

ADAPTING TO SHARED LOVE

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Prologue

"Thorax!" Queen Chrysalis seethed with anger, having just dispelled the traitor's disguise for all her loyal changelings to see. She immediately suspected it was him the moment she saw that glint in *Starlight's* eyes.

His betrayal was still fresh in her children's minds, as they all hissed while she approached him menacingly. Right when Chrysalis stood before him however, she stopped, as she heard a resounding sharp thud followed by another. Confused, Chrysalis turned back, towards the source of the noise.

There she spotted Starlight, the *real* Starlight, desperately striking the base of the throne with a large stone held by her hooves. She was obviously making no leeway, breaking off more chunks from the rock rather than from the throne, yet that didn't deter her from continuing to vainly chip away with steeled resolve.

After a few more strikes, Starlight paused, realizing that she had been spotted. Her first instinct was to drop the stone, then jump into the throne's hollow space beneath, narrowly avoiding a magical blast from Chrysalis as she did so.

"Very clever," said Chrysalis, before buzzing her wings and taking flight towards the throne. There she began to take her time peering

through the gaps, looking for the unicorn. "And clearly Thorax revealed to you the secret of my throne! I can't have powerful ponies using their abilities against me. Even with your embarrassing little rescue attempt, everything has gone according to *my* plan."

"What plan, why did you do all this?" asked Starlight, only to back away when Chrysalis then stuck her head through one of the throne's holes.

"So I can feed, of course!" answered the changeling queen. "By replacing the most beloved figures in Equestria, my drones will be able to store all the love meant for them, and return it here, to me." She flew to the top of the throne, where she took her seat, saying, "Everypony will do as I command, and my subjects and I will feed on their love for generations! Ha ha ha ha!"

In response to their queen's decree, the rest of the changelings cheered and hissed in approval. As that happened, Starlight crawled out from her hidey-hole. She couldn't allow Chrysalis to succeed, couldn't allow Equestria to become nothing more than one giant love buffet for the changelings. At the same time, however, there was nothing Starlight could do. She was all but useless without her magic, Trixie and Discord were captured and cocooned, and with Thorax's hooves bound to the floor, he wasn't of much help either.

As Starlight looked to Thorax, hoping to find some way to free him, she noticed something. His wings, radiant and twinkly ever since forming his friendship with Spike, shimmered with light, giving Starlight an epiphany.

"What if you didn't have to?"

Queen Chrysalis touched down by Starlight Glimmer, hissing as she shouted "RIDICULOUS!"

Immediately, Starlight tried to make a run for it, but had her tail seized by the changeling queen's teeth before being flung at the hooves of two armored drones. They wasted no time, pinning the mare down as their queen approached and leered down at her with contempt in her eyes.

"The hunger of changelings can never be satisfied!" she chided before turning and making her way towards the subdued traitor Thorax. For his treachery, she would make an example out of him.

Before she could reach him, however, Chrysalis stopped and turned back to Starlight when she exclaimed:

"Exactly! Thorax left the hive and made a friend. He shared love, and now he doesn't need to feed. You don't have to live your lives starving all the time!"



The other changelings within the chamber looked to one another with quizzical expressions, a reaction that Chrysalis herself took note of. Her eyes turned steely as if in deep thought, and the chamber subsequently became silent, save for the buzzing wings of her airborne children. After a moment of silent deliberation, Chrysalis spoke.

"You, traitor," she said to Thorax, her back still turned to him.

His front hooves still adhered to the ground, Thorax visibly shrunk at his name before hesitantly giving his response.

"Y-yes, my queen?"

"What she's saying, is it true?" Chrysalis coldly asked. "Have you not felt the need to feed after... making a friend and *sharing* love? Your hunger has been satiated ever since your betrayal?"

If Thorax could rub his hoof at the back of his head nervously, he would have.

"Well I wouldn't say '*betrayal*,' I just--" His words then died in his throat when Chrysalis suddenly turned back to him and fixed him an over-the-shoulder disdainful glare.

"Y-yes," he finished, bowing his head fearfully.

"Hmm," sounded Chrysalis, turning to Starlight, then looking away as she began pacing thoughtfully.

This was entirely new information to the queen, as never in the history of her species had she heard of a changeling sharing its love freely, let alone make a friend. Was Starlight right, would simply sharing love be what finally rids the changelings of their insatiable hunger?

Admittedly, though, there wasn't much proof that would support that theory, other than the traitor's words and his wings. They shined and sparkled like crystals, and they were definitely real. If they were merely a facade created by his changeling magic, then they would have had the appearance of ordinary wings when she dispelled him of his Starlight disguise with a spell earlier.

It was at that moment where Queen Chrysalis was presented with a choice: continue on her with evil plan and no doubt go to war with Equestria should her infiltrators posing as royalty and Twilight Sparkle's friends ever be discovered, or go with the newly presented option that Starlight Glimmer proposed, which would allow the changelings to experience something they hadn't in a very long time. Peace.

Both held great risk for her children should they fail, but only one had a desired result that was more worth it at the end.

"Very well, Starlight Glimmer," said Chrysalis, turning to the captured pony. "You've actually managed to convince me."

"You monster! You'll never get away with... Wait, what?" Starlight blinked, then tilted her head in bafflement. Starlight wasn't alone either, as just about every changeling in the chamber was confused.

"You've convinced me," Chrysalis reiterated. "My plan shall cease here. I'll be releasing you and your pathetic friends from my custody."

Starlight's jaw was slack, the mare utterly puzzled by this sudden turn of events.

"Oh don't get me wrong," Chrysalis said, shaking her head. "I have no intention of reforming my ways if that's what you think this is. I'm merely making the decision that may be more beneficial for my children further down the road. But know this, Starlight Glimmer..."

Just then, the queen took on a more menacing stance.

"If this course of action proves costly to my changelings, and it turns out that what you said was nothing more than trickery, then I will have no qualms enacting one of my many other grand schemes, and your name will be at the very top of my revenge list!"

And with that, she signaled to her drones; it took them a while to realize that she was ordering them to take the pods full of cocooned ponies from the ceiling, but they did so anyway. Once the pods were carefully laid on the chamber floor, Chrysalis had her drones unhoof Starlight as well, then spoke.

"There, take them and be gone from my sight. I happen to know from my vast information network that you possess the magic to accomplish that in one go." Chrysalis's horn glowed green, and she then said, "Here, as a show of good faith, I'll be manipulating the dark stone to leave your magic intact. Well go on then, see for yourself that I'm being trustworthy."

Starlight scrunched her face in concentration, and low and behold her magic collected in her horn unhindered. Right then and there, Starlight had opportunity. With her magic returned, she could easily shatter the dark stone, defeat Chrysalis and her swarm, and rescue her friends!

Then again... that might have been the old Starlight talking, and she wouldn't be practicing what she was preaching, now would she?

Suppressing the urge to fire a beam at the stone, Starlight instead picked up all the pods containing her friends with her telekinesis, then turned to free Thorax from his binds.

"Not him," chimed Chrysalis, stopping Starlight before she could do so. "He isn't going anywhere."

In response, Starlight set the pods down, then turned to the changeling queen, her expression stern.

Blowing a bit of her mane out of her face, Chrysalis scoffed. "Oh don't give me that defiant look. He's not going to be punished for his betrayal if that's what you're thinking. No, I have other, more special plans in mind for him."

"Starlight, just go," Thorax pleaded.

"Well I can't just leave you, you're my friend!" said Starlight. "What if she changes her mind?"

"Somehow, I doubt that," answered Thorax with a shake of his head. "She seems, I don't know, more different now. Genuine, I guess. If this is truly an opportunity to change the hive for the better, then I have to be here! Please, Starlight... trust me on this."

Starlight remained in her position, locking eyes with Chrysalis. After a moment, however, she lowered her head in resentment, sighing "I trust you, Thorax..."

She picked the pods up again, whispered "Good luck" to Thorax as she gave him quick one-sided hug, then hastily made her way out one of the tunnels.

"So," Chrysalis then said once the unicorn was gone, sauntering her way towards Thorax. She stopped right in front of him, then leaned over him, causing him to lean back nervously in response. "Now that she's out of the way, I'm interested in hearing more about this 'sharing love' concept. Care to further elaborate?"

A bead of sweat running down the side of his head, Thorax chuckled anxiously before swallowing dryly.

Chapter 1: Tryout

It had been some time since Starlight Glimmer and her friends made their daring rescue attempt at her castle, and already much had changed. Thorax had explained as best he could to Chrysalis how sharing love had quelled his hunger and, wanting to see if she could recreate the effects for the benefit of her changelings, she decided to run a trial experiment.

She wished to establish a test hive somewhere in Equestria, to see if her children could truly coexist alongside ponies and thrive off the ensuing love as a result. Finding such a place that would agree to house them proved to be difficult, as most of Equestria was wary of the insectoid race. Ponies were right to be skeptical, of course, as the changelings did ruin a royal wedding and attempt a hostile takeover before. There was also the fact that they secretly kidnapped all of the princesses and replaced them with doubles, but Princess Celestia herself managed to keep that from being public knowledge; if the two kingdoms were to have the best possible chance for peace, then only a select few would be privy to that information.

Surprisingly enough, one place agreed to have the test hive within its borders, and it was none other than the Crystal Empire. Queen Chrysalis didn't expect that, as she was sure the royal couple had a personal vendetta against the changelings, or at the very least with her. Then again, Thorax was residing there and personally knew the two, so he might have had some influence over their decision.

Regardless of what she thought of Shining Armor and Candace, Chrysalis dispatched workers to the Empire, and in no time at all, their test hive was constructed in the castle's crystal mines below. With that done, she then sent the required number of changelings needed to properly run it, and appointed Thorax as its leader. Even if Queen

Chrysalis herself wanted to oversee this new hive (which she didn't), she couldn't, as she was much too busy with ruling the main one.

After allowing some time to pass, Queen Chrysalis decided to see if her little experiment had garnered results. She found it strange, walking down the bustling streets of the Crystal Empire, and in broad daylight no less. Granted, no pony knew it was her, as she had changed her form to that of an ordinary earth pony mare, but it was still strange nonetheless.

For her disguise, she had lowered her height to match that of an average mare's and changed her sleek dark carapace into a white coat. Her mane was mostly unchanged, though; the same color and a bit neater, and still sometimes getting in the way of her left eye. Lastly, a simple heart seemingly carved from an emerald was what she chose as her cutie mark. With these radical alterations to her appearance, she easily passed as a typical tourist taking in the sights of what the Crystal Empire had to offer.

So far, she was pleased with what she saw. Nearly everywhere she looked, her children were walking and talking with the crystal ponies; not only that, but they were doing so with their true appearances. None of them seemed like they felt the need to disguise themselves, not even a little.

Walking past several stores, she gave their windows passing glances and spotted some changelings sweeping, restocking inventory, helping customers, or simply manning cash registers. They all looked quite happy, and definitely well fed. However, as much as she would have loved to approach any one of them for questions, there was somepony was she supposed to meet first.

"Well hey there, my queen!"

Or rather, some *bug*.

Thorax landed in front of Chrysalis on his buzzing wings, a bright, cheerful smile on his face. Worried if anypony had heard him announce her as queen of the changelings, as there was a reason she was disguised, Chrysalis tried to act casual while looking for any witnesses. Thankfully, nopony seemed to have caught on.

"Alright, I'm impressed," Chrysalis said aloof. "Tell me, how did you know it was me? Also, remember that this is supposed to be a surprise inspection, so quiet with that name!"

Eyes widening, Thorax smacked a hoof over his mouth.

"Oh, sorry!" he whispered before bringing his hoof back down. "Uh, to answer your question, I know just about everypony here, and I've never seen *you* around before. We also agreed to meet around here, so I just, you know... kinda assumed. I was right though, wasn't I?"

In response, Chrysalis raised her head in a haughty manner and faced away with a humph!

"Correct you may have been, but I'd advise that you exercise discreet next time. *Should* there be a next time," she added. "Chances are that I could have actually been a mare. Then what would you have done, hmm?"

Abashed, Thorax furrowed his brows and rubbed at the back of his head.

"I... see. Sorry. I'll try to be more careful in the future."

"Good, see that you do," she said before walking past him, her head held high. "As an added level of precaution, during the duration of my visit, you are to refer to me by..." She halted in place, then brought a hoof to her chin as she took a moment to think of a plausible pony name.

