



[Art by AskBubbleLee](#)

CricketFish Nightmare Night

After a long day at the Capricorn Reef Hospital, tending to medical emergencies and regular patients, Bubble Lee was relieved to see her shift was nearly over. It was unfortunate that she had to work on Nightmare Night of all days so she wasn't able to help her fiancé with decorations and preparation for Trick or Treaters, but at least the tired unicorn will be home in time before the festivities can begin... if her and Mako have anything planned that is. After everything that happened with the loss of her baby, Margarite Mix decided not to host another costume party at the Mix. With no reason to really dress up or buy a costume, Bubble was having trouble getting into the holiday spirit.

As the clock ticked closer to the end of her shift, Bubble kept herself busy with paperwork at the front desk since she had no other patients... that she knew of. Her ears twitched and perked at the sound of hooves approaching her and she looked up to see a familiar green and white splotched face with a permanent scowl plastered to it.

Bubble: *ear twitches* Dr Evergreen. Do you need me for something?

Evergreen: Yes, I have a new patient for you. I think you'll be able to handle this fine before you clock out.. *hands her a clipboard* Bunch of scrapes and bruises, a few sticks stuck in the wounds... Moron fell off their roof....

Bubble: *fluffs up a little* Uh, r-right, I can handle it.... That's kind of harsh though, don't you think? I mean, it was probably just an accident.

Evergreen: It always is.. *grumbles as she walks away*

Bubble: *grimaces* Who spat in her coffee? Sheesh. Alright, which room are we in? Ah, here it is. *walks down the hall and open the door* Hello, my name is Buu-- Mako?!

Mako: *smiles awkwardly* Hi honey, heheheh..! I thought you were off already. *looks to the side, sweating*

Bubble: *eye twitch* Evergreen was right, you are a moron. What were you doing on the roof?!

Mako: I was putting up Nightmare Night decorations and I lost my footing! Then Kiwi came by and made me come here. *pouts*

Bubble: *looks at his bleeding arm* I can see why..! You are lucky not to BE a decoration after that fall! No one would probably even notice if my mother didn't come by.. *grumbles as she starts gathering up medical supplies*

Mako: *mumbles quietly* Singe was right, the ring made her more bossy....

Bubble: *ears swivel back* What was that?

Mako: Nothing, my Love!

Bubble: *stares at him* Hrrm... I'm really mad at you.. You should have been more careful..! You aren't a young guppy anymore, bones don't stay strong forever.. Even if you do have dragon blood in you. *starts cleaning the wound*

Mako: *winces a little* I know, I know.. But I just really wanted to get those decorations up, I haven't done anything for Nightmare Night in years.. Fifty to be exact..

Bubble: *ears twitch* ... So last when you were with Willow?

Mako: *thinks on it* Yeah, heheh. Kids and candy go hand in hand after all..~ I still had decor in my basement, so I thought with things getting better these days, it would be nice to get back into it again.

Bubble: Well, at least you know the cobwebs are authentic.... Honestly, I never pegged you as someone who would be into Nightmare Night. Just, kind of surprising.

Mako: Heheheh, years ago it was hard not to get excited over it. Me and Lady would sneak off to get sweets from nearby villages when we were little, it was fun, hahaha!

Bubble: That was nearly 500 years ago though.

Mako: It was still exciting. And when I went with Aleyn, we would scare the livin' daylight out of pesky teenagers that came by and made a stink about not getting a whole lot of sweets. The younger kids were sweeter, they get the better candy... *grins*

Bubble: *chuckles as she pulls a splinter out* So you are one of those types of ponies. Why am I not surprised~ ... I never really got into Nightmare Night. I mean, dressing up in costumes is always fun but... I'm kind of always in a costume? If that makes sense, hehehe.

Mako: *chuckles* I can understand that. Soooo, would this mean you're not interested in a few things I got for you today? *stares with round orca eyes*

Bubble: *dead pan stare* *sighs and look away* Ugh, I can't resist those eyes!
Hmhmhm, I never said I wasn't going to celebrate. But! Only on one condition! *points at him*

Mako: *pouts a bit* I'm not allowed on the roof anymore, am I..?

Bubble: *nods* And you need to take it easy and not lift anything with this arm. While you don't have a fracture, you may have strained the muscle. *as she starts dressing the wounds*

Mako: *groans a little* Okaaay, I'll listen to Nurse's orders.~ *tail wags*

Bubble: *kisses Mako's forehead* I'll give you a lollipop when we get home~

Mako: I got a whole bag of those. *snickers before his ears perk up* And candied apples..... that I left on the kitchen counter- Fuck, Pebbles probably got to them!

Bubble: *grimaces* I have no idea what that would do to a dog... But you said my mom was there right? Maybe she put them away?

Mako: If she didn't eat them herself, with her cravings.. *grumbles*

Bubble: *snickers* I'm sure one or two missing apples will be fine~

Mako: You know bloody well it won't just be two apples, hahaha! *stands up and rubs his arm a bit* No heavy lifting, no strain.... I've been needing a vacation from work anyways.~

Bubble: *tail wags* Good~ And with that, my shift is done. Let's check you out and head home before there isn't any candied apples left~

To Bubble and Mako's dismay, when they arrived home it wasn't apples that became their number one concern. There, fluttering around the house and fixing the decorations that were out of place after Mako's fall, was Kiwi. This wouldn't normally be a problem this was taking place last year, but right now the mare's belly was round and swollen with a delicate foal inside... and flying was the last thing anyone wanted her to do!

Mako: KIWI!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bubble: MOOOOM!!!!

Kiwi: *ears perk* Hmm? Oh! Cuddle Bubble! Welcome hooome~ I had a feeling you would have Mako well taken care of. How is your arm, dear? *leans over the edge of the roof to adjust a decoration*

Mako: HmmmMMMMMM!!! Nevermind my arm, get down from there! You are PREGNANT!!!

Bubble: *whines* You really shouldn't be exerting yourself like this..! E-especially from such a high place!

Kiwi: *waves her hand* I'm almost done! I wanted to make sure everything looked nice before you two got back. Heavens know that Mako would want to just climb back up here and fall again.. Tsk tsk.. *shakes her head at him*

Mako: *pouts at her* I-I would not have! Maybe for five minutes, but please come down! You're too far along to be doing this kind of stuff!

