Warning: messy feelings

Disclaimer: I don’t own anything.

Summary: Semi AU. By the time Midoriya Izuku remembered who he was and that he’s in a game, he was being sent off to marry of the one of the Final Boss, Dabi, the 1st Duke’s Eldest Son of the fictional country from the otome game, My Hero Academia

Paring: Todoroki Touya (Dabi) / Midoriya Izuku

A/N: For the purpose of this story, Dabi is Todoroki Touya.

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### Notes

* My Hero Academia
  + Medieval Europe/Fantasy AU.
  + Hit otome-game where MC Uraraka is peasant-girl who gets to attend super rich/classy UA where all the socially top and powerful meet.
  + Midoriya, in a desperate attempt to protect Uraraka’s smile, ends up taking all her routes and shit. And also her heart.
  + King Tsukauchi Naomasa, who is young and mocked relentlessly for it.
    - Makoto -> Princess
* Midoriya Izuku
  + Parents are dead, moves in with other family. Typical cinderella
    - His village burned down because it was used as bait to draw out bandits
    - The duke came and saved him, but it was Dabi’s plan...
  + Suddenly remembers his life when his Guardian Angel (All Might) crashes into him. And so, when he’s told that he can marry the Duke’s (unloved) first child, he agrees (sorta arm-wrestled, but actually okay with this)
  + Originally intended to stay close to the heroine when she showed up but then he realizes that he’s married to antagonist #2, Dabi, the reason why the kingdom is plunged into despair and forces Shoto to take the throne. Goes by Midoriya now.
  + Yeah no. He might be a scapegoat, and he’ll die at the end of this anyways-so he might as well fix everything in the process
    - Thinks he’s gonna die because of Royal family and politics
    - And then he starts to actually die because he gets cursed (only Natsuo knows) and it can only be cured by True Love™ and well. Midoriya has more important things to worry about than that so…
    - Stares dabi in the face and realizes that his <other him> fell in love hard.
  + Fixes Duke’s family (w/ modern thoughts), even if they don’t wanna be saved.
  + Helps the royal turnover
  + When war comes and Dabi goes, waits.
    - “I am your husband. My loyalty goes to you, first and foremost.”
    - And dabi falls fast falls hard. Lucky him, Midoriya falls just as hard.
    - But also Midoriya is fine if he is thrown away. Since he probably won’t live long.
  + Recruits most of the ppl onto his side and shit
  + Enters academy at 15.
    - Remeets Bakugo.
    - Learns that hte heorine is Uraraka and gosh she’s beautiful
* Royal Family:
  + King Todoroki Enji - who has recently become kinder
  + Queen Todoroki Rei - who’s health has taken a complete turn for the better
  + First prince Touya - Dabi who everyone hates. Midoriya's fiance.
* Castle folk:
  + Night Guard head: Aizawa, Vlad King -> Kamui Woods (once Aizawa leaves to teach at the academy, not to keep an eye on their problem kids but to keep an eye on problem child)
  + Security Detail Head: Yamada, Bloodhound
  + Chisaki (eventually)
    - & precepts are his eyes and ears on the outside
    - Assassin-nurse guy that’s nice and polite to everyone but Midoriya. Fuck him.
  + Knight-In-Training:
    - Eri
    - Shinshou
  + Etc
* “Liberation Front”: Dabi’s eyes and ears outside of the kingdom
  + Also enamored by Midoriya, stunned by his loyalty, kidnapped him once to see how far they can push him and they didn’t even come close to his limits

### Timeline

* 10 year old Midoriya Izuku marries Todoroki Touya, Dabi (hates being called Touya)
  + Kingdom does a full turn-around
  + After the Dabi-controls his flame incident, ppl take Midoriya a lot more seriously (inside of the castle)
  + He’s a fucking genius. Smart beyond normal capability (thank god for sam public education) and he’s a talentless, quick learner (magic + fighting-training), hard-working, determined
* 11-15: Izu gotta fix 4 things:
  + Clean water systems & better roads & simple tools (water pump)
  + Crop rotation, usage of all sorts of crops in his life. New food ideas (and eventually deforestation)
  + Tax System (double-booking)
  + Prevents outbreak
  + “The people here are incredibly innovative. That’s good. I’ll uh ‘invent’ things, and they can take it and run”
* 15 year old Midoriya enters UA, and the game begins
  + Has his Debut Ball, Dabi’s Fiance. Wedding planned for his graduation
  + War should have started (it didn’t)
  + Rebellion should have began (it didn’t)

### The Legend Begins Here

Wait wait wait, Midoriya thought to himself. He was kept, outside, for three goddamn hours, waiting for his supposed fiance.