There was a multitude of options for her to choose from, but ultimately she decided on, "Chandelier. You will call me Chandelier."

"Chandelier, really?" Thorax questioned.

"I don't see why not," Chrysalis replied with a shrug. "Sounds befitting enough for one of my regal status, disguised or no, and it seems to resonate quite well with this crystalline eyesore these ponies here call an empire."

Staring at her, Thorax scratched at the side of his head.

"Uh, but don't you think Chandelier's a bit of a mouthful? Can't I just call you Chandy instead?"

"No," came Chrysalis's swift response before she continued her walk down the street. "Anyway, now that we have the matter of my alias resolved, can we move on to the entire reason for this meeting?"

"The reason?" Thorax said in his momentary stupor, only to then give his head a quick shake when it returned to him. "Right, right, the reason!"

Realizing that she had gone a bit of a ways ahead without him, Thorax immediately ran towards her.

"S-so," he started once he caught up to her, "I think you'll be happy to know that, just like I said in my earlier reports, the experiment has been very successful so far."

"That I can see," said Chrysalis, her eyes skimming through all of the changelings busy mingling with the ponies. "Still, this level of co-habitation couldn't have miraculously happened overnight. Surely there had to be a few hitches along the way, no?"

"Naturally," Thorax answered with a light nod. "The crystal ponies had yet to return during the whole, ahem... *wedding debacle*, but they did later hear about it. Once the test hive was constructed and our numbers walked the streets, it made sense for the ponies here to a bit distant of us, to say the least. Luckily though, with help from Shining Armor and Cadance," Chrysalis slightly grimaced at their names, though Thorax didn't seem to notice, "I managed to set some things in motion that helped break the ice for both of our kind."

At that, Chrysalis halted, staring at Thorax.

"Really now?" she said, tilting her head in interest. "My my, I'd say that you've succeed in piquing my curiosity. From the way you detailed your reports, I was under the impression that you were merely observing the entire time, not consulting with royalty to help bring about our kind's acceptance here. What exactly were those *things* you set in motion then, hmm?"

Embarrassed, Thorax averted his eyes and rubbed a hoof at the back of his head.

"Oh it wasn't anything special, my qu--er... *Chandelier*. Come, I'll show you." And with a wave of his hoof, Thorax signaled for her to follow him down the rest of the street. "We started off small, of course: a few outdoor parties that just about anypony could join. Half the staff were crystal ponies, while the other half were changelings.

"And man, let me tell you: do you know how difficult it is to convince the more skittish of our workers from changing their form while they served snacks? Fortunately though, they did, and the ponies were more aware of our presence, which was just our intention. With each new party after that, we'd add more and more changelings, not to work, but to mingle with the crowd. Things went surprisingly well, and eventually when we started walking the streets, ponies just stopped being so distant."

"Interesting," said Chrysalis in regard to that information.

Moments later, in front of what seemed to be a hospital, she spotted a changeling in a nurse's outfit pushing a filly in a wheelchair. Seeing that, she was reminded of the other changelings she saw working in the stores earlier.

Chrysalis then gestured towards the changeling nurse, saying, "Now that's a peculiar sight. Now how exactly did you accomplish that?"

"What, you mean some of us getting jobs?" Thorax asked. Chrysalis nodded, which prompted him to answer. "Oh, well... the hive doesn't need much maintaining, so a lot of changelings just took to wandering around up here, looking for something to do. I guess at one point one of these shops must have hired a changeling off the street, then another did the same, and another after that. Next thing I know, changelings are returning to the hive with bits and things they bought.

"I suppose that got several more changelings interested, so to help smooth any remaining tension, Shining, Cadance and I developed several training programs designed to help them pursue whatever career they'd like. Looking around now, you can see how well that went. We've become an integral part of the community; we've made new friends here, and some changelings even moved in with ponies! We love and are loved in return, and we haven't felt the need to feed in a long, long time since. We're almost always full."

Hearing all she needed to hear, Chrysalis remained silent and stood still, merely observed her subjects as they went about their day.

So, it was possible for changelings and ponies to love peacefully alongside one another. Not only that, but it was possible for them to be

whatever they strive to be in this foreign land. This was excellent news indeed.

"Hmm, I'm pleased to have witnessed this for myself, then," said Chrysalis. "It's still too early to tell, but perhaps with this information, we'll be able to--" She had to stop mid-sentence, as her stomach just then decided to start rumbling. The noise it made was loud, and she was a bit embarrassed that Thorax had heard it.

Watching his queen blush as she stepped back and held her stomach, Thorax tilted his head and smirked amicably.

"Um. A bit hungry there, are you?" he asked.

"S-silence!" she answered with a shake of her head. "I had to leave the kingdom early to get here, so I had no chance to feed on our love stores. I'll leave now and return so I may get to it!"

She then turned her back to Thorax and made to leave the empire. However, as soon as she took a few steps, Thorax moved in front of her.

"Wait, Chandy!" he said, causing her to stop.

"Chandelier," she corrected him, her expression conveying annoyance.

"That. Listen, you sound awful hungry, and I'd hate for you to pass out or something on the way home. Why don't I take you somewhere so you can fill yourself up with a little something before then?"

Chrysalis's face lit up.

"Ah, of course! Take me to the love stores at the hive here!"

Thorax winced at her enthusiasm, then rubbed at the back of his neck sheepishly before replying.

"Actually... the store's are all empty here. We haven't felt hungry in a long time, remember?"

In response, Chrysalis visibly deflated.

"But," she said, "if there's no stored love, how were you going to feed me?"

"Um..." Thorax looked up and down the street, then jumped as he pointed to a building before walked towards it. "Here, follow me."

Chrysalis was confused, but followed Thorax all the same into the building. Moments later after stepping in, however, she was further perplexed by what she found.

"What is this, some sort of diner?" she questioned.

"Yep!" said Thorax with a cheerful nod. "I figured something from here ought to give you enough energy to make your trip."

Chrysalis looked at the menu hanging above the counter, and upon reading its many selections, she had to keep herself from retching.

"What, you mean pony food?" she said, trying to keep the disgust from making itself known in her voice.

"I know," said Thorax, "regular food doesn't give us nearly the same amount of energy that love does. But hey, it's still better than nothing."

Honestly, Chrysalis would have preferred nothing.

"But... but the chewing, though," she said. "It's... it's disgusting! All that masticating and... and swallowing! I find the whole process to be utterly revolting!"

"You know, I used to think that too," Thorax replied, moseying his way up to one of the stools by the counter before taking his seat. "But Spike and all the others started sharing meals with me, and eventually I kinda grew to like it. I'm sure you will too, if you gave it a chance. Here, I actually know the perfect thing to order if you don't want to do any chewing."

Finding a waiting call bell lying on the counter, Thorax dinged it twice, prompting a crystal mare waitress to step out from the kitchen door. Seeing Thorax seated on the stool, she immediately approached him.

"Well hey, Thorax. What'll it be today?" she asked with a smile, pen and notepad at the ready.

"Hey Glass Tray," said Thorax in return.

Chrysalis managed to keep face neutral, but she was surprised that Thorax and the mare knew each other. Then again, she shouldn't have been, seeing how long Thorax had been living in the empire.

"I'd like two of your best crystal berry smoothies, please. One for myself, and the other for my friend here. Oh, and put them on my tab; don't have my bit bag with me at the moment."

Scribbling his order onto the notepad, the mare nodded.

"Alright, two crystal berry smoothies coming up," she said before heading into the kitchen.

With the mare gone, Chrysalis, not seeming to know what to do with herself in the meantime, took a seat on the stool next to Thorax's.

"So," Chrysalis began, "a smoothie, huh?"

Thorax shrugged.

"Well you said that you didn't want to do any chewing, so..."

Before he could continue, the door to the kitchen flung open as the waitress stepped out, a tray balancing two smoothies held by her mouth.

"Enjoy," the waitress said as she placed the drinks on the counter, then walked back to the kitchen.

"Well that was fast," commented Chrysalis.

Thorax took a quick sip of his smoothie, then responded her.

"Oh yeah, Glass Tray's the best when it comes to smoothies! They're her specialty, and she can whip them up just like that! Anyway, go ahead, try it. Maybe you'll like it like I said."

Chrysalis glanced at the smoothie's straw tentatively. She didn't want to wrap her lips around the thin plastic and suck up what she was sure would be a horrid concoction to her taste buds. She just wanted some nice condensed love.

Sadly, there wasn't any love available for her, so the smoothie would have to do.

She opened her mouth, put the straw in, then began to slowly and steadily drink through it. The cold drink splashed and spread its sweetness over her tongue, and immediately her eyes widened as a result.

"Well?" Thorax asked excitedly.

Chrysalis released the straw, and sat straighter on the stool.

"It's... less terrible than I thought it'd be."

Thorax smirked; she wasn't fooling him.

"Hm, I knew you'd like it," he said before returning to his smoothie, drinking nearly half of it in a matter of seconds. To Chrysalis's surprise, he then recoiled and brought his hooves up to his forehead as if in pain.

"What's wrong?" she asked worriedly.

One of Thorax's rear legs kicked forward at nothing as he answered with, "*Nng*, brain freeze! Drank too fast!"

"Brain freeze?" Chrysalis had never heard of that term before, but she was curious enough to experience it for herself. She secured the smoothie's straw in her mouth, and emulated Thorax by drinking a large amount of it. Moments later, she regretted that decision.

"Ahhh!" she cried, her head in her hooves. "This... this headache! Why would anypony buy these?! These smoothie things should be banned!"

To her dismay, she heard she heard Thorax laughing.

"Why are you laughing!?" she yelled, clutching him but the shoulders. "You should be helping me!"

Through his bouts of laughter, Thorax answer her with, "Give it... give it a bit."

Angered and confused, but mostly angered, she made to shake him silly. She stopped, however, when she noticed that the pain in her brain was subsiding. Soon enough, it was completely gone.

"Huh... I feel better?" she asked.

His smirk refusing to falter, Thorax nodded.

"Yeah, that's brain freeze for you. You have to wait for it to thaw out. But uh, you know what, Chandelier... this was short, but fun. You may not *be yourself* right now, but you had a cute face there when you were freaking out, and I've love to see it again sometime. Oh, that reminds me, actually!"

"Hmm?" hummed Chrysalis, observing Thorax as he searched his person.

Moments later, he had what looked to be a rose hair clip secured in his magic. Where he pulled that out from, especially when he didn't have any bags or the like on him, Chrysalis hadn't the slightest idea.



"Here," he then said, fixing the rose hair clip over the left side of her bangs. "I remember you always had a problem with your mane falling over your left eye, so I bought this earlier to fix that."

"O-oh," came Chrysalis's delayed reply. Curiously, she pawed at the hair clip, finding that it did indeed keep her mane at bay.

"I think it looks very nice on you," Thorax commented with a smile and a nod. "You know, if you ever decide to stop by for another check up, I'd love to have another smoothie with you."

Chrysalis was a... a bit caught off guard by... well, a lot, actually. Perhaps it was because of her previous villainy, but never had somepony told her that they were looking forward to another meeting, let alone give her a gift. Truthfully, she didn't know how to properly respond.

"Um... thank you, Thorax," she said. "I... I appreciate your gift, and... and I look forward to that as well."

Right then and there, Queen Chrysalis felt less hungry, and it wasn't because of the smoothie.

Months had passed after Chrysalis had confirmed Thorax's 'love-sharing' solution to be completely viable in ending a changeling's insatiable hunger, and just like before, much had changed. With permission from Shining Armor and Cadance, Queen Chrysalis and her changelings abandoned their original hive in the badlands and moved into the new one beneath the Crystal Empire. A lot of work went into expanding the new hive to accommodate them all, but once that was done, the changelings began learning from the previous occupants on how to share love, which was still an entirely new and strange concept.

Not all of them were getting it at first, which in turn caused problems for their queen to resolve. Unfortunately, even though she didn't want to admit it, Queen Chrysalis was still a bit unsure about it herself, so she sought the aid of Thorax, who was much more experienced when it came to teaching others the subject. With his help, the changeling transition into pony society went by much smoother.

He was such a major help in fact, that in order to continue distributing the workload of changeling governing evenly between the two, Chrysalis officially appointed him as co-ruler. She was less aggressive than she used to be and was no longer stressed from trying to save her subjects from starvation, and it was a decision that made sense to her; those who were part of the trial hive continued to see him as their leader (some dared to call him a king whenever they believed that Chrysalis wasn't within earshot), and he surprisingly had a knack for leadership. Though admittedly, his methods were a bit hooves-on for her standards.