Kiwi: *ignores him* Almost done.... There we go~ That looks much better, hmhmhm~ *gently flies off the roof onto the porch* See, no harm done~ *wearing a shirt with a pumpkin over her belly*

Mako: *rubs his face and groans* Please stay on the ground now.... You should be taking it easy...!

Kiwi: *puts her hands on her hip* I'm not the one whose arm is bandaged up, young stallion..! You really should be more careful.. What if I wasn't there? You could have gotten seriously injured.

Bubble: *fluffs up and mutters to herself* ... I really am starting to sound like her....

Mako: *mumbles* No kidding... *staaaaares at Bubble*

Bubble: *stares before poking his bad arm*

Mako: AAHOOW! *holds his arm and pouts at her*

Kiwi: *continues rambling* -- And who would carry you to the hospital if it were your leg? Certainly not I! I'm not supposed to carry anything heavy. You father hardly allows me to carry my own purse half the time..

Mako: *ears perk* Does Silver even know you're here? On our roof..?

Kiwi: *ears perk* Well, no. But he knew I was coming to visit Bubble. I just forgot she worked today. Hmhmhm, pregnancy brain moment I'm sure~

Mako: But he doesn't know you were flying... on our roof. *pulls out his phone, dialing a number*

Silver Lining: *answers the phone with a grunt* What?

Mako: Did you know your wife was flying and on our roof..?

Silver: Put her on.

Mako: *holds his phone out to Kiwi* It's for you.

Kiwi: *takes the phone* Hello? Oh hello Sweetums~ I'm at Mako and Bubble's place, like I said I would be..... Well, yes, but only after Mako fell off the roof-- Of course I was being careful..... *siiiiighs* I'll be home soon.... I love you too.... *hands Mako the phone back and pouts*

Mako: *grunts into the phone* Thanks. *puts his phone away and crosses his arms* You know I only tell on you cuz I care, right?

Kiwi: *pouts more* Hmmp.. Just because I'm pregnant doesn't mean I'm helpless. But, now that you've gotten my husband into a flustered mess, I should get going.. *hugs Bubble, glaring at Mako*

Bubble: *hugs her back* Thanks for stopping by, Mom. Be safe heading back. Give Daddy my love.

Kiwi: Of course Cuddle Bubble~ *looks to Mako* Oh, and I put your candied apples in the fridge and did the dishes while you were gone. Have a happy Nightmare Night..~

Mako: *wants to stay pouting, but sighs* Thanks for the save, heheh..~ Happy Nightmare Night..~

Bubble: *watches as Kiwi waddles away* If I ever become my mom, put me out of my misery..

Mako: Hmmm.... Nope. Live with it..~ *heads into the house*

Bubble: *sighs* You are the one who is going to live with it! Hehehe~ *goes inside and gets greeted by Puppy Love and Pebbles* Oh! Hello! Hi! Awwww did you miss Mommy? Aww, who are my good babies? Yes you are~ *kneels and snuggles her puppies*

Mako: *gives scratches on Pebbles' back* Did you behave while I was gone? Who's a good girl? Who's a good girl?! *rubs her belly as she rolls over*

Bubble: *giggles as Puppy licks her face* Bleck! Hmhmhm~ And just like that, the fatigue of a long day of work has been lifted! Who knew having Puppy kisses worked like magic? Hmm? Are you magic? Are you a magic boy? *rubs his belly*

Mako: Heheheh, these two are always nice to come home to. Makes the sloppy kisses worth it--OOF! *getting covered in dog kisses as Pebbles pushes him down* AAACK! Down girl! You're almost as heavy as me, hahaha! BLECK!

Bubble: *cringes and grabs Pebbles by her collar* Pebbles! Off! Off Daddy while he's injured, okay? *gently coaxes the large irish wolfhound off*

Mako: *groans a bit as he stands up* Hehehe, being a pet owner is rewarding..~ *picks up a tennis ball and bounces it across the living room* Go play!

Bubble: *watches as the two dogs scramble across the wood floor to go get the ball, one hitting the end table and the lamp falls off it* Sometimes. Sometimes it costs money too.

Mako: *grumbles* Maybe we should stop buying lamps and just stick to the lights on the ceiling.... *walks into the kitchen*

Bubble: *gets the broom out of the closet* Hmhmhm~ I mean, I don't need light to see. I kind of just glow naturally~ *starts picking up the pieces*

Mako: Heheh I know. But not all our friends have the best eyesight. *pulls out the candied apples and gets them ready for the night*

Bubble: *dumps the broken glass in the trash* True.. Maybe we can get wall mounted lamps? Like you see in dungeons and castles? Or is that not modern anymore? Hmhmhm~

Mako: Snrk! I think the look of wall-mounted torches has changed.~

Bubble: Darn~ They were so practical, hmhmhm! Wow, you made a LOT of apples.. We aren't going to be able to eat those all..

Mako: Hehehe they're not for us. They're for the trick-or-treaters! I also have some candy ready in a bowl for them too. *points to a very large bowl full of candy*

Bubble: *smirks* Wow, you really do like Nightmare Night, huh? And I don't even have a costume this year.

Mako: Maybe not, buuuut I did get you this. *reaches into a shopping bag and pulls out a orange sweater with white ghosts going across the chest*

Bubble: *takes the sweater and stares at it for a bit* Snrk! *lays it over her chest and grins* ... Do... Do you like my Boooo-bies? Hahaha!

Mako: *cheeks get pink, reaching to grope her chest* I think they are, Booooo-tiful.~ SNRK!

Bubble: *laughs* Hahaha! Oh you know my humor so well~ I love it! ... but it looks kind of small for me. I might stretch the poor ghosts' faces in this form... *with a pout*

Mako: *smiles* Well, I didn't exactly buy it for this form. *gently pinches her cheek*

Bubble: *blushes lightly* O-oh.. You want me to uh.. Get changed? But what about the Trick or Treaters? *ears fold back a little*

Mako: *wave his hand* Don't worry bout them, they won't need to look in here that much. They just want the candy, hehehe. Besides, some time out of this "costume" will help you.~

Bubble: *rubs the back of her neck* I guess that's true, heh.. Okay, I'll go get changed then~ *as she takes the sweater up to the bedroom*

Mako: *calls after her* And when you're done, there's some scary movies on and a nice cheesecake waiting for you!~

Bubble: *calls from the bedroom* Cheesecake?! You are spoiling me~ Hmhmhm! *before a flash of green light came from the cracks of the door*

Mako: You make it easy for me, Cricket! *snickers as he starts gathering up snacks and drinks at the coffee table*

Puppy Love: *barks and jumps on the couch to sniff the food, tail wagging*

Mako: OYE! No! Noooo! Down boy!

