



Reduced Sentence; Increased Pulse

Phenomenal Lass did not mean to look intimidating.

She simply was. Towering, breathtaking, and built like someone had sculpted an angel out of soft curves and shimmering power, she radiated a sort of glowing earnestness that made most criminals forget why they had shown up in the first place.

Miss Match, however, was not “most criminals.”

She had been crouched near the jewelry store window, examining a display that glimmered with holiday lights and suspiciously expensive necklaces, when the shadow fell across her — large, warm, and unmistakably heroic.

“Miss Match,” Phenomenal Lass said, voice ringing with celestial righteousness. “I am required to inform you that loitering-with-intent is a Class IV infraction in this district.”

Miss Match arched an eyebrow. “Loitering-with-intent? I don’t even get out of bed without intent.”

Phenomenal Lass blinked. Her alien eyes were a soft rose-gold tonight — the color they turned when she was trying to be stern. “I must detain you for questioning.”

“Oh, *must* you?” Miss Match purred.

Phenomenal Lass nodded solemnly, completely missing the teasing tilt of Miss Match’s lips... or the way several passersby had slowed down to admire the spectacular contrast between them. Miss Match — athletic, sharp-featured, busty in a way that suggested she lifted weights *and* prospects — versus Phenomenal Lass, who was somehow even more generously built, her heroic silhouette displayed under a formfitting winter-issue uniform that left absolutely nothing to the imagination and somehow *still* seemed innocent.

A lesser woman would have felt threatened standing this close to a walking celestial pin-up.

Miss Match just felt... tingly.

“What if,” she said lightly, “we work out an alternative?”

Phenomenal Lass tilted her head. “Alternative?”

“A reduced sentence,” Miss Match offered. “Community service. Educational service. You know... holiday rehabilitation.”

Phenomenal Lass brightened. She genuinely, deeply loved learning. “Educational rehabilitation sounds culturally beneficial. What are you proposing?”

Miss Match reached into her coat. “A lesson. About an Earth tradition.”

Phenomenal Lass leaned forward, fascinated. Her chest pressed forward too — and Miss Match momentarily forgot what she’d been reaching for. Phenomenal Lass was always voluptuous, but in close-quarters her proportions became something else entirely: the effect was as if gravity bent around her... or maybe Miss Match’s attention did.

She recovered quickly, fingers closing around the sprig she’d stashed earlier.

“Mistletoe,” Miss Match said, pulling out the small green ornament and letting it dangle from its red ribbon.

Phenomenal Lass gasped softly. “Botanical symbolism! I’ve read about this. It alters social rituals, correct?”

“You could say that,” Miss Match replied.

Phenomenal Lass stepped closer, eyes shining with academic interest. “Does it induce honesty? Or trigger a culturally mandated declaration of intent?” She paused. “Is there a pheromonal component?”

Miss Match laughed. “No spores. No chemicals. Just... expectations.”

Phenomenal Lass considered this. “Fascinating. Then please demonstrate.”

Miss Match smirked. “Gladly.”

It took Miss Match very little time to melt the lock on the boutique next door, and she led Phenomenal Lass into the sitting area by the hand.

Sitting down with a graceful little bounce, she extended her arm, dangling the mistletoe squarely above her own lap.

Phenomenal Lass blinked. Her eyes lowered... then widened... then quickly returned to Miss Match's face.

"This position is significant?" she asked carefully.

"Oh, very," Miss Match replied.

Phenomenal Lass frowned slightly, as if consulting internal records. "My understanding indicates the tradition involves a... gesture of affection? A kiss?"

"That's right."

Phenomenal Lass looked down at Miss Match's lap again — then blushed faintly, which was remarkable considering her usual obliviousness. "Miss Match, this seems... imprecise."

"Not at all." Miss Match placed her free hand on her thigh. "You get very close... right here... and then the expectation kinda takes care of the rest."

Phenomenal Lass's breath hitched — a tiny sound, soft but unmistakable. She stepped closer, not from seduction, but from dutiful adherence to cultural instruction. She was simply obeying the rules of the lesson. That was the dangerous part.

"Is this considered... forward?" PL asked, genuinely concerned.

“In some cases,” Miss Match said softly. “In this one? It’s considered festive.”

Phenomenal Lass swallowed. Her shadow fell over Miss Match as she hovered, uncertain, her heroic form framed in holiday lights. Her uniform shifted with each tiny movement, emphasizing the kind of exaggerated curves that comic-book physiology struggled to justify — and Miss Match’s eyes couldn’t help but follow.

“I wish to perform this ritual correctly,” PL said, earnest as ever. “What is the next step?”

Miss Match’s smile deepened. “You let gravity help you.”

Phenomenal Lass’s brow furrowed. “Gravity?”

She leaned down instinctively — and Miss Match felt the warmth of her body before she felt the breath on her cheek. Up close, Phenomenal Lass radiated something almost magnetic: innocence wrapped in irresistible physical presence. Her chest hovered so close to Miss Match’s own that they nearly brushed, twin monuments of distraction that made the air feel thick and warm.

Miss Match inhaled slowly, savoring the moment. “You’re doing great, sweetheart.”

Phenomenal Lass blinked rapidly — flustered in a way Miss Match rarely saw. “I am? I feel... uncertain.”

“That’s normal,” Miss Match murmured. “Earth customs can be tricky.”

Phenomenal Lass’s gaze drifted downward again — not quite understanding *why* the placement of the mistletoe mattered, but clearly aware that it did. Her azure hair framed her face like a soft halo as she leaned even closer, her voice barely above a whisper.

“Do I... administer the kiss now?”

Miss Match held her breath. It was a strange, intoxicating power to have someone so obviously beautiful so close, so earnest, so gentle. Her heart grew heavy with the tension of it — wanting, waiting, fighting her own impulse to pull the alien heroine down the last inch.

“Only if you want to,” she whispered.

Phenomenal Lass hesitated — and in that hesitation, Miss Match saw something rare: Phenomenal Lass wasn’t oblivious right now. She was overwhelmed.

The weight of intimacy was new ground for her.

“I want to... respect the tradition,” PL said softly. “And respect you.”

Miss Match felt her breath hitch. Damn her heart for reacting.

She reached up, brushing a stray lock of hair from PL's cheek. "Then take your time, sweetheart. We're in no rush."

Phenomenal Lass exhaled slowly, visibly relieved. "Thank you. This is a very thorough lesson."

"Oh, the lesson's just getting started," Miss Match replied, letting the mistletoe sway lazily above her lap again. "This is only the warm-up exercise."

Phenomenal Lass looked at her with guileless curiosity — the kind that made Miss Match's stomach flip.

"There are more customs?" PL asked.

"Oh, *so many*," Miss Match purred. "But first... let's see how you handle this one."

Phenomenal Lass lowered herself another inch... their lips only a breath apart...

And the mistletoe trembled in Miss Match's hand.