A proper king he may have been, but it was only in title and power. There was no wedding between him and Chrysalis like many changelings and ponies believed, and there definitely was no love. Aside from the occasional outing they'd partake for a shared smoothie (outings where she'd insist to go under the guise of Chandelier), Chrysalis kept their relationship strictly professional.

Thorax was seemingly fine with where they stood, but that didn't stop him from trying to get Queen Chrysalis from out of her shell. Because of him, all of their subjects were walking amongst the ponies in their natural forms, making friends with them as they shared laughter and good times. That is, however, except for one.

Queen Chrysalis herself...

Chapter 2: Trueself

"They're staring..."

"Well of course they're staring. This is the first time they're seeing the real you out in public."

"I... I don't like it. Let me go into any of these buildings so I can become Chandelier."



Right as Queen Chrysalis turned for an open doorway, Thorax zipped towards it and barred it with his body.

"Nuh-uh, you promised!" Thorax exclaimed with a stern shake of his head.

"Well I *un*-promise!" she shouted in return. Chrysalis didn't like all the eyes focusing on her, eyes belonging to both ponies and changelings. She could feel them silently judging her, and she wanted nothing more than to hide from them.

Stunned by her response, Thorax blinked before speaking.

"Th-that's not how it works!" Before he could get further worked up, he stopped himself. He took a breath, composed himself, then removed himself from the doorway before speaking to her in a more confining manner. "Listen. I know you're a little nervous, and it's definitely not something you're used to, but you have to socialize. Not as Chandelier, but as your real self."

Chrysalis scoffed.

"Well that's easy for you to say. You didn't lead an invasion against Equestria."

"Eh, true," Thorax admitted, rubbing the back of his neck. "Still, that's old news. Us changelings have done such a great job building trust and relations here that everpony in the Empire's just about forgotten. I'm not asking you to make friends with all of the Crystal Empire, just one or two ponies."

"Well what if..." Realizing what she was about to say, Chrysalis's queenly and imposing air faltered, her brows furrowing with uncertainty as she lowered her head. "What if nopony likes me?"

A pause had set in, and Chrysalis was quickly aware of that fact that she had shown weakness. Hoping to remedy that, she regained her regal posture before continuing with, "Ahem. That was a hypothetical question, of course. I mean, who wouldn't want to befriend such a great and sovereign ruler such as myself? They'd be crazy not to."

Like many times before, Thorax wasn't fooled by her display. After spending a considerable amount of time ruling at her side, he learned to read her like a book, and therefore knew that, underneath her hardy exterior, she was an insecurity larva fearful of rejection. Still, if he wanted to get her socializing while sparing her confident facade, then he'd have to appeal to her ego.

"See, you've got nothing to worry about," he said, giving her a reinforcing pat on the back. "You'll do fine. Just show them a little of that Chryssy charm and they'll be eating out of your hoof in no time."

Reacting to the abhorrent shortening of her name, Chrysalis huffed out in annoyance.

"*Chryssy*?" she repeated, her voice underlined with ire as she glared at him. "First you debase Chandelier's name, now my own?"

Unfazed by her glower (though if he was the target of it many months back it would have scared him stiff), Thorax casually inspected the back of his hoof as he gave his reply.

"What? It's a nice name. Easier to pronounce and cute, and I definitely like it."

Chrysalis growled, then turned away to hide her blush as she muttered, "I am not *cute*... I'm dignified."

Despite having a clear opportunity to poke her further (as he definitely heard what she said), Thorax decided against it and instead returned to the original task at hoof.

"Anyway," he started, "to get you out there and start meeting ponies, I've got a wonderful day planned for us."

"Oh, how lovely," Chrysalis replied sarcastically, obviously less than thrilled for what he had in mind.

Ignoring that, Thorax continued.

"Pay attention now, because I'm only going to say this once. First we're going to go to the park. There's a group of ponies there that always get together to play soccer this day of the week and we're going to be joining them."

Chrysalis blanched.

"Wh...what?"

"After that, we're going hiking--without the use of our wings. Lot of travelers like to share their stories when scaling the local mountains, and we'll be listening to any we come across."

"Hiking?! But--"

"Then after that, we'll be going for a nice relaxing picnic."

"Oh. Well that's not so bad," Chrysalis said in relief before putting a hoof over her stomach. "A little love later on does sound goo--"

"And we'll be eating solid food. *Real* food."

"Oh... goody..." said Chrysalis, her expression deflating.

"It's to help train you," Thorax explained matter-of-factly. "If you want to make friends, then you've got to at least learn to chew. If ponies see you sucking love in that scary way you do, then you'll lower your chances to befriend them."

Chrysalis slouched, and her mood already irritable as she gave her reply.

"I don't have much of a choice in this, do I?"

His expression bright and cheerful, Thorax hooked his foreleg with hers, then dragged her in the direction of the park.

"Ha ha, nope!"

The day had already started, and already Chrysalis wanted to go home...

One last thing. Just one last thing to do from Thorax's accursed list of activities, and Chrysalis could finally go home. She thought Thorax's aim was to help her be more social for pony society, not torture her.

They arrived at the park earlier and, true to Thorax's word, a group of ponies were playing soccer there. Naturally they were cautious of the changeling queen the moment they spotted her approaching them, but with a few words from Thorax (who unsurprisingly was already familiar with them), they allowed Chrysalis to join their game.

Chrysalis made it exceptionally clear that she had no intention of running around the field and getting sweaty (that and she was too embarrassed to ask what the exact rules of the game were), so they gave her the position of goalie, which was the easiest to understand. All she had to do was stand at the goal post and stop the ball from going past her; simple enough.

Things were going fine up until where the ball flew towards her, only for her to stop it with her magic. The ponies were furious, and Chrysalis didn't know why until Thorax explained to her that she wasn't allowed to use magic--only her body. After that, she tried again, but

soon regretted that decision when the ball kept striking against her head again and again. She walked off that field feeling dizzy and seeing stars, and she might have gotten several concussions.

Next thing on the list was hiking, and Chrysalis didn't much enjoy that either. She didn't see the point of the scaling the local snow-topped mountain by hoof, especially when they had perfectly good wings. Thorax simply explained that flying would remove the fun out of it and left it at that. In fact, to remove the option of flying altogether, he had them both lug backpacks full of hiking gear, which forced their wings flat against their backs.

They started their hike and, sure enough, they encountered two stallions on the mountain trail. Thorax started talking with them, and they in return began recounting their many many treks up and down the mountain. Chrysalis, on the other hoof, found their tales boring and subsequently tuned them out. That proved to be a near fatal mistake, however, as she became less aware of her surroundings and nearly tumbled off a cliff as a result.

She was clinging onto a rocky edge, her rear legs kicking at air as she screamed fearfully for her life. Fortunately Thorax and the stallions heard her cries and managed to pull her back up in time. After that, Thorax understood if she wanted to leave the mountain, which they did.

Now they were on the third and final part of the activity list, and Chrysalis couldn't wait for it to be over.

"Come on, you can do it."

"I'd rather not..."

"Oh come now, what are you so afraid of?"

"Oh, I don't know, with how well this day has been going so far--*choking?*"

Sitting across from her on the laid out picnic blanket, Thorax tried once again to levitate a single crystal berry towards Chrysalis's mouth via his magic, only for her to sharply turning away from it in distaste.

Setting the berry back into the basket, Thorax relented, at least for the moment.

"You know, we won't get anywhere if you refuse to at least give it a try," he said. Crossing her hooves over her chest, she turned away from him and ignored him, prompting him to continue. "Really, you're being difficult. A small bite, that's all I'm asking."

"Oh, *I'm* being difficult?" she said incredulously, turning back to him. "You're the one trying to force feed me! I'm a queen, and I will bite into that berry when I'm good and ready."

The right side of Thorax's mouth formed into a scowl.

"Oh, and when's that? I'm only trying to *'force feed'* you because you're taking forever! Seriously, you don't even acknowledge the berry; the only time you do is when you move your mouth away from it!"

Chrysalis remained silent, and Thorax soon realized that they were at an impasse. No amount of yelling would get her to eat, so he had to be more civil about it.

"Look," he started, speaking in a calm and more composed manner. "We have to come to some sort of compromise. Is there any reason, other than the supposed chewing, that you don't want to eat the berry?"

Chrysalis's expression momentarily reflected her contemplation, and then she spoke.

"I... I don't trust it. Perhaps I'm still set in my old paranoid ways, but I'm a queen and this is still a foreign land to me. As crazy as it'll sound, I look at the berry and all I can think is that it'll seek to harm me by becoming as sharp as glass the second it's in my mouth..."

Sitting on his haunches, Thorax rubbed his fetlocks under his chin quizzically.

"Hmm... I think I know where you're coming from, and I also think I have the answer. Question, Chryssy: do you trust me?"

"What?" asked Chrysalis, furrowing her brow as she turned back to him.

"Do you trust me?" he repeated before reaching his muzzle into the basket. When he then pulled it out, a single berry was held clenched in his teeth by its leaf. "Chryssy" he muttered through his teeth, "if you trust me, then take the berry from my mouth. I promise you that it and I won't hurt you in anyway."

Chrysalis pulled her head back, stunned by his actions. This... this *stunt* he was trying to pull in order to get her to eat, it made him look silly. She was embarrassed, not for herself, but for him!

Still, what he said did bring up one question to her mind. *Did* she trust him? She made him leader of the trial hive, later a co-ruler of the changelings, and now he was with her, trying to get her to eat for her own benefit. She asked herself deep down, and was surprised by what the answer was.

Without saying anything, she leaned towards him, her eyes locked on his as she slowly opened her mouth. She gently clamped her teeth

onto the berry's end, and before she could bite down onto it, she paused. She noticed that he was looking directly into her eyes, and hers into his.

At that moment, Chrysalis felt... strange. She had never been this physically close to another before; well, at least not without them cowering, that is. He didn't seem to be frightened in the slightest, and she didn't quite know what to make of it.

Soon realizing that they were ogling at each other too long to be declared normal, Chrysalis sliced off her end of the berry and immediately pulled away to chew it. She'd only taken a small portion of the berry, but it was a start.

After plopping the rest of the berry into his own mouth and eating it, Thorax spoke, albeit a bit nervously.

"Eh... so... How are... How's the berry treating you? Good, right?"

After facing away from him to hide her brightly blushing face, Chrysalis took a moment to thoroughly chew before giving him her response.

"It was... adequate. Though I think I still prefer it in smoothie form..."

"*And* she remembered to smile. Oh you should have seen it; they didn't run off, and she was able to hold down a normal conversation with them. Then after that, we went to the park and encountered this couple feeding the ducks."

"Thorax..."

"Chryssy said that that looked like fun, so she politely asked them if they had any extra bread."

"Thorax, could you..."

"They did, so the four of us sat there, just talking and feeding the ducks toge--"

"Thorax!"

Frightened by the sudden shout of his name, Thorax jolted straighter in his seat. He gave his head a quick shake as he recomposed himself, then faced forward steadily over the table located in one of the Crystal Palace's many tea rooms. There, sitting across from him with an embarrassed look on her face, was his friend Princess Cadance. They were having one of their weekly tea sessions, and this was the first instance where Cadance had to stop Thorax from talking.

"Sorry," she quickly apologized. "It's just... when I brought up the topic of Chrysalis, I didn't think you'd go on and on about her. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad to hear that she's making good progress, but I didn't think you'd go on a one-sided tangent there..."

"Oh, um..." Completely abashed by what she said, as he didn't mean to drone on like he did, Thorax turned his head and coughed dryly into his hoof before responding with, "Eh, yeah... I probably should have just said that she was doing fine and left it at that, huh?"

Cadance gave a warm, lopsided smile.

"Would have spared me that half an hour of trying to keep up, but yeah, that would have been appreciated." Just then, she redirected the subject to one Thorax didn't expect. "Um, listen, Thorax. I don't mean to pry, and this is a completely shot in the dark, but... you seem to have some rather, well, let's just say *strong feelings* for Chrysalis. Is there something more going on there than just teaching her to be more social?"

That question made Thorax feel warm, uncomfortably so. He readjusted himself awkwardly on his seat before giving his reply.