Pebbles: *paws at Mako, begging for the snacks*

Mako: No! Down, you two! This is not food for doggies! *grabs their collars to gently lead them away from the couch and to their dog beds* Stay.

Imago: *comes downstairs in the sweater and thigh high socks* Hmhmhm, dealing with some troublesome teenagers already?

Mako: You could say that, heheh. *sees them move to get up* No! Staaaaay...!

Pebbles: *whines and lays her head down, making sad puppy eyes*

Puppy Love: *ears perks and tilts head when he sees Imago* *tail wags fast*

Mako: What are you lookin' at? *turns around and cheeks get pink* Hmhmhm, you look adorable in that sweater.~ *tail wags fast*

Imago: *blushes and pouts at him* Hmmm.. Hmhmhm, it fits well, not too tight. *tugs at the sweater*

Mako: *walks over and pulls her into a hug* You look like a cute little piece of pumpkin pie, SNRK!

Imago: *blushes more and chirps* Mmm! Hehehe! No I don't, silly~ *nuzzles his chest and purrs*

Mako: Just try to prove me wrong.~ *purrs, but then his ears perk* OYE! *points at Puppy Love who was sniffing at the cheesecake* No! That has chocolate in it!

Puppy Love: *freezes mid motion and stares guiltily at Mako and Imago*

Imago: *folds her arms and stares* Puppy! Go lay down! *points to the dog bed*

Puppy Love: *ears droop and drags his tail over to Pebbles and hides his head underneath her*

Imago: *shakes her head* Teenagers, I swear...

Mako: No kidding... *chuckles a bit* If they behave I'll get them the treats I bought from the pet store.~ *plops onto the couch and puts on a movie* After some well needed relaxation and horror.~

Imago: *curls up on Mako's lap* Just what the Nurse ordered~ *with a purr*

As the day carried on and hours passed, kids came and went every now and again to get candy. Every time Mako would put on a mask to give the kids a playful scare before handing out apples and candy, while Imago instinctively hid under a blanket on the couch so none of the kids would catch notice of her glowing eyes. As the sun set and the moon rose into the sky, Mako started to get a little tired, but the horror films that had plenty of screams and scares kept him going to stay up with Imago.

Mako: Heheheh, doing okay? You've been hiding under this blanket for hours..

Imago: *peeks her head out* I'm doing alright. How are you? You look like you are getting tired... did you not get your old man nap in today? *with a teasing grin*

Mako: *sticks his tongue at her* I spent most of today shopping and making apple treats, heheheh. I can stay up a bit longer though, I don't mind. *ear twitches a bit* But you've just been.... Ducking under there a lot..

Imago: *ears twitch* ... Just trying to be safe rather than sorry. *pulls the blanket off her* I mean, I know you are right, unless they come into the house, they can't see me here. Maybe I'm just being too careful? *looks to the side*

Mako: *smiles* It's alright to be cautious. But tonight, at most they could just think you're wearing a mask too, hehehe.... I just want you to be able to relax at home, especially on the holidays. I won't let anything happen to you, I promise..

Imago: *nods* I know, I trust you... I guess old habits die hard, hehehe. I'll try to relax more, the night is still young after all~ *with a smile*

Mako: And there's still half a cheesecake left, hehehe.~ Wait, half? *looks at the cake* I didn't think you'd eat THAT much!

Imago: *face gets red* Well, I couldn't have any candy.. Besides, it's the holidays, right? *looks to the side*

Mako: *stares at her, but grins* Yeah, you're right.~ Plus, better it goes to you than the pups.

Imago: *tail wags* Hmhmhm, I still left half for you~ Now let's finish this movie~ I want to see who dies next!

Makko: Ten bits says it's the big meat-head jock that's been pickin' on the comic book geek all night.

Imago: Hmhmhm, I bet you a bottle of scotch that it's the pale bimbo blonde~ Something about watching her get her head ripped off sounds... satisfying~ *with a wide grin*

Mako: *winces a bit, but smirks* I can't imagine why..~

As the night went on, Imago relaxed more and got more comfortable being out in the open while trick or treaters were at the door, even getting up a few times to get a refill on drinks. While she was still mostly out of sight, it felt nice to not constantly worry that some pony may see here. It got to the point that the changeling nearly forgot that she was out of disguise at all, and enjoyed giggling and watching scary movies with her beloved mate.

Mako: *sees the credits start to roll* Oof, finally! I need to use the bathroom, I was holding it in so I wouldn't miss the ending, heheh! *jumps off the couch*

Imago: Okay! I'll go ahead and pick another movie out~ *flipping the channels to see what's on*

Ding Dong

Imago: *ears swivel* Hmm? I got it~ *gets up, without thinking, and goes to answer the door*

Child 1: Nightmare Night! What a fright! Give us something sweet to bite!..... Woah! What a cool costume!

Imago: *ears spring up* C-costume? *looks at herself and tenses up*?!?!?!?

Child 2: Woah, that mask is so neat! It looks so real~

Imago: *ears fold back and smiles nervously before dropping candy in their bags* Ehehe.. T-thanks! Happy Nightmare Night..!

Child 1: Thanks! *leaves with their friend*

Imago: *closes the door and lets out the nervous chirping she was holding in* mmmMMMMMM!

Mako: *out of the bathroom, staring at her with wide eyes*

Imago: *slides down the door and stares at him* T-that could.. have gone worse, hehehe..... *ears fold back, chirps* I forgot! I should have waited until you were out a-and.. ! *chirps and holds her face* And.. they thought it was a costume... They weren't afraid of me..

Mako: I-I saw...! That was... actually pretty great, hehehe..! *scratches the back of his neck*

Imago: Great?! That was terrifying! So many things could have gone wrong...

Mako: But they thought you were in costume.. Those kids looked way too young to know what Changelings were like years ago, let alone be scared of them.