And he wasn’t even here?????

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This was how the legend of a backwash boy would eventually change the world. But he didn’t know that.

### First Week

In the castle, life was different from his home life. From the moment he woke up, he went into the library and read. There, he gained further confirmation about this world, and how it perfectly lined up to the one he remembered reading about, a lifetime ago. He read and he read until someone came to give him breakfast.

He ate, as always, alone. The Duke was too busy, the Duchess was ill, the eldest was out on patrol, the second son and daughter were in school, and the youngest was with the Duke. No one else is at the proper social standing to sit with him otherwise. He, still, doesn't understand why that matters when no one was here, but he didn’t want to start a fight in someone else’s home.

After breakfast, the simple bread and simpler soup, he returned to the library to resume reading. As a student, he never enjoyed reading thick bands of history and information dumps, but now, it felt like a matter of death.

If he was to stand at the pinnacle of social standings, he wasn’t going to be blindsided by it.

“Uhm…” he looked towards the guards, it would be the first time he spoke to them since he got here. In fact, this would be the first time he talked to anyone since his initial introduction, “Is there any place I could get some paper and ink?”

“...Huh?”

The guard at the door, a blond man with his hair gelled straight up in the most intense tower that Midoriya has ever seen, stared at him blankly. He thought about it and then nodded.

“There should be some on the desk. You need it?”

“Yes, that would be great. I … I uh can get it myself, if you can tell me where it is.”

“...Alright,” the blond nodded, “Go back into the library. At the center of it, there’s a huge desk. There should be some loose paper and ink there, little listener.”

Midoriya brightened at the words, his eyes shining, and eagerly gave a polite bow of thanks.

“Thank you!”

He rushed back into the room without further preamble, and missed the blooming smile on the knight.

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Conveniently, Midoriya knew the language. In fact, he dared even say that this is his mother language. The words, scriptures, kanji and hiragana, everything was so just easy. This has got to be the easiest thing he had done since he got here.

But this wasn’t Japan. He wasn’t home. This wasn’t home, not even for the people who lived here.

Knowing that he wasn’t reading fantasy books, but the actual history of the place he is in, took away from the experience. But, at the same time, made him that much more interested. Somewhere, far away in his brain, he wishes that he did care more about the politics of the nation, but he knew enough to always be in the Top Ten grades up till college so that had to account for something.

Of course, if someone asked him to recite back the all 16 openings of his favorite anime, he could do that, backwards, in two languages, and all their corresponding episodes and endings.

Midoriya had confidence in his memory, but having some extra paper to compare and contrast to what he remembered from this game, was something else that he wanted to confirm for himself. He would probably have to eat or burn all these papers so that no one else could read it or.

Or…

He wrote it in English. And then Mandarin. It registered as a different language in his head, so he assumed that it must also be a different language in this world. Since there was no one that could prove true or false for this, he tore it up. At worst, someone could find these and say that he’s a witch. Hopefully, they’ll dismiss this as a child’s doodle.

But it was better than writing in their common tongue, wasn’t it?

Midoriya sighed. Child scribbles it was. He rolled his wrists and started to reorder his thoughts. The world of MHA was extensive, it was why so many people loved it so much. They had at least three games, with the mobile game being one of the spin-off games that dwelved much harder into their school life.

He wrote out what he remembered of social circles and major events. He pulled books out of the history section to cross-reference it. He got lost among the shelves and just like that, three days passed. It seemed that after the designated lunch time on the first day, they forgot about him.

In all honesty, he forgot about them too.