"Uh. I.... I don't think I follow. She's the queen and I'm the king, and I like to think that we've at least become good friends by now. Is that what you mean?"

To his apprehension, Cadance shook her head.

"No, Thorax," she said. "What I'm trying to allude to is more than just simple friendship between you two, and I have a sneaking suspicion you know exactly what that is."

"You can't be serious, Cadance," Thorax replied, shrinking in his seat. "You're saying that I... with her?"

Shrugging nonchalantly, Cadance's response was "Hey, I know it when I see it. I am the princess of that, after all."

In response, Thorax chuckled dryly as he waved that comment away.

"I mean, sure she's very pretty, and cute at times, and actually kind of nice when you get to know her, and puts on this adorable face when she gets a brain freeze, and she--"

Thorax paused, as he noticed that Cadance's brows were raised knowingly as she grinned at him. Her expression said it all to him.

"Oh great," Thorax muttered in defeat, holding a hoof to his chest.

He supposed that that proved it, then. He couldn't fool himself anymore, especially now that Cadance knew. He liked Chrysalis, possibly even loved her. He didn't want to acknowledge it, but for some

time now his chest has been feeling... *different* whenever he thought of Chrysalis. It was a good different, but at the same time, scary, and for what he believed to be good reason too.

"But what if..." he started, only for his ears to lower as his words died in his throat. His attempt still garnered the attention of Cadance, however.

"But what if, *what*, Thorax?" she asked, holding her hoof over the table should he need to hold it for emotional support.

Thorax took her offer, made a steady breath, then spoke.

"But what if she doesn't like me back? I'm sure there are plenty of other ponies or changelings more deserving of her who catch her eye, and I'm just a..." It hurt him to say it, but, "I'm just a lowly drone who got lucky to end up where I am now..."

"Oh Thorax," said Cadance, taking his hoof with both of hers before giving him a warm and reassuring smile. "You're plenty deserving. At least I think so. You ventured out to the Crystal Empire on your own and made a friend here. You were the first ever changeling to accomplish that, and because of you, you were able to give your people a new lease on life. Besides, have you seen Chrysalis show interest in anypony else?"

"Well no, but--"

"Well then you have a window of opportunity," Cadance cut him off with. "Just... tell her how you feel. If she likes you back, then that's great! If she doesn't, well... well at least you'll feel better getting that off your chest."

"Tell her how I feel, huh? Heh, well that's easy for you to say," Thorax replied, huffing in amusement. "Love between changelings is

unheard of, much less for a queen and a drone. We were always kept busy collecting love for the benefit of the hive as a whole, so romance isn't something we're experienced with. The idea of keeping love solely between two beings seemed a little selfish to us at the time."

"*At the time*, Thorax," Cadance point out. "The changelings aren't hungry anymore, so it's perfectly acceptable if you want to pursue romantic interests."

Thorax titled his head, his eyes skimming over the table listlessly.

"I suppose," he then said. "Still, I can't just up and tell her! Um, what is it that you ponies say that a situation like this needs? Eh, timing?"

Releasing his hoof, Cadance leaned back in her chair and rubbed at her chin as in thought.

"Timing could be good," she said. "Is there some big changeling holiday coming up that'd be perfect?"

To her displeasure, Thorax shook his head.

"We were always working. No time for holidays, remember?"

"Right," Cadance acknowledged, her hoof returning to stroking her chin. Soon enough, a suggestion came to her. "Hearth's Warming is just around the corner, with a bit celebration the empire if planning for the occasion, what about that?"

Again, Thorax tilted his head, as he wasn't familiar with the term.

"Hearth's Warming, what's that?" he asked.

Cadance was nearly shocked to hear that come out of his mouth, but then she remembered him stating that changelings didn't really care for holidays. Seeing as she was the one who first introduced him to the holiday, she figured it was up to her to explain its significance to him.

"Wow... Thorax. Uh, better get cozy in that chair, because you're going to be in it for a while longer. So long ago, before the two sisters, before Equestria even existed, there were the three tribes that didn't exactly see eye to eye..."

Chapter 3: Confess

It was Hearth's Warming day, and the air was charged with excitement and merriment. Ponies and changelings had taken to nearly every street, essentially turning the entire Crystal Empire into one big party as they celebrated with food, drink and music. The changelings were largely unfamiliar with the carols their crystal pony friends sang, but after giving them a few listens, they too joined in.

Yes, just about everyone was enjoying themselves and the company they kept, and deep in the thick of it all were the beloved king and queen of the changelings themselves.

"Well, this Hearth's Warming thing is certainly something, isn't it," said Chrysalis, observing a changeling and pony huddle shoulder to shoulder as they laughed and drank eggnog.

Watching the same thing in astonished earnest as he stood by her, Thorax nodded.

"Boy, you can say that again," he said. "When Hearth's Warming was explained to me some time ago, I thought everypony would be celebrating it by spending time with loved ones by the fire, not partying out in the streets!"

"Still," Chrysalis mused. "It's nice seeing our subjects mix so well with the crystal ponies. Really helps to hammer how successful our efforts have been, don't you think?"

Again, Thorax nodded.

"Oh yeah, definitely. Being here to see the fruits of our labors up close, so worth it."

The two then went quiet after that, taking a moment to really soak it all in. Soon enough, Thorax looked up to Chrysalis, only for his mouth to form into a large and excited smile when he noticed something different about her.

"Oh hey, you're wearing the rose clip I gave you!" he said, obviously thrilled to see that she was. "I thought you said you were saving it for special occasions."

Feeling the heat rising in her cheeks, Chrysalis immediately faced away from him.

"Well... this is a special occasion," she answered, using her hoof to play with the clip in her mane. "I heard that Hearth's Warming was gonna be big, and since we planned on being out and about for all this, I figured I'd at least look my best."

That may have been what she said, but Thorax knew what she really meant. She just wanted him to see her with it; his gift to her from so long ago.

"Well I'm glad to see you with it," he said, giving her a warm smile. "With or without it, though, I still think you look cute."

Still looking away from him, Chrysalis grumbled something in response. Thorax couldn't make out what she said, but he still thought she was adorable regardless.

Just then, Thorax saw his moment, his window of opportunity. Right then and there, he had to let Chrysalis know how he felt, lest he'd never be able to rid himself of the pressure that builds in his chest whenever he thought of her. Like Cadance said: even if she didn't like him back, then at least he'd feel better.

He hoped, anyway.

Hoof to his chest, Thorax controlled his breathing and tried to still his rapidly beating heart. He was getting nervous, increasingly so, so he'd have to do it before he chickened out. He took a deep breath in, exhaled, then made his attempt.

"Chrysalis... I... I have something to tell you," he started.

Chrysalis's ear twitched in response to her name, then she turned back to him.

"Hmm?" he hummed in acknowledgment.

C'mon, Thorax, it's now or never, he thought.

"For..."

To his fear, he was getting skittish, as he was looking down to his shuffling forelegs. After taking another breath, he tried again, this time with more gusto.

"Chrysalis. For... for the longest time now, I've--"

"Nog for the king and queen, and this street's cutest couple?" asked a stallion as he butt in, presenting a tray of mugs full of eggnog to them.

His momentum thrown in for a loop, Thorax's posture jolted straighter as he blurted out, "For the longest time I've been wondering if you wanted a drink! Yeah, that's it!"

Using his magic, he took two mugs and presented the other for her to take. Outside, he kept a cheerful demeanor, but in the inside, he was silently berating himself for screwing up his chance.

Chrysalis eyed the mug curiously, then did the same to Thorax. She was sure he had much more to say than to simply offer her eggnog, but she supposed that she may have just imagined that. She accepted the mug with her own magic, then the two walked to a less dense part of the street so they could enjoy their drinks.

Things after that went well enough. They chatted idly, watching their changelings enjoy themselves with their pony companions while the two occasionally took sips from their eggnogs. Minutes into their conversation, however, Chrysalis began to notice, little by little, some rather odd behavior from her subjects.

She didn't attend many parties, so she wasn't quite sure at first, but her changelings seemed to have been enjoying themselves a little too much. Those who were laughing were doing so heartily, and there was a visible lack of balance for both the ones standing still and the ones walking. Upon paying closer attention to a changeling who stumbled past, she observed that its face was incredibly flushed, almost like it was... like it was drunk.

Her brows furrowing, Chrysalis brought the eggnog to her sights, the drink that was being freely served. Wanting to confirm her suspicion, she brought the mug to her lips for a tentative sip. In no time at all, she downed the liquid, then smacked her tongue against the roof of her mouth to better taste it. As far as she could tell, it was non-alcoholic, so something else had to be the cause.

"Thorax," said Chrysalis, her eyes focused on her changelings in the crowd.

"Hmm?" she heard him reply.

"Do you notice something strange happening here?" she asked.

"Strange?"

"Yes," she said with a nod. "Something's happening *only* to our subjects. They appear to be drunk, but it can't be alcohol because otherwise the ponies would be affected as well."

"...Oh... oh that's a big problem."

Eyes still locked on her subjects, Chrysalis tilted her head in confusion.

"Problem? Why do you say that?" she asked. "I mean, sure they're inebriated for some reason, but things should be fine as long as they don't get themselves hurt or break something."

There was a pause before Thorax, with his words slightly slurred, spoke.

"I'm not talking about our subjects, Chryssy... The real problem I'm seeing here is..."

"Is?" she repeated, wondering why she now felt what seemed to be breathing on her flank.

"The real problem is..."

It took Chrysalis a few seconds to put together why he sounded so unfocused, but by the time she had an inkling as to why, it was already too late.

"Is how I can't get enough of this flank!" Thorax exclaimed, seconds before pouncing on said flank--*her* flank.

The moment his hooves planting themselves on her side, right where her cutie mark would be if she had one, Chrysalis's eyes widened, her neck extending to it full length as she produced an "Eeep!"

"Th-Thorax," she then uttered, her legs inexplicably locked in place. "What's gotten into you?"

His response was something Chrysalis didn't expect from him--from anypony, for that matter.

"Sorry, but I just... I just *reeeally* love your butt!" he explained with a snicker, his cheek nuzzling her posterior affectionately.

Flattered, yet alarmed, Chrysalis's tail instinctively moved to cover her more private areas as she slipped away from Thorax, which in turn caused him to slump onto the crystal pavement below. He laid flat on the ground, staring up at Chrysalis with a goofy grin on his face.

"Thorax," said Chrysalis. She craned her neck lower to him, then gently gave the side of his face a few taps before speaking. "Hey, get a hold of yourself! I need you to tell me what's going on. You and just about every other changeling here is behaving like this. I need answers, dammit!"

To her annoyance, Thorax's smile grew brighter, accompanied by a blush spreading over his face.

"I... I think I know what's going on," he drawled, his head lightly swaying as it tried to maintain balance. "But... but I don't want to say it out loud. Don't want to scare anypony. Come closer to I can... can whisper it to you."

Anxious to hear what he believed the cause to be, and why it would be so dire for him to whisper it, Chrysalis obliged and brought her face closer to his.

"Alright, now tell me," she whispered. She lightly scowled when he shook his head.

"No, closer..."

"Like this?"

"Closer~"

How close did she have to be? Any closer and their muzzles would bump into one another. Regardless, she did as she was told.

"Alright," she said. "This is as close as I can physically get. Now can you tell m--*mph!*"



To her shock, Thorax shot forward, pressing his lips against Chrysalis's.

Chrysalis was stunned, her eyes wide and unblinking as Thorax's forked, serpentine tongue invaded her mouth and slithered its twin tips along her teeth and pointy fangs. What came as a much bigger surprise to Chrysalis, however, was that she made no attempts to stop him. No, it was quite the opposite, in fact. Her tongue instead met with his, the both of them sliding over one another as she kissed him back.

They both hummed contently into the other's mouth, their tongues battling it out for dominance as they did so. Losing herself in the moment, Chrysalis lurched her head forward, which prompted Thorax to do the same. She wasn't aware of how long they played their little game, as time seemed convoluted to her; all she could feel, all she could taste was Thorax, as well as a strange, blooming feeling in her chest.

Moments later, before things could escalate any further from mere kissing, Chrysalis remembered that they were out in public, and immediately separated and stood tall from Thorax in a panic. To her relief, it seemed as if no pony had witnessed what the two royals were getting into. The changelings were still seemingly intoxicated and their pony friends were worriedly attending to them. It seemed that Chrysalis wasn't the only one to notice her subjects' strange behavior.