Imago: *ears twitch* ... I.. I guess you are right... They said I looked... cool. This is such a weird feeling, I want to be happy but I feel like there is a knot in my throat, hehehe.. *takes a deep breath* I wonder.. Do you think ponies would even notice if I were to go out and.... No, hehehe! That would be crazy! They would obviously notice a real changeling walking around.. Right?

Mako: *thinks about it* Well.... I mean... No one could really tell me and Lady were actual hybrids on Nightmare Night. They just thought we were dressed up in convincing costumes, heheh.. It couldn't hurt to try..... As long as you don't walk around naked. *tugs her sweater*

Imago: *pouts* I'm not naked.... Right now. Changelings don't need to wear clothes... but I guess a fake changeling would? This is weird, heheh.. *looks out the window and grimaces*

Mako: Hmmm... *smiles* Why don't you take over greeting the kids tonight? They seemed to love it, heheh! It's small, and if something happens I'll be right behind you.~

Imago: *relaxes a little and nods* I can do that, hehehe..~

Mako: *nuzzles her forehead* It'll be alright. And if you get rude teens at the door, you can have fun scaring them off too, heheheh!

Imago: *grins with her teeth showing* Hmhmhm~ That does sound kind of fun!

With Imago now on candy duty, Mako kept a close eye on the door whenever children came by. Each group was caught in awe at Imago's "costume", saying how realistic and cool it was. Every few times there were some teenagers with too much attitude, that were easily chased away with a good old fashioned Changeling scare. As it got later, the kids slowly stopped coming, some turning in to rest or to fill their bellies with sweets all at once.

Imago: *closes the door with a sigh* I think that's the last one for the night.. *stretches her arms* You still holding up in there, old man?~

Mako: *pouts at her and grins* I'm still awake just fine.~ But I wouldn't mind turning in. We're almost out of candy anyways.

Imago: *checks the bowl* Just about, just a few more handfuls left~ That was fun though! *pulls off her sweater and stretches her wings*

Mako: How're you feeling being out of costume for a whole night?

Imago: *wings fluttering* It felt pretty good to be honest~ I never would have thought of using Nightmare Night in this kind of fashion.. Maybe something to look forward to for next year! *with a wink*

Mako: *smiles* I can definitely get behind that, heheheh! I'm glad this cheered you up some. It was so cute watching you interact with the kids.~

Imago: *blushes lightly* Hehehe, I guess that's some good practice for.... when we have our own. *looks to the side*

Mako: *ears spring straight up and cheeks get pinker* R-really? *tail wags*

Imago: *smiles* We've talked about it before. Even if I can't have my own, adopting is still an option... Something to look forward to after the wedding~

Mako: *purrs loudly* Yeah.~ *looks down* OYE! What did I say about the cheesecake?!

Puppy Love: *licking at the empty plate to get crumbs*

Mako: *squints at Puppy* You're lucky Imago already got all the chocolate parts... Hmhmhm, it's feeding time anyways. Comere you two, want some food?

Pebbles: BOOF!!!

Mako: Let's go get some food! *goes into the kitchen, followed by the happy dogs*

Ding Dong

Imago: *ears perk* Oh, must be some more Trick or Treaters. I got it! *as she grabs the bowl and opens the door*

Macadamia Nutt: Nightmare Night!

Hazel Nutt: What a Fright!

Walter Nutt: Give us something--

Imago: *stares at Wally with wide eyes*

Maca: Waalllllyyyy, you messed it up! It's "Give us something sweet to bite!"

Hazel: It's not like we haven't been doing this alllll night.. Whoa, wicket costume though! What are you supposed to be?

Maca: *bounces up and down* Oh! Oh oh! Let me guess! Ummmm... A fairy! A fairy princess!

Wally: *ears fold back*

Imago: Umm.. y-yeah a fairy, that's right.. Here you go... *dumps the rest of the candy in their bags*

Mako: *calls out from the kitchen* Everything alright, Imago?!

Imago: *CHIRPS*

Wally: *ears spring straight up* Imago?.. So it is you, but how--

Imago: HAPPY NIGHTMARE NIGHT! *slams door shut*

Mako: *staaaaaaares at her with wide eyes before peaking out the window* Oh, it's Wally. *goes to open the door*

Imago: *puts her weight into the door, whispering at him* No! No don't..! He.. He was there when.. She..... Mmmnn! *looks up at Mako with shiny round eyes* He.. remembers me...

Mako: *ears spring up straight* *gently picks her up and carries her as far away from the front door as he can* What?!

Imago: *trembling* W-Wally was there..! With Bubble after I fell.. He was there when they brought me to the tree house but.. He was so young! I didn't think he'd remember me..! Maybe he didn't, but you said my name and he knew. I knew he knew! Oh goddesses..! *chirping more*

Mako: Oi... *rubs the back of his head* Uuuh... I-it'll be okay, this can still be handled..! I mean-it's Wally. Maybe he'll sleep it off and just think he was dreaming.

Imago: *shakes her head* I don't know.. I..... There was one other time he saw me.. This me! It was a few years after Bubble fell, Vespa, the drone in charge of me and my "mission" came back to the Reef to bring me back to the hive.. Wally mistaken her for me and was abducted but after Vespa was taken away by the guards, he never told anyone. Maybe he'll just... continue not to say anything?

Mako: *ears twitch nervously* Maybe.... If needed, maybe I can talk to him about this... Just a friendly talk...

Imago: *stares at him* You are not allowed to knock him out.

Mako: Dammit....! *shakes his head* Th-that was Plan B! I would have an actual talk with him first!

Imago: Makoooo, that gives ponies brain damage. He's too soft, don't hurt him.. Besides, Maggie would skin you alive.

Mako: She can fockin' try... *grumps at her* But fine... A real, legit talk, if needed... But he's a potato, he'll probably forget this in a matter of days.

Imago: *ears fold back, looking to the side* ... I hope you are right..

Mako: *thinks back to years and years ago* Wait.... Did you get into a fight with the drone that came here for you..?

Imago: *nods* I had too! She was going to kill Wally if I didn't confront her... Why?

Mako: *points at her* So it was YOU who broke through my bloody shop window and broke all my shit!!!