The door came crashing in, and Midoriya flinched out of his notes to turn his head and the blond from before stared at him. Midoriya, flustered, collected all his notes in his hands and scooted as far backwards as he could go, and felt the bookshelves behind him dig into his back.

“You… You were here? This whole time?”

“...Yes?”

Did he do something wrong? How did he fuck this up? He thought that he was fine, alone. Was someone upset that he was here? They could have just told him to get the fuck out and he would have done that. What was the problem?

“Are… Aren’t you hungry?”

The blond looked as confused as he did. And Midoriya blinked twice and then nodded.

“I … I can be.”

His stomach growled back. The guard stared back at him, open-mouth shock before he sighed and nodded.

“Alright, let’s get you some dinner.”

“Dinner…?” Midoriya blinked back, “Don’t you mean lunch?”

“I’m saying that it’s been three days since you’ve eaten anything… Aren’t you hungry? Or even tired?”

Midoriya looked back down at the books, “Will I be eating alone?”

“...Yes,” the blond admitted after a moment.

Midoriya nodded back, “Good. Then, can I bring this book too?”

“What?”

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### Control - Dabi

The first time their eyes met, after that incident, Midoriya dropped his eyes. He was in bed-rest for about a day, and was well-enough to be up and about again. It had nothing to do with the fact that Midoriya was bored out of his fucking mind in the Doctor’s office.

Yet, not even forty-five minutes after he left the make-shift infirmary, he had a run-in with his fiance. If it wasn’t for the fact that he knew that this was from a game, he would daresay that this was all too convienently planned.

Once he realized what he had done, he couldn’t help but shake the fact that this would set up the rest of their relationship for the next four years before it ended in his grisly demise. What a terrible end, yes, but what a terrible life as well. If his life had to end a tragedy, then his life should be about suffering, right?

Was it really a tragedy if it liberated him from his eternal disparity?

The thought sent a shiver down his spine and taking a deep breath, he decided to do what he thought would keep his ass out of trouble and maybe to the age of eighty with a cat on his lap or something. It felt like a pipe-dream so he trashed the thought, no matter how appealing it felt. If he was going to die awfully, he might as well at least try to have a good life before that.

“Good morning, beloved,” he said, giving a polite bow, before straightening and giving a smile to Dabi.

Forty would be nice. It would be more what he lived last time. To die at 14 would be too sad, after all. And if at all possible, he would like to have sex once. At least once. He doesn’t know how that will happen, and it wasn’t like he had any prior experience in this field either. But he didn’t want to die a virgin two times in a row.

The corridor filled with that blue flame, and Midoriya was lucid just long enough to think that dying by this fire would be a beautiful death.

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He woke up again. Another third degree burn, but it was also on top of his left arm. Looks like he threw up his to protect his face just in time, lucky him. His chest was burned, and it seemed like one of his feet was within blast radius as well.

It was painful, no doubt about it, and the scars would be awful to look at. But, he couldn't squish the giddy feeling bubbling up in his chest.

He wasn’t dead.

He had encountered the Cremator and his flames, not once, but twice now, and he wasn’t dead. The first time could be chalked up that he momentarily lost control of himself, but the second time? He got burned for greeting him.

Excellent. He wasn’t going to die from saying hello. Terribly injured, yes, but he wasn’t dead. He wasn’t dead and he would recover. The rumors about the Duke’s Eldest son in the game were wrong. This was revolutionary.

The last thing people expected was that, after being burned so badly the first time, Midoriya would continue to actively search out for the Duke’s eldest.

“Good morning, my darling.”

“Good evening, my dear.”

“Hello, my sweetheart.”

“Have sweet dreams, my treasure.”

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He hissed when the in-house doctor wrapped his injuries and handed him another ice pack.

“...You know, most people would have just avoided him altogether, if they managed to survive the first fire incident. Actually, there are many people that avoid him altogether.”

The blond guard, Yamada as Midoriya has finally learned his name, told him as he winced and grimaced at the sight of Midoriya and his new assortment of burns. The doctor had left after heaving a big sigh as he got another container of salve out, and Midoriya hoped that the man got a pay-raise for dealing with this so well. One of the maids already broke into tears when she saw how bad the burn by his shoulder was.