It warmed her heart, knowing that her changelings now had good hooves to fall back on.

Chrysalis looked down to Thorax, whose face was profusely blushing as he gazed up at her from the ground, and it was then that she fully grasped what had happened to her subjects. She found the cause through their kiss: Thorax's body had an overabundance of love, so much so that he was practically salivating it.

She didn't think that it would happen so soon, but it seemed that the changelings and the crystal ponies were getting along a little too well with each other. Normally that'd be fine, as it was what Thorax and

Chrysalis both intended and worked so hard for, but there was one thing she overlooked.

With the two species celebrating their friendship during a festive holiday like Hearths Warming together, love was in the air. In this case, however, literally. She should have noticed it before, but the crowd, perhaps the whole Empire, was generating it, and in massive amounts.

One thing that wasn't well known about changelings is that they don't need to feed off love directly; they can also absorb it through their bodies. However, due to their evolution brought about by them always scavenging for love, something happens to them in the rare cases where they have too much of it in their systems. A chemical unbalance happens within their bodies, and the effects it has on changelings is remarkably similar to what alcohol does to ponies.

Chrysalis thought her changelings seemed drunk, but now that she knew what was happening, they might as well be. Being a queen, her body had a much, much higher tolerance for love than that of a drone, so it was up to her to explain to the ponies worried over their changeling friends.

The instructions she gave them afterwards went something along the lines of: some time away from large crowds, perhaps a little coffee and bread, and they'd be right as rain again.

"Oh no..."

That was what Thorax muttered some time later when he became much more clearheaded. At first, he was unsure as to where he was, but after his senses began to gradually return to him, he discovered himself to be lying on Chrysalis's back as she walked through the dimly lit halls of the changeling castle.

Once he began to recall what happened at the surface, where the memory of him behaving in an inappropriate manner and stealing a kiss from Chrysalis popped into the forefront of his mind, he groan as he covered his face with his hooves in embarrassment. He didn't mean to act like that, something just came over him.

Her ears twitching in response to the noise he produced, Chrysalis spoke, though she kept her gaze forward.

"Mm, of sound mind now, are we?" she asked.

Face still buried in his hooves, Thorax considered staying silent. With any luck, she'd think that he was asleep, then hopefully drop him off at his chambers. He'd rather deal with the aftermath of his actions later than sooner.

"If you're pretending to be asleep, Thorax, don't bother. I can feel your face cowering between my wings."

Looks like it's sooner, then...

"Um, h-hey!" Thorax said, a nervous smile forcing itself onto his face as he shot his head straight up. "I wasn't pretending, I was... uh, I just had a bit of a headache is all."

Being unable to see her face, it was difficult for Thorax to read if she was buying his excuse or not. After an uncomfortable pause, Chrysalis spoke.

"Mm, considering what just happened to you and the other changelings, I suppose some effects are bound to linger."

Furrowing his brow, Thorax tilted his head a bit to the side.

"After what happened to me and the other... what?" he said.

"What, you don't remember? It only happened like, what, an hour ago." When he remained silent, Chrysalis had a quick chuckle before deciding to enlighten him. "Our subjects and the ponies were producing too much love, and we were all in the thick of it. Our changelings absorbed it, got drunk off it, and started to behave erratically."

She looked over her shoulder, then gave Thorax a haughty, amused look.

"*Some* of our changelings, however, acted a tad more erratic than others. So," she paused intentionally, "you love my butt, do you?"

Breaking under her gaze, Thorax brought his hooves back over his face.

"Yeeeah, about that... I'm... I'm sorry. If it wasn't for all the love, I wouldn't have just, y-you know." He sighed. "Things are... things are about to get a whole lot awkward between us from here on out, huh?"

"Oh I wouldn't go so far as to say that," Chrysalis said as she faced forward again, much to Thorax's surprise. "Like you said, it was the excess love in your system that had you behave like that. You weren't in control of yourself. Still, that kiss though..."

The kiss. Thorax lamented the fact that she brought it up, as he really hoped she wouldn't. Holding his head as he shook it in despair, Thorax held his tongue. Even if he did speak, what could he say that would save him from the uncomfortable situation he found himself in? He didn't think anything could.

Noticing his silence, Chrysalis decided to take the reins of the conversation once more.

"Well," she started, albeit a bit awkwardly, "drunk or no, the desire to kiss me didn't just stem from nowhere. Clearly, at least at that moment, you harbored some... attraction for me. But rather than run off guesses and conjecture, how about you tell me why you decided to kiss me."

Thorax flinched, placing hooves flat on her back as he sat up straighter and clenched his teeth anxiously. Whether she was giving him an opportunity to come clean with his feelings for her, or she was interrogating him, he hadn't a clue.

"Uh..."

"Oh come now," said Chrysalis. "A simple answer, that's all I want. Here, I'll even make it easier for you." She cleared her throat, then said, "Thorax, do you like me?"

That seemed like an opportunity to Thorax, but he still wasn't quite sure just yet.

"Of course," he replied. "You're our queen. We all love and adore you."

Chrysalis scoffed in amusement.

"I know my children adore me, it's only natural. But what I wanted to know was: do *you* like me."

With that, Thorax began to believe that perhaps it wasn't an interrogation after all.

"W-well," he said, lying flat on her back while allowing his hoof to hang over her side. "I... like you, yeah. Ever since you decided to take Starlight's offer of sharing love, I've started seeing a side to you that I never knew existed. If somepony had told me years ago that Chrysalis

was smart, witty, fun to be around, and has a cute smile, well... well honestly I wouldn't have believed them."

Unbeknownst to Thorax, his flattery caused Chrysalis's face to contain a bright, crimson blush.

"I've gotten the chance to see the real you, and I was in awe of every bit of what I saw. I was afraid of you then, but I guess I still am now."

At that, Chrysalis half-grimaced.

"Still afraid of me? Even after telling me all that? What, do I still give off that menacing aura?"

Quick to answer, Thorax shook his head.

"No. Well... not to those who know you've changed, at least. I'm afraid for... different reasons..."

"Different reasons?" Chrysalis questioned.

Resting his head onto the back of her mane, Thorax nodded.

"Yeah, different reasons... Like I said, you're an amazing changeling mare, Chryssy. Good company, sharp as a knife, and... and pretty darn sexy, if you don't mind me saying so. Any stallion, be it changeling or pony would be lucky to have you." Using his hoof, he drew circles in her mane as he then muttered, "Not being deserving of you one day... that's what I'm scared of. Heh, not like I'd ever have the chance."

Once Chrysalis reached the end of the hall, she stopped, as the path then split into two directions. The left hall lead to Thorax's chambers, and the right to her own.

"Mm," sounded Chrysalis, her expression conveying deep thought and consideration as she looked down both ends.

"Well, I guess this is where we part ways for the night," said Thorax. "Goodnight."

Once he made to get up and off of her, however, Chrysalis held him onto her with her magic as she casually strode into the right hallway, much to Thorax's bewilderment and confusion.

"Uh..." he uttered unassuredly, turning back to where the path split. "Aren't we turning in to our own rooms for the night? What are you doing?"

Her stride changing into a confident saunter, Chrysalis answered him with:

"Giving you a chance."

Chapter 4: Copulation --Adult Scene—

Large, imposing doors swung inwards as Queen Chrysalis waltzed into her private chambers, and much like how hunters bring their captured pray back to their dens, she carried a meek and stunned Thorax on her back. Using her magic, she closed the doors behind her, then focused on the translucent cocoon filled with luminescent fluid lighting the room, which was adhered to the ceiling above. With a quick spell she adjusted its brightness, making the room dimly lit.

Once that was done, she made for the center of the room, where her lavish bed lied in wait. Upon reaching the foot of it, she enveloped Thorax in her magic, then, without saying so much as a word, tossed him onto it.

"Wha!" he cried, landing on the mattress's silk satin sheets on his back.

Before he could inquire as to what was going on, Chrysalis crawled onto the bed and stood over him, a predatory glint in her eyes as he stared directly down at him. Their faces were a good few inches away from one another, but regardless, Thorax swallowed dryly. He didn't know what was going on, whether he was suddenly in trouble with her or not. Almost immediately, he tucked his forelegs over his chest timidly, his expression somewhat fearful as he hesitantly made eye contact with his queen looming over him.

"Uh..." he began, unsure on how to determine her intentions. "So... so this is your room, huh? First time in here, and I gotta say: it's... it's very nice. I like the uh... Well the bed's nice, so... Yeah."

Chrysalis didn't respond, instead choosing to keep him as the focus of her intimidating sight. If it wasn't obvious, she had no intention of discussing home decor. Perhaps it was a lingering byproduct of the old tyrannical life she left behind in favor of her current, grander one, but she enjoyed seeing him squirm beneath her, enjoyed seeing his chest rise and fall with every anxious breath he took. It made her feel powerful, and like with everything else she preferred, in control.

Curious to see if she could draw a reaction from him, her mouth curled into a devilish smirk before she opened it, Thorax's eyes widening upon spotting her bared fangs. He'd seen them plenty of times before, sure, but he never noticed how pointy they were until just that moment. It certainly didn't help that her tongue and the inside of her mouth were glowing a bright green in the near darkness (a result that happens to a changeling's flesh when they've sustained off a healthy diet of love), as they further highlighted the sharp points they ended in.

With Thorax's body frozen in fear, he could only watch hesitantly as Chrysalis lowered her head, slowly bringing her open fangs closer and closer to his exposed neck. Once he felt their points rest on his chitin, his legs twitched before instantly locking once more. Chrysalis was powerful, he knew that. The smallest amount of effort would be all she'd needed to pierce his neck. At that moment, fear was the most prominent emotion he felt, but strangely enough, there was something else he was feeling, something he didn't expect at all in his situation.

Excitement.

Slowly, Chrysalis brought down her teeth, Thorax shutting his eyes and hitching his breath as he felt two sets of pin-point pressure grow against his neck. Right as it felt as if they were about to finally penetrate, Thorax was both shocked and relieved when they eased off, only for Chrysalis to instead run her long tongue over the area.

"Ah," he moaned unintentionally, shuddering at how her saliva cooled his carapace. And with that action, he finally understood what her aim was.

Realizing that he was completely at her mercy, Thorax became seemingly petrified, his face blushing deeply as Chrysalis then ran her tongue under his chin. She moved it in slithering motions as it traveled upwards, only for its tip to flick off his jawline teasingly as she retracted it. She redoubled her disarming smirk, causing Thorax to smile meekly in return as she neared her muzzle closer to his.

Once they were just a mere few inches away, she paused, then peered into his eyes with her intimidating gaze again. Thorax stared back, occasionally glancing at her fangs, much to hesitant to dare look anywhere else that wasn't her. Moments later, he nearly shouted when Chrysalis swiftly closed what little distant remained, only for his mouth to be silenced as she forced her lips against his.

Stunned, Thorax stared in disbelief at her closed eyes; it took his brain a while to realize that she hadn't struck him like he thought, but was instead kissing him. Her lips were locked with his, and she hummed as her tongue pried at his mouth for passage. Relaxing, Thorax gradually built the courage to return her efforts, his own tongue poking out to meet hers.

Their two tongues slid over and twisted around one another, but right as Thorax began to enjoy it, Chrysalis, without warning, pulled away. A thin string of their shared saliva linking their mouths grew in length as she separated, but soon broke as she stared down at him with panting breath. She brought back her chilling gaze, and once again Thorax was spellbound with apprehension by it.

"Why so tense, Thorax?" Chrysalis asked knowingly, her cheshire smirk betraying her feign of ignorance. "You seem fainthearted, unnerved even." She then leaned over his ear, her fangs grazing over it

as she whispered, "Are you perhaps...*scared*?" She gave his ear a quick sensual lick, saying, "My, I wonder why."

His breathing deepening, Thorax struggled to find his words.

"N-normally, no. Right now, though, as I'm currently pinned beneath you..." he smiled nervously, tucking his legs in closer to himself, "m-maybe a little bit."

Chrysalis chuckled at that, then swiftly brought her toothy smirk inches away from his muzzle. He flinched, which greatly amused her.

"Oh come now," she singsonged dejectedly. "Surely the king of the changelings would be daring enough to touch his queen~" She extended her tongue, ran its length over his lips, then watched as his face turned a fiercer shade of beet red.