Imago: *chirps and tenses up* That was you? I thought it was some cantankerous old shriveled up-- oh yeah, it's you.

Mako: *grumps at her* You have any idea how much that cost me to repair..? And what good all the insurance did me cuz a Changeling did it?! *grabs the fly swatter*

Imago: *ears spring up* You wouldn't dare... *back peddles*

Mako: Yer payin' me back one way or another, Cricket...! *swat on her backside*

Imago: *CHIRP* HMMMnnn! OW! Fuck off, you cantankerous old bastard! *runs away*

Mako: *chases her* Get back here you little shite! *spanks again with the fly swatter*

Imago: *runs into the bedroom and locks the door*

Mako: *holds up his pinkie claw and uses it to mess with the lock til there was a click*

Imago: *clicks so it's locked again* I can do this all night.

Mako: Hrmmmm...! Yer lucky I'm tired, or yer arse would be bright red by now!

Imago: *snorts* So your old age is catching up to you..~

Mako: I'm gettin' my tools and takin' the door off the hinges. *walks down the stairs*

Imago: Shit.

After a little persuading to keep the bedroom door where it belonged and some playful jabs at each other for the chase, the two lovers calmed down and had a good laugh. But deep down they were still concerned about what would become of the Wally encounter. Fortunately, or unfortunately, by the next morning they didn't have to wonder for long...

Wally: *at the front door* Good morning Mako.

Bubble: *sips her coffee loudly and internally sweating*

Mako: Mornin', heheh.. What brings you by this early? *keeping the door slightly closed and blocking the entry*

Wally: *peers over his shoulder* ... Where is she?

Mako: Who, Bubble? She's having coffee.

Wally: *ears twitch* Well, I'd like to talk to her too... Can I come in?

Mako: *ear twitches a bit, but stays smiling* Uh, sure. What's going on..? *steps aside to let him in*

Bubble: *staaaaares at Mako, fluffing up a little*?!?!

Mako: *silently gestures to stay calm from behind Wally's back*

Wally: *smiles at Bubble* Hey Bubbs, how are you feeling?

Bubble: *puts on a smile* Me? Oh I'm fine, hehe. Just.. trying to wake up..... How are you?

Wally: Confused... What was Imago doing here last night?

Mako: *stops mid motion, holding a vase in his hands*

Bubble: *uses magic to levitate the vase out of Mako's hands* Hrm... Who is Imago?

Wally: *ears fold back* Then.. you don't remember? She was here, in your house last night! I saw her, clear as day and Mako even said her name... *ears spring up and turns to Mako* How do you know Imago?!

Mako: *ears perk up* Uuuuh, well..... I, pffffff..... I've... fed her Love, in the past... *cheeks turn red*

Bubble: *facepalms behind Wally back before making a strangling motion at Mako*

Wally: You fed her? *looks Mako up and down* ... And I'm assuming not with cookies. Does she just come here for free love or something? Or was she checking on Bubble? *rubs his temples* You have no idea how confused I am right now! So.. any answers would be nice. Is she okay? Is she still in danger? It's been years and all the other changelings have reformed, I just figured she did too--

Mako: Imago is safe! She's doing better than she used to be, heheh... *glances at Bubble*

Bubble: *ears fold back and smiles a little*

Wally: *sighs* That's.. a relief. Last time she was here on the Reef, it wasn't good. I was afraid that she got arrested or something but... You have no idea how relieving it is to be able to tell someone all this. I mean, I'm sure you don't know, but Bubble used to know her too!

Mako: *ears twitch a little* Y-yeah, I know the story.. Imago told me herself, heheh. But uh.... You'd be surprised how much she's been up to lately.. Said she was even getting married.

Wally: *ear perk* Married? Wow, that's crazy, heh... I'm really happy to hear that, I wish I could have had more time to talk to her last night.. Can you.. tell her I said that? Next time you see her?

Bubble: You.. don't have to worry about that. She already knows. *as she stands up*

Mako: *ears spring up* Are you sure...?

Bubble: *nods* Yeah.. kinda? Heh.. Everytime before this it was by accident and it was forced. Just once I want it to be on my terms.. And I trust Wally. I mean, after all these years this is the first he's ever told anyone..

Wally: *looks between the two of them* What was by accident? I'm sorry, you lost me.. So you do remember Imago, don't you? Have your memories come back then?

Mako: *grimaces a bit* You might wanna sit down, Walter.. *closes the window curtains and locks the front door*

Wally: *looks at Mako before hesitantly taking a seat at the kitchen counter* W-Why are you closing the curtains and locking me in here?

Mako: So you don't run.

Wally: *ears fold back and whine* B-Bubble, what does that suppose to mean?

Bubble: *ears fold back* It's okay Wally... Everything is okay, just remember, we are still friends, right? Even if things don't look as they seem, you are still my friend.

Wally: O-okay..? You are scaring me too. What is this about?

Bubble: *fiddles with her fingers* I'm trying to explain that.. No I don't have my old memories because they were never my memories to begin with. They were Bubble's memories and.. I'm not Bubble... I am Imago.

Wally: *looks Bubble up and down* Uh huh... Why..? I'm sorry, so.. You are Imago, disguised as Bubble? Or are you just yanking my chain? Where is Bubble then? And why are you disguised a-- This is confusing, hold on.. *rubs his temple and thinks* There are two Bubbles.... Are you both getting married to Mako?! *stares at Mako*

Mako: *cheeks turn red* O-oye! I-..... I-in a way, yes... *looks to the side*

Bubble: *pouts at Mako* Don't confuse him even more, this is already hard enough as is... There is only one Bubble! Yes, I'm marrying Mako but.. The real Bubble isn't here anymore. It's just me. This.. *references to herself* .. is just Imago.

Wally: *ears fold back* What do you mean the real Bubble isn't here anymore? Where is she?

Mako: *ears twitch* Just tell him....! He needs to see....

Bubble: *tense up* I..... okay.. *before transforming in a pillar of bright green flames into her changeling form*

Wally: *whinnies and leans back with wide eyes* OH! Woah! Okay! So you are! Wow, this... really doesn't help the confusion... You look good by the way. No longer.. Sickly. And like you are about to die.

Imago: *ears fold back* ... Thanks.. Wally, this is going to be hard--

Wally: Right, but wait, how long have you been disguised as Bubble then? What does Kiwi and Silver think of this?!