“...I appreciate the concern,” Midoriya said. “But it’s okay.”

Yamada gave him another look, clearing in disbelief. “Is it even worth it? It’s enough, isn’t it? Can’t you just go back now? You’re going to actually die at this rate.”

“You know, I never thought I would live a long life,” Midoriya said suddenly, wincing as the balm came down onto his leg where the newest burn was. “But when I think about it, I’m pretty lucky that his quirk is fire.”

“...I don’t really think ‘lucky’ is the right word for the situation,” the blond replied.

The green-haired boy, despite how much pain he must be in, managed to give a little chuckle. With every interaction, his theories were getting closer to the truth. Maybe the pain had cornered him into the furthest corners of his sanity, but that was fine. If it meant he lived, it was fine.

“It’s just… The rings we got are chosen for us, and our vows are pre-written. We don’t get to choose what colors we wore or the date or even a partner. But this,” he raised his newly bandaged arm, “this is something that he gave me. For us, this is the closest thing to a wedding gift that I’ll get,” he explained.

His mother’s wedding gift was a son who chased away her husband.

Maybe it was a Midoriya thing?

It was a huge spin, to say the least. But he needed to say it. He needed everyone to believe it, even if he doesn’t. That it’s okay that this happened, and that to some extent, he wanted it. Even if it’s fake and a lie, because a little bit of pain is nothing when Midoriya just wants to make it past 14. He’ll sacrifice all of it away, and say that he did it for love.

Not for his fiance, but his mom, who he was born to twice now.

And well, if they think he’s crazy, they’ll send him away. After that, he’ll be free. So, either he lived somehow here and never be the same, or he’ll be sent away and also not dead. Win-win, if you ask him.

“There are many people who will call you a fool for that.”

Midoriya blinked to where the Doctor stared at him from between his long bangs. He looked like a ragged kind of guy who has clearly seen too much from the world and could go for an eternal nap, and Midoriya always felt bad asking him to patch him up. His red eyes pierced through him, looking too alert concerning his current disposition.

And in all honesty, he wasn’t wrong. Midoriya remembered thinking the same things when he watched all those crazy exaggerated dramas with his mom as a teen, but knowledge from another world is powerful. He had the proper explanation for this, and he knew that, if he wanted to live, he needed to lie. He was a shit-liar, but that was fine. It didn’t need to be a full-faced lie.

“Yeah,” Midoriya agreed, “that’s what we call people in love.”

The looks he got, from the black-haired man and the blond, made him think that they thought he was crazy. That was fine. As long as they didn’t try to kill him for being crazy, that was fine. He was pretty much harmless, with no special ability of any sort, so surely they’ll just cast him away when they decide he was too crazy to deal with.

“...Is it really that nice?” Yamada asked quietly, “Being in love?”

Midoriya thought about the people who stabbed their loved ones in a fit of violent passion. Then, he thought about the old lady down the street who died a week after her husband from a broken heart. He thought about his mom who was always waiting for a man and only got a paycheck every month.

He smiled and lied through his teeth.

“Yes.”

And with that, Midoriya was dismissed from the infirmary area in a few days. He ran straight for where he thought the first son would be.

Because he was a fool.

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An entire week of being in and out of the infirmary, abandoning his studies, and running sheerly on adrenaline and pain, finally resulted in something changing. Dabi, as soon as he saw Midoriya turn the corner, set the corridor ablaze.

He gave a shocked cry, because he usually gets a word in before this happens. But, finally, finally, finally, Midoriya managed to dodge the first shot of fire. He wanted to cry, he was so happy, but he also wanted to cry, because his leg fucking ached and the heat was making his other wounds rather unbearable.

“Do you understand now?! This fire-not even I can control it! This is a fire only brought forth to destroy! Nothing will remain when I use it! Why haven’t you learned this yet?! Everyone knows this! I only hurt people! I was brought into this world only to hurt people around me!” Dabi yelled out, eyes wild and wide as the fire danced along the side of his arm.

