all that softness, but now wasn't the time. Once again activating her hand and leg, Mouse pushed with every ounce of mechanical and biological strength she possessed.

Inch by inch, Bethany wedged farther into the door, the billowing rolls of her pampered body squeezing tighter and tighter into the constricting space. Yet despite Mouse's cybernetics and Bethany's meager contributions, she was stuck firmly well before the widest point of her hips.

"Ow ow ow!" Bethany cried. "Don't push so hard—it hurts!"

As if on cue, the sound of distant explosions filtered in through the still-open balcony door behind them. Mouse fought to keep the panic out of her voice as she said, "We have to get you out of here; Wastelanders are burning the city!"

"But I'm too big to fit!" Bethany wailed, her wheezing breath now punctuated with snuffles.

Mouse dropped to the floor and crawled through the narrow gap between Bethany's ankles, popping up in the foyer to face her friend. "I'm gonna go get help."

"Don't leave me here!"

Rising on her tiptoes, Mouse tried to wipe away a tear rolling down Bethany's cheek but only reached as far as the chin that made a ring of fat around her friend's neck. "I'll come back, I promise."

Hesitating, Mouse's insecurity warred with crisis-fuelled panic. Then, she said, "I should have said this a long time ago, but I like you."

Bethany's sniffling stopped, and she met Mouse's eyes. "W-what?"

Mouse leaned into the big woman, laying a hand on her cheek. "I like you... a lot."

"You... *like me* like me?"

Mouse nodded, and then Bethany's thick digits were on her waist, ineffectually pulling her upward. Mouse lept off the floor and into a set of arms bigger than she was, pressing their lips together and tasting the remnants of sweetened nutrient paste on Bethany's mouth.

When Mouse finally broke the kiss, her arms were around Bethany's neck. She was nestled between her friend's enormous breasts, with her legs dangling across the slope of her belly.

Bethany whispered, "Why didn't you say anything sooner, you idiot?"

Mouse shrugged, the motion awkward in her suspended posture. "I was too afraid, I guess..."

Bethany was silent for a long moment. Finally, she said, "You better hurry."

Mouse met her gaze. "Are you sure?"

Bethany nodded, chins and cheeks wobbling as her eyes started to tear up again. "Promise you'll come back? You won't leave with them..."

Mouse pecked another kiss on Bethany's round cheek. "I promise."

She pushed Bethany back into the throne room and got her back on the bed. The lift doors closed on the image of the once-Queen sipping on her feeding tube. As she rode down to ground level, Mouse prayed she'd be able to keep her promise.