Imago: They don't know.. They can't know..

Wally: Can't? I mean, yeah Kiwi is a bit uptight but I'm sure she'll warm up to you. Especially if you are in a poly relationship with Bubble..

Imago: It's not a poly relationship, Walter! It's just me! There is no Bubble..! She's gone....

Wally: *ear spring straight up* ... What?

Imago: Back when she fell off the cliff, when you two were just 8.. Bubble hit her head and wouldn't wake up. I tried so hard, for years to get her to wake back up but.. She was gone.. That's why Vespa came to the reef and took you. She was there to bring me back, but I refused

because I had to keep Bubble alive.. That's why I couldn't stay with you when you asked me too..

Wally: *ears fold back flat to his head*

Imago: I realize this is a lot to take in, and.. I never wanted anyone to know. For a while, Mako was the only one who knew. Then his sister and his nephew found out...

Wally: *looks at Mako with a side eye*....

Mako: Outside of us, no one else knows... Not Kiwi, Silver... Not even Singe...

Wally: *scrunches his muzzle and looks away from him* ... Not even me.

Imago: *swallows hard* Wally, I couldn't tell you back then, it was for your own safety--

Wally: My safety?! I almost died because of you.. Because you didn't tell me there was a changeling still after you... I promised I wouldn't tell any pony about you, that first night you came to the Reef. And I never told anyone. Not my parents, not my sisters, not even my grandparents..! Not even you. Or.. Bubble. Or whoever you are now..!

Imago: *ears fold back* I'm still me.. I'm still the same pony tha--

Wally: The same pony as who? As the little filly I use to sneak out in the rain with and hide under Cinder's wings because we were both scared of the thunder? A fear that you miraculously got over.. But I never questioned.. No one did. You changed into a completely different pony and I never..... Goddesses I'm such an idiot.. All this time you lied to everyone..

Imago: *takes a step back, her wings twitching* I.. I had too...

Wally: Did you though? You could have just... stayed! Even if it wasn't with me, maybe Willow? You could have taken Bubble to a hospital where she could have gotten real care..! You..... You just hid.. And lied.. And pretended like everything would go away if you just ignored it like some child!

Imago: *flinches*

Wally: You are still doing that, aren't you? You still have no intention of telling anyone what you did? You are just going to continue to lie and hide and get married? And pretend like that fixes anything?!

Mako: *steps closer* Walter, calm down a little..! I understand you're angry, but Imago did everything she could to help Bubble. There wasn't anything a hospital could've done, she was gone long before help came..!

Wally: Then why did she keep hiding even after Bubble was gone? Why not come out clean after knowing there wasn't anything left that could be done? You just enabled her and encouraged her to lie and hide.

Mako: *shakes his head* Think real hard, Walter. What do you think they would've done to Imago if she came out about it..?! Everyone hated Changelings back then, they would've assumed it was all her fault and taken her away!

Wally: It IS her fault! Imago doing nothing in this situation means she did wrong. If she knew that Bubble wasn't getting better, then she should have gotten help or taken her to someplace who could have. And if they decide that there was nothing they could do, then Imago could be blameless.

Mako: She didn't know! That's why she kept her in a cocoon for years! *inhales* I didn't meet Imago until last year.. She was going to college as Bubble, to be a nurse, for the soul purpose of finding a way to help the real one. Once she found out there was nothing she could do, she was going to-.....

Wally: *stands up* Last year?! That was... what.. Nearly 20 years of a Bubble being in a coma?! Do you have any idea of how ridiculous you sound right now? You have no concept of time or what that would do to a pony! I'm not even a doctor and I know even if Bubble was to wake up, she wouldn't be able to move again.. Probably never walk, be stuck in a bed for the rest of her life?! That's not living... One year in a coma is bad. A few hours without the proper care could lead to permanent brain damage..

Mako: Changeling cocoons keep ponies preserved and healthy, her body wasn't the issue..! It was her brain...

Wally: Which is why Imago should have brought her to the hospital right away. To stop.. Bleeding in the brain or whatever happens. I don't know, I'm not a doctor, but I have enough common sense not to pretend I am!

Mako: *growls a little* Okay Walter, let's say Imago did bring Bubble in... How the hell do you think they wouldn't have blamed her regardless? That they wouldn't think she purposely pushed her off that cliff? Or done some kind of magic to hurt her that badly?! You have no idea, how quickly Equines can turn on other species! You don't know what it's like to constantly be afraid for your life, just because you're not the same as everyone else! They could have killed Imago for Bubble's death and declared it justified! Could you sleep at night knowing that?!?! *growling loudly*

Wally: *takes a step back and flinches away* D-d-do I have any idea.. what it is like to be a-afraid? I was afraid from the first moment I met Imago. I w-wanted to leave her there, let her leave! But Bubble wanted to save her, more than anything. Imago could have..have killed us right there.. Changelings have done it, I've seen it! But Bubble trusted her and risked her life to save Imago's.. My life too...

Imago: *ears fold back* ... I wouldn't have lasted if she hadn't. If you hadn't brought Willow and gotten my wounds cleaned... She saved my life, and I tried so hard to save hers. I swear, I thought she would just wake up.. The cocoons are supposed to put ponies to sleep, it's supposed to heal them, I thought it would work..

Wally: ... W-well it didn't, for Twenty years.. *shakes his head* And that d-does.. d-doesn't even explain why you are still here, after you confirmed Bubble is dead! Why?

Imago: *looks at Mako* I was going to leave last year after faking Bubble's death.. But I.. I couldn't leave this life I made for myself behind.

Mako: *ears fold back* I met her on the island when she was here on Summer Break.. Took her out to dinner and eventually things just, got more serious. *looks at Imago* During her last semester, she revealed herself to me.. I was angry at first, but she assured me that the love we had was real and I wasn't just a token... Since then I kept her secret..

Imago: *smiles a little* And we decided to get married and start a life together...~

Wally: *shakes his head* It's not your life. Not to everyone else. That's Bubble's life. I'm happy for you, that you both found happiness despite all this but.. What you are doing right now isn't right.

Imago: *ears fold back* It's my life now. I don't want to run away anymore... I did, for a long time but that only hurts the ponies I care about..