Midoriya stood there, and could feel the fire licking at his skin, devouring it in its entirety. The place where his skin had yet to heal properly still stung, and yet, he took a step forward.

Did… That Dabi, the Cremator, did he really think that? Then, all the times that he used his flames on Midoriya, were they all warning shots? Is that why he didn’t die at the touch? In the games, it was pretty clear that anything Dabi’s flames touched would incinerate into ash within seconds, but all Midoriya had were some bad burns. He thought that it was because this Dabi was much younger than Game-Dabi, or that it was because he didn’t want to kill him.

But maybe it was something else altogether.

He kept stepping forward. The fire climbed the corridor walls, and while the heat was tough and uncomfortable, Midoriya could only focus on those blue eyes, the same shade as his fire.

“Go away! I said, go the fuck away! You fucking idiot, are you trying to die?! This fire-it’ll consume me, so it’ll definitely consume some little thing like you-”

Ah, who was he kidding. He was an idiot. It wasn’t something as honorable and respectable as surviving for his mom. It wasn’t for love. It wasn’t anything as beautiful or poetic like that.

Midoriya just didn’t think that “lonely” was a good look for the confident villain, Dabi.

“It’s your flame,” he said, forging forward. “So, if you, with your flame, decide to cremate me away,” he opened his arms as he spoke, “then I welcome it.”

And maybe it was because it was such a shocking proclamation, Dabi’s flames calmed down for a second.

“...Are you crazy? Do you not understand that you can die? I could kill you with this. We wouldn’t even have a body left.”

Midoriya shrugged back, “Then I wasn’t strong enough to stay by your side. You are my fiance. If I can’t be by your side, then I might as well be dead.”

And then, after a moment of absolute agony in the center of the sweltering heat, Dabi started to laugh. It sounded awkward, like it wasn’t something that he was used to, but the more that he began to do it, the better it sounded. The sound bounced off the walls and overtook the crackle of the blue flames around them.

Dabi hunched forward, clutching his stomach as though he heard the funniest thing ever, and Midoriya wondered if he had been holding back his laughter all this time, and now that he had something to laugh at, everything came tumbling out right now. While he was pondering it, however, Dabi began to calm down.

“What a crazy guy,” he said, wiping at his eye. “Where did they even find you?”

“Some street corner,” Midoriya replied back, “It was always cold there, so I wasn’t prepared for how warm the castle could be.”

The older man snorted loudly at that, but the smile stretching across his lips was unmistakable.

The fire began to die down, or perhaps Midoriya was losing consciousness and it felt like the fire was going out. Well, regardless, he saw Dabi’s face. Now that he wasn’t laughing, the fact that Midoriya had managed to close the gap between them from the entire corridor to four feet was sinking in.

More than that, Midoriya could clearly see his future fiance better now. The older man looked so lost and confused, with a twisted grin on his face like he didn’t know how else to express himself and Midoriya thought that it was, at the center of that blue inferno…

“...beautiful…”

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When Midoriya woke up, and felt a numbing pain running all up and down his arms and legs and chest and neck, he took a deep breath and then choked on it.

Nothing was going his way, from the moment he woke up in a fucking game to now.

He coughed violently, each one making his chest cramp awfully and his throat clench. He gasped between coughs and it served to make the situation worse for him. What a way to wake up. Without a doubt, this wasn’t a dream though, if only because there was no way this pain could be a dream.

He wheezed a little, and a cup was handed to him. He nodded his thanks, and tried to drink the liquid in an attempt to stop the coughing.

“You know, that could have been poisoned.”

Midoriya thought about it, stifling his coughs to the best of his ability, and then shrugged.

“Then, I die by poison and not because I’m coughing,” he managed to wheeze out and downed the rest of the water. It was delicious, as delicious as water could be, and soothed his throat all the way down. He gave a satisfied sigh when he finished it and then handed it back to the man who gave it to him, “Thank you for not poisoning me.”

The man stared at him pensively. It wasn’t the usual in-house doctor in front of him. This man had dark hair that came down like wild grass, and it reminded him of seaweed. He gave a little chuckle at the thought.

