

Minimum Wage

(Part 1 of 3)

By Nightmare the Stallion

Nightmare scaled the fire escape down into the alleyway behind the club. He lingered behind a dumpster as somebody passed by the mouth of the alley, and then approached the back door and knocked. The peephole squeaked open.

“Oh, it’s you. Come in.”

The door rattled and clicked. A few minutes passed.

“Hurry the fuck up! I’m still wearing my costume. If somebody sees me—”

“Now whose fault is that?”

“Ignis. For putting in all these goddamn locks.”

Nightmare stomped, the flat sole of his Converse clapping against the concrete. A muffled laugh came from behind the door.

“Now don’t get your tights in a twist, kid. I’m goin’ as fast as I can.”

Eryx opened the door and ushered Nightmare into the locker room. The dragon’s musk hit Nightmare like a brick. His ears flattened.

“Bad night, huh?”

“Ignis is throwing some sort of mixer tonight.” Eryx scratched the red fuzz on his pudgy belly. It glistened with dampness in the flickering fluorescent light. “I’ve never seen the place look so *nice*.”

Nightmare chuckled. “I’ll believe it when I see it.”

The horse propped one of his Converse up on the bench and began to unlace it. Eryx approached Nightmare from behind and helped him remove his outfit. Nightmare bit his lip and pressed the spandex crease of his ass against Eryx’s plump yellow sheath.

“Another after-work quickie, huh? You are *insatiable*.”

“Ignis wants you in there, *now*. She wants everything to be perfect tonight. Which means no fucking around.” He paused for a second, and grabbed a handful of Nightmare’s ass. “But thanks for the offer, kid.”

Once he had stripped, Nightmare pulled a purple rubber suit from one of the lockers. He yelped, and dropped it to the floor.

“You’ve gotta be fucking *kidding* me.

Marco didn't wash the suit, *again*." He gestured wildly. "The hose is right *fucking there!*"

Eryx began to help Nightmare into the suit.

"Cold piss is the *worst*." Nightmare groaned. He shivered as Eryx guided his tail through a hole in the suit, and then zipped the suit up to his neck, sealing him in.

"You're telling *me*." Moisture from Eryx's fur was pattering on the tile floor. He rubbed the horse's shoulders. "Come on, kid. A paycheck is a paycheck."

Nightmare stared at his costume, folded in his hands. Custom made, tailored to a fault. He shook his head and placed it in his locker, turning his gaze to the white toilet symbol emblazoned on the belly of his suit.

"Yeah. Yeah, I know."

Eryx shoved Nightmare out of the door leading into the club. He tossed a pair of purple wellies out after him, and then shut the door.

Nightmare hopped around, trying to keep his balance as he stuffed his feet into purple wellies, which were a size too small. Some fluid sloshed around inside.

"Ugh! Fucking Marco."

Nightmare stomped his way through the club atrium — where the masquerade was taking place — feet squishing in his boots. The guests were licking sweat and glue from one another's fake mustaches, grabbing at each other through scratchy woolen costumes, ravaging each other on gaudy furniture. Sweaty, tacky passion set to elevator music.

He barged into Ignis' office, tearing down

the bead curtain strung over her door.

"Oh my *fucking god*."

Ignis was wearing enough necklaces to deflect a bullet. None of them matched. She was sitting on a velvet chair, smoking a hookah.

"So, are you a gypsy now? A fortune teller? Some sort of goth Disney princess, maybe?"

"I thought you of all people would like what I did with the place. You're used to more *upscale* environments, are you not?"

"The Dollar Store isn't *upscale*."

Ignis tisked.

"Well, I *was* going to give you a bonus for entertaining so many guests. But I suppose being around people as rich as you *used* to be is a bonus in and of itself."

Nightmare snorted, something between a laugh and a pout.

"Yes, Mistress Ignis."

Ignis licked a cloven hoof — polished to a silver shine — and peeled a few hundreds from a stack. She placed them in the envelope containing Nightmare's paycheck.

"You amuse me. Such a *brave* and *committed* hero by day." She stood and approached Nightmare. His eyes watered as they were barraged with the vapor of some heady, off-brand perfume. "But when you're on the clock? You really don't have *any* shame at all, do you?"

"N-no, Mistress Ignis."

Ignis pulled the horse close with one hoof, and fondled him with the other. Nightmare stood at attention, his face flushing as his employer forced herself on him. He dared not twitch a single muscle.

“And *that’s* why you’re everyone’s favorite little latrine.”

Nightmare tried to back away, but Ignis stopped him with a kiss. He whined into her muzzle — choking on her freakish long tongue — and she cackled into his.

Ignis released the horse, pulling a box out from under her desk as he regained his composure. The box was brimming with the gear that went with Nightmare’s suit.

“Time to get you dressed.”

Nightmare flattened his ears and presented his fists. Ignis stuffed them into rubber mitts, which she then laced tight and cuffed shut. She strapped kneepads onto him, smoothing out the spots where the pads bunched up his suit, careful not to catch the lips of his wellies. He was then fitted with a harness gag, the rubber filling his muzzle. The gag itself resembled a shower drain, capped with a perforated metal pan that Nightmare rested his lips on.

“I hope I didn’t mess up your mane too much.” Nightmare raised an eyebrow. “Coco’s here.”

Nightmare gave a panicked whinny through the gag. The drain in his mouth gave his squeals a metallic ring.

“You just got it permed, didn’t you?” Nightmare nodded with vigor. Ignis bleated and tightened the harness. “Hold still! If he wants to turn your mane into a mop, then that’s just what he’ll do, perm or no perm. You really should know better, working where you work.”

Ignis collared and leashed her employee, wrapping the leash around her wrist and giving it a tug. Nightmare lowered his head obe-

diently, and Ignis applied padlocks — shaped like little black hearts — to the buckles on his gag harness and his collar. She locked up his wrist cuffs for good measure, and then dangled a ruby-inlaid key in front of Nightmares face. He followed it with his eyes.

“Eight hours, Nightmare. Just pretend its a normal shift, and youll do just fine.” Ignis dropped the key back into her dress. She exhaled a cloud of vapor — It wasn’t hookah — and leaned in close, swallowing Nightmare with her void, purple eyes. “And if you fuck this up for me, you have *much* more to look forward to than being fired.”

As Nightmare was led from the office to the bathrooms, none of the guests paid attention to the procession — too occupied with their ‘classy’ anonymous sex — except for one. Nightmare caught motion out of the corner of his eye: a red balloon, wafting above the crowd. He followed the balloon’s string down to find a jester, gaze concealed under the brim of a jingling hat.

Nightmare’s first customer.