Mako: *ears fold back* Lying all the time isn't easy on the moral side.... But, there have been times we've talked about just leaving. Just leaving behind the island, and the lives we built here..... *looks down* There's too many loose ends... Too many memories, so many friends and family we'd lose too... We can't just go knowing we'd never see any of them again... That includes you, Walter... If we left, we'd never come back..

Wally: *ears fold back* ... Then don't leave. Just tell the truth! Tell everyone what really happened to Bubble Lee.

Imago: *shakes her head* I can't..! If I tell them then they'll--

Wally: *looks at her* What? Hate you? Make you live up to your mistakes? Make you have consequences for your actions? So alternatively you'd rather lie and hide and pretend it will just go away if you ignore it. That's not how life works.. But if that's how you like things, just continue to ignore me. I'll go away... Eventually. *turns to leave*

Imago: Wally! Please, don't go..! No one can know, you have to understand that!

Wally: *unlocks the door* Hmph... I promised Bubble that I'd keep you a secret.. I've never broken a pinkie promise, I'm not starting now... *opens the door and leaves, slamming it close behind him*

Imago: *stares at the door* *takes a seat back at the counter, resting her head on the counter*

Mako: *ears fold back flat, standing behind her and gently rubbing her back* I'm sorry, Cricket....

Imago: *sniffles* ... I-I don't know what I expected...

Mako: *wraps his arms around her to hold her close* We both knew it wouldn't be easy.... Maybe we should just give him a little time to himself..

Imago: *rubs her eyes and nodded* Mmhmm.... Y-yeah...

Mako: *looks over to the kitchen and whistles*

Pebbles: *runs over and tilts head at Imago, wondering why she's crying* *lays head on her lap*

Puppy Love: *brings over a stuff fox plushie and whines*

Imago: *gently pets her dogs, tears running down her face*

Sweeping around the wooden floor of the bar, Margarite cleared away dust and dirt that was left behind in the bar from Nightmare Night. While she didn't take part in running it that late this year, she allowed other employees to tend to patrons as they came in and out in costume. The mess left behind was unbelievable, but she didn't mind too much in spending the day cleaning it up by herself. Or at least, she thought she would be alone.

Wally: *lays his head on the counter* Hi Maggie..

Maggie: AAH! *spins and waves her broom around like a weapon* ... O-oh! Hey Wally! *puts the broom down* Heheh, for a chonker, you sure are light on your hooves..~

Wally: *shrugs* Sorry..

Maggie: *ears perk* Hey what's wrong? Did your grandparent's cafe run out of coffee this early..?

Wally: *shakes head* No..... I can't talk about it. I just need somewhere quiet to think..

Maggie: "Can't" or won't talk about it...? *raises an eyebrow*

Wally: *sighs* I promised I wouldn't talk about it...

Maggie: Promised who? I dunno if it'd be worth moping and being sad.. *pets his head*

Wally: *ear twitches* I... can't tell you who. It's part of the promise..

Maggie: *staaaaaaares him in the eyes* Wallyyyyyy...

Wally: *closes his eyes* I have two sisters, that doesn't work on me...

Maggie: *siiiigh* Fine. *starts sweeping* So where are you coming from? After Nightmare Night, I expected you to still be asleep from a sugar crash, hehehe..~

Wally: Not really in a sweets mood. I didn't even have any coffee. Mako didn't offer any either, the jerk..

Maggie: Aaah, so you made a promise to Mako then? *stares at him*

Wally: *sighs* No.. I'm serious, I can't tell you. I promised her I wouldn't tell anypony. I made a pinkie promise.. *with a pout*

Maggie: Sooooo, Bubble then. *raises an eyebrow*

Wally: *sits up and stares at her* Maggie...

Maggie: Don't "Maggie" me, Wally, it's clear you're covering for them too.. So what's it about? Mako being five hundred years old, or Bubble being a Changeling? *wipes down the bar*

Wally: *ears spring up* How did you know-- Wait... Mako is five hundred years old?!

Maggie: *looks up* Ooooh, the Changeling one..

Wally: *stares at her* How do you know?! And how are you so calm about this?!

Maggie: I found out several months back. I walked in on them while she was, "naked". *doing air quotes*

Wally: *ears fold back* So you know what happened to Bubble then...

Maggie: Yeah.. It's pretty devastating... I'm glad the poor girl was put to rest properly after all this time.. Still... Can't say Imago didn't try.. The physical body is a complicated map sometimes.

Wally: *snorts* She didn't do anything.. She literally did nothing right.. It's so... infuriating to think that someone I used to admire and care for was so.. Selfish! So childish and.. And... Ugh! I can't even think of a proper word to describe her...

Maggie: Whoa whoa, easy, potty mouth. The Wally I know is too squishy to curse around other ponies, heheh... Pretty justified anger though..... So, you going to turn her in...?

Wally: *pouts* No.. I told you already, I made a pinkie promise... Even if Bubble is dead, I'm not going to break that promise... Even though every part of me wants to go to Kiwi and Silver's house right now and tell them! ... Maybe that's why I'm here...

Maggie: *leans on the bar counter* Do you think it would really do any good to tell them a fifteen to twenty year old secret...?

Wally: *shakes his head* Me telling them would only cause pain on all sides.. But Imago needs to come clean and stop living a lie. There is no way she is truly happy knowing that everything she believes in is a lie. Even her and Mako meeting was based on lies and deceit.. On both sides it seems. And they came clean and now they are happy together!

Maggie: *shrugs* Probably because they've never had that kind of happiness in their lives before. This life they have is literally the best one they've gotten to live in this long.

Wally: And I'm happy for them! I really, truly am.. But what they are doing right now, is wrong. Imago told me she didn't want to give up this life she made. This isn't her life! This is Bubble's life. All these memories and friends are Bubble's, not hers.

Maggie: *winces a bit* But, the real Bubble didn't go to highschool... She didn't go to college, and make all those friends she did.. That was Imago....

Wally: *shakes his head* Not on paper. Not to everyone else. Imago doesn't exist anywhere... Just my memories. I knew her, Maggie. Before--... Back when me and Bubble found Imago in the woods as children.. I knew Imago and cared about Imago and... and even years later with

what happened when those changelings attacked the Reef? You remember that? That was Imago! I was there...