"I... I-I..." Thorax stuttered, only to go stock still when Chrysalis then snaked her muzzle into the crook of his neck.

Chrysalis enjoyed toying with her new plaything, peppering his neck with love bites and teasing licks. She reveled in her actions, felt empowered by them. Every subtle jerk, every half noise she managed to produce from him was a small victory to her.

Eventually, however, her ministrations induced an entirely different reaction from him.

"Oh?" Chrysalis soon mused in surprise.

She looked back for a brief moment, then returned her attention to Thorax, her large, predatory grin catching him unawares.

"Well, well, well," she chimed. "Seems that you finally got around to touching your queen after all. Though I must say, this is quite the unconventional way to do it."

Overwhelmed with embarrassment, Thorax immediately panicked.

"I--I'm sorry!" he apologized. "It's just that, w-with all the touching and stuff, it... it just slipped out!"

Thorax was distraught; his penis has slipped from his internal sheath, grown fully erect, and was rubbing against the inside of Chrysalis's rear leg's inner thigh. Being a male changeling, his reproductive organs were kept internally within his body, and only his penis would extend outside, for obvious reasons, of course. Additionally, his member was much different from a pony stallion's; it was green, and had a thick base that got a bit thinner as it reached its spearhead shaped tip. And just like Chrysalis's tongue, it glowed.

Chrysalis looked back to his member, admiring how it stood out so clearly in the dim light.

"My, it appears as if your little friend there is looking for some attention," she said, licking her lips as she turned back to Thorax.

His eyes widening, Thorax blinked, then shook his head anxiously as he replied with, "Wh-what? ...Oh. N-no no, my uh, *little friend's* just fine, thank you very much! C-certainly nothing a queen such as yourself needs to concern yourself with!"

Upon hearing that, Chrysalis smirked, then got the most devilish idea.

"Oh relax, Thorax," she said huskily, shimmying herself lower down his body. "I just want to give it a little look-see, no need to be so

coy. In fact, if you're worried about a queen looking at you there, I can easily remedy that~"

"What are you--"

Before Thorax could finish that sentence, a green, unearthly flame quickly enveloped Chrysalis, then disappeared just as soon as it came. Next thing Thorax knew, he wasn't looking at Queen Chrysalis anymore, he was instead looking at Chandelier.

"There we go. Much better now, wouldn't you agree?" asked Chrysalis.

In saying that, Thorax noticed that, yes, she did change her appearance, but she kept a few of her original features. Her long glowing tongue, for one. He wouldn't dare call her out on it, but he was sure she did that on purpose, just keep him on edge.

With Thorax watching in strange balance of apprehension and awe, Chrysalis (or *Chandelier* for that moment) slowly shuffled herself lower down his laid body, not stopping until she was comfortably positioned between his rear legs. With a cat-like smirk on her face, she, with precise deafness, then leaned forward, her lengthy tongue unraveling from her maw as her muzzle grew nearer to his mast inch by inch.

Seeing her so close to his hard tool, Thorax shook, and he wasn't sure why. Possibly it was because he was fearful, or perhaps he was simply excited... could have been both for all he knew. This was Chrysalis, *his* queen, despite his equal status to her. He had both loved and feared her for a large majority of his life, and he was unsure how to handle lusting over her.

Matter of fact, he began to suspect Chrysalis knew of this as well. That would certainly explain why she chose to don her Chandelier alias, perhaps to help set aside his preconceived notions of her while they got

intimate together for the first time. Thorax admired that it actually helped ease some of his anxiety somewhat, as well as add a certain bit of... *kinkiness* to it that he found himself surprisingly agreeing with.

After taking a breath, Thorax shut his eyes, tried to relax, and waited.

It initially caught him off guard, but the first thing he felt was her hot breath hitting his length, making it twitch in response. What came next was the wet feeling of her tongue, pressing itself flat against the underside of his member. The tip of her tongue twisted and curled around Thorax's base, teasing him before she began to run its cool and slimy texture upwards in one sensuous lick.

"Ah," Thorax breathed, a pleasant chill coursing through his spine as her tongue reached his tip.

Tongue still on his cock, Chrysalis smirked widely around her open mouth. She curled her tongue around his tip, almost securing it, then had it spiral down the rest of his length, making him squirm in the process. Taking great enjoyment in his reaction, she placed her forelegs on his inner thighs, then positioned her mouth right over his tip.

She tightened her tongue's grip on Thorax's spire, and as his breath hitched while he took in air through his clenched teeth, Chrysalis struck swiftly. She brought down her head, his tip disappearing past her lips as she quickly engulfed it with her mouth. Thorax's eyes widened, his jaw going slack as he involuntarily lurched forward.

Making small, barely audible half-noises, tentatively he stared down to Chrysalis. There he found her staring back, her lips locked around his tip and her tongue slithering in pumping motions up and down the rest of his length. The warm yet cool wetness of her tongue as it worked his shaft, coupled with the comforting warmth of the inside of her mouth, it was completely overwhelming to Thorax. His head fell

back due to the resulting pleasure of her ministrations, his tongue hanging out the side of his mouth as he breathed unevenly towards the ceiling.



Seeing him in such a placid state, it was only natural for Chrysalis to feel prideful of her skills when it came to oral. Even if said skills were a bit rusty. The last time she preformed fellatio, it was on Shining Armor, where she was disguised as Princess Cadance sometime before the royal wedding. He said that was the best blowjob she'd ever given him, and Chrysalis still snickers whenever recalling the memory.

Like most changelings, she was well versed in a wide number of sexual acts, which was necessary more often than not when in long and deep cover infiltration. Back in those days, sex was just a means to an end, a way to further cement their false identity so they could continue to collect love for the hive in secret. Changelings becoming intimate

with each other was an extremely rare occurrence, as they were all working in ensure they had enough love for the hive's survival.

Now that their kind was accepted and love was abundant, they could copulate just for the mere enjoyment of it, just as Chrysalis and Thorax were at that moment.

Still, Thorax seemed to be enjoying himself a little too much for Chrysalis's liking, as she preferred her partners a bit of the submissive side. Wanting to keep him on his hooves, she lowered her head, allowing even more of his pulsing rod to sink into her mouth. As she did so, however, she *accidentally* grazed his flesh with one of her pointy fangs. Almost right away, she got her desired response.

"Y-ya!" Thorax yelped, his pleasure-drunk brain snapping to the present. He unknowingly placed a hoof on her head, ready to push her away. Using nearly all of his will power at the last second, however, he managed to prevent himself from doing that.

Chrysalis paused, looking up to him expectantly. Going by the saucy look she was giving him, Thorax could practically read what she was thinking.

Well, are you going do something with your hoof there, or not?

Trying to save face, Thorax met her gaze with a forced smile, then used his hoof to instead gently part a bit of her mane from obscuring her eye. It was a sweet gesture, but Chrysalis knew what he nearly did. In fact, she was kind of hoping he would, too.

Nevertheless, Chrysalis continued where she left off. She brought her lips further down his shaft, taking in as much of him as she could. Soon enough, her lips were wrapped around his base, and his tip would have made her gag if she wasn't already experienced. Thorax threw his

head back again, releasing a content sigh; Chrysalis was half tempted to sink her fangs into his rod, just to see him jolt again.

Rather than doing that, however, she instead raised her head off his cock, sucking and slurping salaciously around it as she slowly withdrew it from her mouth. Thorax moaned lowly all the while, Chrysalis's tongue writhing around every newly released bit of his flesh before she released his tip with a 'pop'.

She tilted her head to the side, looking around Thorax's spire to smile knowingly at him. He smiled back, and there Chrysalis could see that he had accustomed perfectly to their little romp. Taking on Chandelier's form helped take some of the edge off his nerves, just as she suspected it would.

Quite the unsuspecting fool he was. With what she had in mind, she couldn't wait to see the utter horror etched onto his face once her mischievous little plan came to fruition. As she tried to keep her smile from growing wider, hinting her true intentions, Chrysalis began to follow through with her scheme.

She licked the side of his cock--once, twice, then ran her tongue up the underside of it. With the pleasant sensation of her cool tongue tracing over his burning length, Thorax laid himself back fully onto the bed, a dumb smile spreading itself across his face. His guard was down, just as Chrysalis anticipated it would.

After giving the tip of his rod one final brush of her tongue, Chrysalis then wrapped her lips around it and engulfed it in her mouth once more. She lowered her head in that same practiced motion, taking him all the way to the base, then raised herself back up until only his tip remained before lowering again. Again and again she repeated that action, suckling at his flesh as she did so.

She allowed her tongue to escape, then had it wrap around his base as she continued her motions. Chrysalis certainly knew what she was doing. Thorax's eyes were shut, his breathing slowly becoming more and more labored, and he had subconsciously rested a hoof atop her head. All signs that he was getting close to the edge.

Thorax was fully aware of that as well, and he tried so hard to mentally keep himself from cumming. Try as he might, however, the inviting warm and moist confines of her mouth was making it a losing battle, as he could feel his climax swiftly approaching. He had to warn Chrysalis, he wouldn't dare sully his queen's mouth with his lowly sperm.

"Ch-Chryssy, I'm..." he uttered, only to fall silent when Chrysalis gave his flesh the tiniest of pricks with her fangs. It was enough to break his concentration though, and with that, he came.

Thorax gasped fearfully, intense pleasure shooting up his spine, his vision momentarily going white as his mast began to throb violently. With the first two throbs there was nothing, but after the third, a hot volley of his cum began to erupt from his cock, directly on Chrysalis's tongue and the back of her throat.

Chrysalis didn't stop her motions, instead bobbing her head at a faster pace. She slurped wetly around his member, milking him for all she could, allowing his seed to collect in her mouth. She didn't grant herself time to savor his essence's taste, as curiosity of what his reaction would be was more interesting to her.

Right as his rod's spurts began to taper though, Chrysalis pulled away from it. Using her tongue still wrapped around his base, she aimed his tip for her face, where it unleashed the last of its load. By the time his mast finally settled, white pearlescent streaks stained Chrysalis's face, across her muzzle, over one of her closed eyes, and even some of it getting onto her mane.

After releasing her tongue's hold on his cock, she wrapped her lips around his tip, cleaning it of what remained of his seed. His deep breathing slowly steadying, Thorax watched, his member rehardening due to her skilled tongue work. Once she was done, she let his tip pop free from her mouth, his then gave him a steamy and salacious grin.

Still out of breath, Thorax tried to match her smile with his own. However, that smile faltered when Chrysalis's body went up in green flame, dispelling Chandelier's form for her own. Upon seeing the sleek black carapace of Chrysalis's face besmirched by the contrasting white of cum, *his* cum, Thorax's eyes widened in terror. Chrysalis, on the other hoof, redoubled her smile, as his exact reaction was just what she was aiming for.

Purposely slow, Chrysalis opened her mouth widely, giving Thorax full view of his seed pooled over her tongue. Thorax very nearly had a heart attack at the sight of it, as the very thought of him having done that to his queen panged at his old instincts. He feared that he would be punished severely for using his queen in such a degrading manner.

Closing her mouth, Chrysalis pulled her head back and swallowed, Thorax gulping in disbelief as he watched a lump go down her throat. She looked back to him, opened her mouth to show that his essence was gone, then licked her lips purposely before speaking.

"My," she said, smearing a streak of his cum off her eye with a hoof, "you sure laid it out. Defiling your queen's radiant image really gets you off, doesn't it?"

Panic-stricken, Thorax tried to crawl away from Chrysalis, to hide away in a darkened corner in shame. Chrysalis, however, predicted he might behave in such a way. She held onto one of his rear legs with her magic, making his attempt to get away futile, then turned her head away

and casually yawned as his hooves slid against the sheets to no avail. Soon realizing that he wasn't making any traction, Thorax fell back onto the bed, fearfully turning to Chrysalis.

"I--I'm sorry!" his words fumbled almost immediately. "I didn't mean t-to! P-please, just let me go!"

Finishing her yawn, Chrysalis took her time looking back to Thorax. She didn't respond, instead merely keeping her expression aloof as she observed him and his chest visibly rising and falling with every breath. It wasn't until he made a quick, unsuccessful attempt to yank his leg free from her magic that he drew a reaction from her. It started with the corner of her mouth rising, then that half of her lips cracking into a smile as she suppressed a would-be snicker. She kept that urge down, even placed a hoof over her muzzle, but it swiftly reemerged two-fold, and before long, her uncaring facade was soon dispelled as she broke into a fit of uncontrollable and hysteric laughter.