Maggie: I remember... I get that you're upset and don't approve of what she's doing, but what other real option does she have? Even if she tried to live as herself honestly, that's not gonna fly here. You know what happens to Un-reformed drones that get caught..

Wally: **thinks about it** ... I don't.. The only un-reformed drone I know of besides Imago was that other drone she was fighting. All I know is that they were captured by guards.

Maggie: **winces a bit** Chances are that drone is dead by now.. The Guard was so intolerant back then, they either executed them or let them starve to death..

Wally: **ears twitch** That.. was back then though. That was before the hive Reformed. Things are different now, right?

Maggie: No, they're not.. Just because one hive reformed, doesn't mean they all did... **hands clenched tight** There's others out there, and I hope they all get what they deserve...!

Wally: Other hives? I didn't think there were other changelings besides Thorax's hive...

Maggie: Heh, weird, right? How alike they are compared to bees, or wasps..? **ears fold back** There's good Changelings, and Bad ones... Not all Un-reformed are bad, but not all of them are good either... Imago is a good Changeling.. I wouldn't agree to keep her secret and not smack her around myself if I didn't think she was good, hehehe..! **ears droop** I've met a bad one before, even if I didn't know it... And Imago, is far from evil like them..

Wally: **pouts** Well, I know that... I just think the way she's handling this is bad on a moral level. When it comes to what happened with Bubble, she did everything wrong..!

Maggie: **tilts her head** Well, yeah. That's how you feel about it.. It's not like she had very many choices to go with though.. If it came down to keeping a lie going, or to possibly lose your life, I'd go with the lie.. That's how Imago and Mako have been living for years. I dunno if they'd be alive, or would have even gotten to meet if they chose the other route.

Wally: **ears fold back** So she let Bubble die in the process..

Maggie: Wally... She didn't let her die.. A hit to the head, goddess knows how long under the water..? Not everyone can walk away from that. Imago tried to bring her back..... From the sound of how long she tried, she kinda obsessed over it.. **cringes** The thought of losing someone like that is unbearable... She told me she didn't want to give up on Bubble because she loved her that much..

Wally: *ears fold back* *looks down at his hands* ... I wish I could have helped somehow. I wish she would have told me why, until waiting until it was too late.

Maggie: *pats his shoulder gently* If it matters, if it felt like she had a choice I bet she would've.. Figuring out the deep problem for that situation had to be tricky without proper machines to look for it. *shrugs a bit* But for a drone, I can't see her waltzing into a hospital for that, heh..... *ears droop back*

Wally: *rubs his temple and sighs* She could have just brought her to the hospital. Not as a drone but as some other pony even? I mean, she's been Bubble for nearly 20 years now..

Maggie: *nods a bit* She probably could have.... Probably could have just left Bubble on the shores for someone to find her... But it wouldn't have changed the outcome.. Bubble would still be gone..

Wally: Maybe... but at least she could have done everything in her power.. Maybe she did.. *rubs his eyes under his glasses and sighs*

Maggie: *turns and pours him a cup of coffee* It's a lot to process at once, isn't it..? Heheh, I got so used to their bullshit I just kinda rolled with it.. It's still one of the weirdest, craziest things they ever told me.. *puts some sugar and cream in front of him*

Wally: *looks at the coffee and sips it* ... Bleck.. Your coffee is so bitter...

Maggie: *pouts at him* Ponies come here for scenery and conversation, not my coffee..

Wally: *smirk* Hehe.. thanks for talking to me about this... I don't know how I feel about it all yet but.. It's nice to know I don't have to keep it all inside anymore..

Maggie: *smiles* No problem... *smile fades a bit* I know it's a real big morally grey place, but just give it some time.. It sucks lying to our friends' faces..... *looks down at her stomach* But the truth isn't always the best thing either...

Wally: *ears twitch* ... I never thought of telling the truth being a bad thing...

Maggie:Hey Wally...? I don't think I could tell Mako or Imago this, heheh... You remember my b-baby, right...?

Wally: *ears perk* Yeah?

In a brief yet thorough explanation, Margarite confided in Wally the truth that for months she knew exactly who the father of her unborn child was. As well as the huge argument that took place in her bar after hours, when she confronted said pony about the truth of her baby.

Maggie: I was so mad, but now I just feel guilty for saying anything... Some evil bitch was the one who made me lose it, not Singe.. But I blamed him for everything anyway.... I'm still pretty pissed off, but... Telling him just tore him apart..

Wally: *ears fold back* I.. I can imagine... So you are saying that.. It would have been better not to tell him that he was the father?

Maggie: *shrugs* After I lost it..? Yeah, it would've been.... But- you know how all over the map his life is..! I dunno if I could find security with someone like that hanging around my kid...
sighs I dunno what would've been better... I never planned on kids before, but at the moment, I just wanted the best options...

Wally: *looks down* You.. want what's best for you and the baby and.... If I know Singe like I know him, he wouldn't have taken "no" for an answer and would want to be in that baby's life.... Whether that's the right decision, I ... don't know. My gut wants to say yes because you are being honest and straight forward.... but I don't know..

Maggie: *siiiiighs and drinks tea from a travel mug* Moral choices can just never show up in black or white, can they...? It's all just shades of grey... It sucks, but hey. No one said life would be easy.... *offers her drink* Chamomile tea? Since my coffee is bitter? *griiiiiins*

Wally: *grimaces* Your tea is worse than the coffee... *sips the bitter coffee bitterly*

Maggie: You're just a picky customer.~ *boops his nose*

Wally: *smirks* Hmhmhm~ Maybe I am.... Would it be okay if I.. stuck around for a while longer? I could help clean, heh..

Maggie: *nods* Sure, I don't mind one bit.~ *starts washing some of the mugs and glasses* And if you want, you can remake the coffee. Heheheh! You were always better at it than me.

Wally: *smirks* Cleaning your coffee maker was going to be the first thing I do. I don't want you scaring away any potential customers~

Maggie: *staaaaaaares at him, before flinging a wet sponge at his face*

Wally: EEE! *flails his hands before taking his wet glasses off* Ugh... Gross...

Maggie: You think that's bad? Go look in the stallion's room from last night's customer load..

Wally: *grimaces* I feel like I'm about to regret my offer...

Maggie: Too late! You're stuck here now! *hands him a mop*

Wally: *whines*