"Oh, you are just too much fun to toy with!" she confessed between chortles, tears having swelled in the corners of her eyes from how hard she laughed. She quickly wiped them away, then held back any further giggles as she continued with, "Really, you've forgotten that you and I are of equal status? Need I remind you that whatever goes on in here between us shouldn't bother you?"

Thorax laid there, his forelegs held meekly over his chest, and bright red blush steadily spreading over his blank expression. It seemed that, in all the excitement, he honestly did forget that little tidbit. To say that he was embarrassed, completely and utterly, would have been an understatement, and Chrysalis's new bouts of laughter upon seeing his face certainly didn't help.

He wanted another go with Chrysalis, so he could be less docile and more machismo this time around with this new information, and partly to get her to stop laughing so he could regain some of his lost

masculinity. He was a king, she was a queen, and they were both lying in bed together after already carrying out one sexual act, so it would be perfectly acceptable if he here to get up and pin her to the bed, showing her what he could really do.

Despite his best wishes to make that fantasy a reality by getting up and following through with what he envisioned, it remained a fantasy, as his body failed to move when he willed it to. The truth was, he still found her rather intimidating, and being reminded of his royal status did very little to curb that initial fear. Physically, they were also of two different changeling castes; she was a tall and imposing queen, cunning and naturally endowed with powerful magic, and he was a lowly drone, intended by nature to serve the hive and said queen.

"I'm sorry," he said. His breath immediately hitched, a second wave of embarrassment washing over him, as he was unsure why he just apologized. He felt that he had to say something, and that just happened to be the first thing he blurted out.

Chrysalis was taken back as well, her head tilted in confusion. She stared strangely at him for a bit, only for one side of her mouth to soon form into a lopsided, giddy smile. He apologized, and she figured she could use that. After all, she did him a service, and it'd be only fair for him to return the favor.

"Aww, you're sorry, are you?" she cooed in an feigned doting tone. "Well, if you're really sorry, I know one way you can make it up to me."

Fixing him a large, lecherous smile, she rose on the bed to her full height. From his position bellow, Thorax's eyes widened at the sight of her head partially blocking the dimmed light cocoon above, and he suddenly felt much, much smaller by comparison. With Thorax likely not going anywhere, Chrysalis coolly stepped forward, walking over him.

With the light now fully blocked, Thorax's world had become complete darkness. He couldn't see a thing... that was, however, until something moved to hang right above him, something that was emanating a green glow. Thorax first thought it to be Chrysalis's tongue, ready to slide out and begin toying with him again. It took him a few seconds, but once he made out its unique shape, Thorax realized what exactly he was looking at. It was of Chrysalis's flesh alright, but it was the furthest thing possible from her tongue.

Right above him, hovering just a few inches away from his muzzle, was her pussy. Due to the glow it gave off, the sleek shape of her slit stood out well in the near-darkness. Her vulva was puffy, and a slight wet sheen, likely her arousal, was visible on it.

Thorax's mind still reeling, Chrysalis began to slowly lower, his nostrils soon flaring once he caught the scent of her lust. Perhaps it was the work of powerful changeling queen pheromones at play, but Thorax instinctively took in a second, much deeper breath, his penis, as well as his sex drive, reinvigorating.

"Mmm~" she hummed contently, sitting squarely on Thorax's muzzle.

Thorax's eyes widened as the intense warmth of her sex pressed over his mouth and nose. Reacting almost on their own, his forelegs wrapped over her thighs, keeping his queen secured and balanced on him. Chrysalis's clit, glowing and erect, and peeking just over his muzzle, was the only thing Thorax could see. He could feel her nectar smear over his lips, daring Thorax to poke his tongue out for a taste.

"Well?" asked Chrysalis in a sultry tone. "Are you going to help yourself or not?"

As if to further drive the message of what she wanted him to do, she began to grind her hips sensually against his muzzle, spreading even

more of her natural lubricant over his lips. With the strong scent of her need flooding his nostrils, Thorax gave in to the temptation and gave Chrysalis exactly what she desired.



Tentatively, Thorax stuck his tongue out past his lips, unintentionally giving Chrysalis's slit a bit of a lick as she slid forward then back. Finding her taste to be sweeter than he imagined, Thorax extended even more of his tongue, running it up and down her folds as she continued to ride his face. His new enthusiasm pleased Chrysalis greatly, who bit her bottom lip and moaned softly as she tossed her head back.

"Mph~ Yes, just like that!" she exclaimed towards the ceiling. To Thorax's surprise, she placed a hoof on his head then ground herself even harder against him. "More! Keep... keep going! Your queen demands satisfaction!"

Complying, Thorax closed his eyes and went to work. He started off slow, tracing his tongue's forked tip along her vulva in a circuit to tease her and get her really riled up. His attempt seemed to have worked somewhat, as Chrysalis mewled, her motions becoming even rougher seemingly out of desperation. Feeling this, as well as picking up the sound of her breathing becoming haggard, Thorax sped up his tongue strokes. Eventually, he ignored her folds altogether, sliding his tongue straight through them.

"Ah~!" Chrysalis wailed, narrowly avoiding crumpling forward by propping her forelegs on the bed just in time. Thorax's tongue wasn't nearly as long as her own, but it was certainly delving deep within her, wriggling against the right nerves lined along her inner walls.

His hooves sliding over her shapely rear, Thorax smiled around his probing tongue. He caressed Chrysalis's flanks, moving his hooves in circular motions as he withdrew his tongue, scraping its twin tips against her velvety insides. His tongue soon slipping free from her entrance, Thorax traced its tips along her folds, gathering every bit of her irresistible nectar it could before retreating into his mouth. After a quick moment to savor her taste, Thorax's tongue darted out, prying at Chrysalis's lower lips again before diving once more into her honeypot.

"O-oh~!" sounded Chrysalis, the sensation of Thorax's warm tongue worming its way into her depths causing her to shut her eyes and lurch forward. With one hoof still on the bed for stability, he returned the other to Thorax's head, keeping him where he was as she continued to rock her hips back and forth.

She expected Thorax to learn quickly, but she didn't expect him to be so good. With every lick, every warm breath of his directly hitting her nethers, Chrysalis's body was wracked by more and more bliss. The pleasurable sensations of Thorax's wet tongue invading her surged upwards, up her spine where it then went straight into her brain

unfiltered, striking her dumb. She was getting close, as her expression at that moment while she rode his face wasn't befitting of a high and regal queen such as her.

Her eyes were set forward, unfocused and in a haze, her cheeks blushed a deep and full crimson, and her long tongue hung listlessly out of her agape mouth as she continued to grind her queenhood over Thorax's muzzle. Before long, she sensed a familiar swelling sensation in her lower core, alerting her of her impending climax, and she briefly contemplated letting Thorax know.

She ultimately decided against it, however, as she ceased her rocking before allowing her full weight to fall on Thorax's muzzle, much to his surprise. His tongue still deep within Chrysalis, Thorax's widened, his hooves fumbling up and down her rear in confusion. It wasn't until he heard her produce a long, throaty moan, as well as felt her inner walls convulsing while simultaneously closing around his tongue, that he realized what was going on. And by then, it was already too late.

Next thing Thorax knew, his queen was cumming around his tongue, her escaping fluids coating his muzzle and chin. Thorax was taken back at first, but quickly recovered. Acting fast, he wrapped his lips over her quivering entrance, doing his best to not let a single drop of her most precious nectar go to waste. Chrysalis yelped unevenly, Thorax's tongue prodding at her insides as he slurped and sucked, coaxing her into producing even more for him to enjoy.

Moments later, Chrysalis's moan died down until her voice fell silent, her inner muscles easing off Thorax's tongue as her climax finally came and went. Sweaty and out of breath, the changeling queen's tired body leaned to the side, more and more until finally she completely slumped off Thorax's face where she landed softly on the bed. As she laid there, her chest heaving as she caught her breath, Thorax sat upright, looked to his queen.

"You... you did exceptionally well," breathed Chrysalis. "You're queen is... satisfied..."

Hearing her say that, Thorax couldn't help but smile in a cocky manner. With Chrysalis splayed out exhausted before him, his eyes naturally ran over her lithe and seductive body. She looked so content, so satisfied. With his cock having swelled to full mast, Thorax wished he could share that sentiment. Moments later, Thorax got an inkling of an idea, and with the throbbing of his spire spurring him, he decided to enact it.

After licking his lips of Chrysalis's essence, Thorax wiped his muzzle with a hoof, then crept towards his queen. Chrysalis was competently unaware of Thorax's approach, her eyes half open and staring at nothing as she basked in her afterglow. She was soon alerted of his presence, however, when Thorax tucked his muzzle between her thighs.

"Oh?" uttered Chrysalis curiously as she looked down to him, an amused smile forming on her face. "Already back at it, are we?"

Using his muzzle, Thorax lifted one of Chrysalis's rear legs up, then pushed it away until she rested flat on her back, exposing her belly and glowing pussy to him. After licking his lips hungrily a second time, Thorax swooped low, giving her already drenched flower a quick lick.

Her rear legs twitching and her body tensing, Chrysalis giggled, then spoke.

"Well... can't say that I don't admire your enthusiasm, but like I already said, I am more than satisfied."

Straying his tongue from her nethers, Thorax give the inside of her thigh a teasing lick before responding.

"Oh I know you're satisfied," he said, crawling over her, not stopping until their muzzles nearly touched. "But what's about to happen is more for... my benefit."

Thorax wasn't being as subtle as he liked to think he was. Chrysalis already had an idea of what he meant, and the tip of his member poking against her entrance was a dead giveaway.

"Ha," she laughed, rolling her eyes in amusement. "It's funny. I remind you of your royal status, and suddenly you grow a spine. You know, maybe I should have kept quiet; meek, shy Thorax was so much more fun to play with."

"Meek and shy, huh?" said Thorax, using his magic to rub his tip up and down her pussy lips, coating it in his saliva and her juices. "Well... how's *THIS* for meek?"

In one swift motion, Thorax thrust his hips forward, his hard cock plunging deep into his queen's velvety, burning depths.

"A-ah!" Chrysalis's exclaimed with a wide, gratified smile on her face, her forelegs moving onto his shoulders as he fully hilted within her. Her inner muscles squeezed around his invading rod out of reflex, and she could feel it pulse in tandem with his heartbeat, as well as the warmth it exuded that wasn't her own.

Thorax shut his eyes, relishing the sensation of her pussy walls enveloping his mast from all sides. In the meantime, Chrysalis looked in the space between their two bodies, her focus directed at the faint glow located where they were joined. She could make out her nub, it's light fluctuating in brightness, as well as some of the base of Thorax's member. Moments later, as she continued to stare at their union, almost as if memorized by the luminescent sight, Thorax pulled his waist back, revealing more of his anatomy.

Chrysalis's spine arched, her chest pressing against Thorax's as the tip of his withdrawing tool scrapped across her love tunnel's pleasure nerves. Electric bliss rippled across Chrysalis's body, through her spine and into her brain. She tried to moan, but the sound never left her throat, as her breathing instead hitched as she gasped for air.

Soon enough, the majority of Thorax's length was free, with only his tip remaining within her, threatening to pop out her entrance and leave her with a cold and empty feeling. Shakily, as if to lessen that, Chrysalis wrapped her hooves around Thorax's neck. Her muzzle near his ear, she opened her mouth, readying to protest for him to stay. Right as she was about to utter a sound, however, she fell silent when Thorax shifted his hips forward, sinking his length back in her.

His spear's tip hit home, prodding at her cervix and prompting Chrysalis to release a pleased moan. Turned on by the sound her voice echoing around the chamber, Thorax locked his teeth on his queen's exposed neck, where he then growled around it. In comparison to Chrysalis's, his fangs weren't as long or as sharp, and had very little chance of breaking through the tough carapace of a queen, if ever. Regardless of that fact, the thrill both parties received from the act wasn't dulled in the slightest.

His tongue licking at her neck from the inside of his mouth, Thorax pulled his hips back again, his reward being her inner muscles desperately trying to keep his throbbing mast in place, as well as his queen's lewd cry ringing in his ears. This was a mighty and powerful changeling queen he was pulling his cock out from, one whose mere presence made him nervous at several points of his life, but at that moment, with her panting beneath him, he felt empowered, he felt in control.

Sure, he'd been called a king before, but this was the first time he truly felt like one. A changeling could get used to such a feeling, he figured.

Reveling in the sounds Chrysalis made, Thorax continued to move his hips back, not stopping until only his tip remained her. Seconds later, rather than thrusting his spire back in, he instead held his position, studying Chrysalis's reaction. How she reacted surprised him.

Her breathing still erratic and uneven, she whimpered, which was so unlike her. Here she was, a queen who ruled by herself with an iron hoof for many years, reduced to a heaving mess by the cock of a mere drone. What she did next surprised him even more than her whimper.

"Please," she eventually begged, her voice throaty and low. "If you're going to do it, then just do it already!"

A wicked smirk spread on Thorax's face, as he considered ignoring her request. She toyed with him earlier, and he could easily return the favor by denying her what she wanted. At the same time though... some part of him felt that to be a bit cruel. Maybe it was due to the exhaustion, but she was showing... *vulnerability* to him by pleading, a quality she always kept hidden behind her stoic veneer. Thorax liked the idea of seeing her more open in the near future, so rewarding her for this first instance would be a good step towards that goal.

Right as Chrysalis was about to make a second plea, slowly but surely, Thorax moved his hips forward in a slow thrust, steadily impaling her with his throbbing mast.

"Yes!" cried Chrysalis, her quivering walls welcoming every inch of Thorax's length. Before long, their pelvises met, and both Thorax and Chrysalis huffed out in contentment. Thorax's member felt so snug, buried in his queen's burning pussy all the way to the hilt, while Chrysalis's tunnel conformed to accommodate him, his tip prodding at her cervix overwhelmed her with a sense of fulfillment.

After a moment where the two spent some time just breathing (time where one of Chrysalis's rear legs twitched whenever Thorax made the slightest of movement), Thorax took one drawn out breath before slowly pulling his waist back. Chrysalis grit her teeth, her head falling onto her pillow as she stared at the ceiling and drew breath sharply. Like before, his tip dragged across her tunnel's most sensitive areas, stimulating her to no end.

Thorax pulled back up until the tip, then reserved the direction of his lower half.

Again and again Thorax moved, each set being slightly faster than the last. He fell into a rhythm, and before long, he was pounding into her, his hips moving at a blur, Chrysalis's dripping need making an audible squelch around his pistoning cock. Chrysalis gleefully took every thrust, crying out unashamedly as intense waves of pleasure assaulted her mind, overcome by the throes of passion and lust. Her eyes soon unfocused, appearing as if they wanted to roll upwards into her sockets as her tongue hung limply from the side of her panting mouth.

At the rate he was going, it came as no surprise to Thorax when he sensed his climax creeping closer and closer. He was going to cum soon, and he'd be dammed if his queen didn't get off before he did. Flaring his nostrils, Thorax clenched his teeth even harder on Chrysalis's neck, keeping himself steady as he added more force and speed behind his thrusts.

"Ooh~" cooed Chrysalis, her hooves sliding down Thorax's back. She noted how much rougher he was being with her; he was behaving like a feral animal, ravaging her body into submission for it's own pleasure. When it came to sex, Chrysalis never thought she'd ever be a the more docile one, but so far, she was enjoying every second of it.

He was being relentless with her pussy, pushing his hard meat into it again and again. Chrysalis's abused tunnel was starting to feel sore,

and her lungs were allowed no time to rest either, as she kept crying out in pleasure each time his spear jabbed at her womb's tight entrance. It was like it was trying to gain entrance into her deepest chamber, with every attempt sending ripping surges of sheer ecstasy straight to her mind, further scrambling it.

Chrysalis felt as if she were flying, and for moments at a time, she would forget where she was; all there was to her was the glowing light emanating from the light sac above, the drool and pin pricks of Thorax's fangs on her neck, and the unceasing assault against her nethers. Before long, however, she sensed something else, something stirring in her core.

The sensation was ignorable at first, dulled by the pleasure brought by Thorax's thrusts, but would make its presence more known to her each time his tip make contact with her cervix. Seconds passed, and Chrysalis could overlook it; she had no time to prepare herself for what was coming.

Her chest heaved heavily, and her heart pounded in her chest. She tightened her grip around Thorax's neck, then crossed her legs over his waist, yet that didn't keep the drone from sliding his cock back and forth in her. Chrysalis's inner walls quivered, then tried to close in on Thorax's still thrusting member. All they did was give Thorax's mast a pleasurable massage as she finally came.

Her back arched and stayed that way as she held on to him, a loud moan escaping her lips as the resulting rush of adrenaline and pleasure made her experience what felt like the wildest ride of her life. Her warm fluids gushed out from around Thorax's rod, dripping onto the bed sheet below, where it would be absorbed into a dark stain. After what felt like minutes, her high died down, and velvety walls ceased their quivering and relaxed.

Her legs losing any remaining strength, her grip on Thorax weakened, and she eventually fell back onto the bed. She groaned lowly, her forelegs splayed out to her sides as a content smile grew on her face. She wanted to commend Thorax for his efforts, only... he wasn't done yet...

"You're... you're still going?" Chrysalis asked tiredly in disbelief.

That he was. His tongue was sticking out the side of his mouth and his face was skewed in concentration as he continued to thrust away at Chrysalis's overworked entrance.

"H-hold on, I'm almost done!" Thorax answered, his eyes focused on where they were joined.

After quickly moving his queen onto her side, Thorax lifted one of her rear legs and hoisted it over his shoulder. Now having better access to her pussy, and with her cum acting as newly applied lubricant, his thrusts went deeper, his speartip pressing harder against Chrysalis's cervix.

With his queen having gotten off like he wanted, Thorax decided to let loose, to finish with an ending his queen wouldn't forget for a long time. He started pulling her against him each time he thrust, sweat pouring from his brow from how hard he was overworking himself.

Exhausted from her own climax to do much of anything, Chrysalis just laid there on her side and enjoyed it. She breathed listlessly, drool pooling onto the bed from her mouth and her chest rising and falling as she tried to slow her heart rate. As she did so, Thorax began thrusting into her with reckless abandon.

He was getting closer. His heart pounded in his chest, and his muscles ached, yet still he persisted. Nearing the end of his stamina, his

penis grew longer and its tip slimier--a reaction that happens to all male changelings when ready to cum inside a female's vagina.

Gaining a few extra inches, Thorax's tip poke and prodded even harder against Chrysalis's crevice, until finally it pushed through and gained entrance to her womb. Once it did, Chrysalis's eyes and mouth widened and Thorax ceased his thrusting, seeing as he could no longer pull his member back. His hard length throbbed a few times until finally he came.



Grunting, Thorax shut his eyes, his wings buzzing loudly as his cum erupted from his speartip, unleashing a volley of his hot seed directly into his queen's womb. Eyes focused on nothing, Chrysalis shuddered from the sensation of cock throbbing around her walls and a warmth growing in her belly. If she hadn't orgasmed already, she would have again then and there.

Moments later, Thorax's wings slowed to a halt, and his jets of cum tapered until finally it ceased altogether. With his tip still lodged in womb, keeping all of his seed from escaping, Thorax collapsed onto Chrysalis, his eyes straining to stay open as he panted in exhaustion.

Using what little energy she could spare, Chrysalis shifted onto her back, Thorax's cum sloshing in her belly as she allowed him to rest more comfortably atop her stomach.

"Hmm, is the king satisfied now?" Chrysalis singsonged lowly, stroking his head softly with her hoof.

Thorax took a moment to breath, then licked his drying lips before answering her.

"K-king... Heh," he laughed, his eyes slowly closing. "It sounds nicer when you... when you say it..."

Smirking, Chrysalis rolled her eyes.

"Well grow comfortable with that title for now, because you won't hear me call you that again for a long time."

This time, he didn't answer, and when Chrysalis look to him, she saw why. He had fallen asleep, and remarkably with his rod still keeping her womb sealed. She considered waking him, so they would wait for his mast to deflate and slip free.

At the same time though, she was pretty tired herself, and didn't mind keeping him in her for a little while longer.

As Chrysalis slowly ran her hoof over Thorax's wings and back, she closed her eyes and eventually joined him in slumber.

Epilogue

Her snore cut short, Chrysalis woke with a start. Eyes still shut, she stirred her head atop her pillow, crinkled her nose, then rose her brows, yet her eyelids barely cracked an inch before deciding to stay closed. They weren't ready to rise just yet, and frankly, neither was she.

"Nghn... five more minutes," she told herself as she turned to her other side, pulling her limbs closer to herself.

Chrysalis had hoped sleep would come, only it never did for her. Her body still felt tired, but her mind was too alert now to slip back into slumber. She was comfortable though, laying on her bed, so she decided to just stay like that for a little while longer.

As she did so, she pondered on how long she had slept. For all she knew, it could have been an hour, two, perhaps the whole day. Living underground made it difficult to determine the time without a having a clock ready and available. That wasn't to say that she didn't have one waiting on her nightstand. She did, but she couldn't muster the strength nor the will to force her eyes open and check it.

Regardless of the time, Chrysalis wasn't worried; she recalled that no queenly duties were scheduled for quite some time after Hearth's Warming, so she could sleep all day if she so wanted.

...

Moments later, a smirk grew on Chrysalis's muzzle. That's right, she had almost forgotten. Hearth's Warming, its celebration in the streets--or more prominent in her memory, what happened *after* she left the celebration with a certain changeling king in tow. Her smile turned downright sinful and her thighs rubbed sensually together as she steadily recalled every juicy little detail.

Actually, now that she could remember what happened the night prior, the warm object giving off a heartbeat that the side of her face was laying against made sense. She was cuddled up with Thorax, her ear on his chest and her horn carefully positioned over his side, and she didn't even know it until then. He barely even made a sound, as he was breathing oh so softly into her ear, indicating that he was still asleep.

After a moment of silent contemplation, Chrysalis nuzzled her head against his chest, making herself more comfortable. In response Thorax shifted, and Chrysalis feared to have waken him. To her relief, that didn't turn out to be the case, as he instead wrapped his foreleg over Chrysalis's shoulder and pulled her closer, murmuring something incoherent before falling silent once again.

Chrysalis blushed profusely, as she was never shown such affection post-coital before, even if it was unintentional. Being careful, she hugged him back, her hooves--

"Wait a minute..." Chrysalis uttered, her hooves blindly fumbling up and down his body.

Something felt off with Thorax. He felt... larger, and what she felt protruding from his forehead seemed to be...

Immediately, Chrysalis opened her eyes, only for them to widen in surprise by what she saw. Thorax was much different from when they went to sleep last night.



He was nearly her size now, though if Chrysalis had to guess by the sight of his new, slender legs, he was taller than her by just a bit. His height wasn't the only thing that miraculously changed overnight--just like herself, his midsection, as well as his back, sported jade chitin plates. Peering over her back, she spotted his wings, still sparkling like before, only now larger and more elegant to match his new frame. He also had a mane when there wasn't one before, though it was much shorter than Chrysalis's and of a slightly darker shade of green. Lastly, the short and stubby horn on his forehead, positioned above his masculine and more defined face, had become large and impressive, rivaling her own.

At first she thought he was playing some joke on her by changing his form and pretending to still be asleep, so naturally Chrysalis tried to dispel his disguise. After lighting her horn and casting the spell,

Chrysalis's was shocked to discover that his appearance hadn't reverted. He really did change, only it wasn't a disguise!

Wanting answers, Chrysalis was about ready to shake him awake, only to then stop.

"Oh," she whispered, now realizing what had happened.

She had heard of it, though it had no name among the changelings, given how rare it was an occurrence. Thorax had finally accepted his role as king of the changelings to heart, and as such, he went though (apparently in his sleep) what was essentially the changeling version of alicorn ascension. No longer a drone, he was now a changeling king in both title and body, and, funny enough, it was his late night rendezvous with Chrysalis that sparked the change.

Chrysalis considered waking Thorax, to toy with him by acting as if nothing had changed until he got a look of himself in the mirror. She could already imagine the look on his face, and the side-splitting laughter she'd have. Hopefully, after she'd explain to him what happened, the two of them would... *break in* his new body by having another few rounds in the bed.

"Yes, I think I shall do just that," she said to herself. "But first thing's first..." Laying back at his side, Chrysalis nuzzled into his chest and closed her eyes.

"Five more minutes..."