“...For an idiot, I’m surprised that you have any manners.”

“...For a doctor, you can be quite rude. Isn’t your… bedside manner supposed to be... kinder?”

The man stared at him for another moment before he snorted. “The reports were wrong. They said that you were a pushover and just stupid, but I guess there is still a fire inside there somewhere.”

Midoriya frowned back, not enjoying how this situation was playing out, but was also grateful to focus on something that wasn’t how itchy his bandages were. He gave an irritated sigh, wondering which was the better option and gave in.

“...My name is Midori…. Midoriya Izuku. The first son’s fiance.”

The older man yawned back, he leaned back into his seat, “I know. I don’t think there’s anyone here who doesn’t know by now.”

“It was an invitation for you to introduce yourself,” Midoriya narrowed his eyes, “Sir.”

The scruffy looking man’s lip twitched and he stood up from his seat. He gave a proper bow, not one of nobility, but one that only the soldier did, with their right fist on their heart and their left hand behind them as he bowed at the waist. It was something that Midoriya had always seen but never up close.

“Wait-” Realization dawned on him.

“Aizawa Shota, a humble night-guard, at your service, Not a doctor, but out of all of us, I’m the only one that knows how to deal with patients,” he said. He straightened back up, “I will be your immediate guard for the foreseeable future. Let’s get along.”

And Midoriya knew guys like this. He spent a lifetime running from people like him, who looked at him as nothing more than a stepping stone, as a current scum that they have resigned themselves to deal with in their life. He knew guys like him, with no life in their eyes, and the only time they managed to have anything resembling a smile was when someone else was suffering.

More importantly, Midoriya knew who this was, and felt the bone-deep chill run through his veins.

“But,” the man said, eyes lingering on the bandages on him, “It looks like I won’t be stationed here for long, will I? Hm, do me a favor and just stay in bed for now while I go on my break, alright?”

And with that, the man left through the window, like a fucking ninja, and left Midoriya to sit in the bed in his shock. A thousand different things ran through his head at that moment, ranging from how bad his arms were itching to wondering if this was okay and the plot of the original game wouldn’t be diverted.

...No way, Dabi’s heart would only flutter when the Heroine entered the scene. Right now, Midoriya just managed to pull a fast one on him. He did something that no one else would do right now, since the Heroine had yet to enter the scenario. Nothing else has changed.

But, he still came to one conclusion. For all these injuries, pains, and itches, he had proven himself in someone’s eyes, because they had given him Aizawa Shota as a guard.

And in the games, Aizawa Shota was Eraserhead, someone with unprecedented use and would eventually play a huge role in the games by becoming a teacher and one of the Heroine’s closest allies. This was good.

Midoriya looked at his hands. He made a fist, relaxed it, then made sure each and every single moved. This was good too.

He was alive.

### Training -

“...What are you doing?”

“I was informed that I cannot meet with Lord Dabi for a couple of weeks,” Midoriya said. “I guess it’s because he had to go out on the subjugation to the Northeastern border. So I figured that I’ll just train instead. I need to catch up on my schooling, but I figured it would be better to train while I still had daylight.”

Midoriya said that, but he imagined how pathetic he looks. His bandages have come off, but the sight of his burns were so grotesque that no one could look at him, and he made one of the maids cry when they saw him. Since then, he kept his sleeves long, colar high, and gloves on. Luckily, it was cold up here at the northern front, so it wasn’t too bad altogether.

However, it made training considerably harder and a lot itchier. Luckily, his clothes weren’t caked in puss and dirt anymore, but he figured that he would do his own laundry since none of the maids came close to him. And Dabi’s too, since they really didn’t want to do his. In Midoriya’s humble opinion, doing one person’s laundry was the same as doing two.

Which was fine, he thought it was a little weird to have someone else do his laundry.

Besides, doing manual labor like this, making a little schedule for himself to follow, it made him think that he’s really working for his stay here. He’s not just someone who is here to indulge himself on taxpayer money, and he’s not going to lay in the infirmary all the time. The repetition of the work helped clear his mind, and it also served to make sure that he didn’t kill himself in his boredom or thinking himself into circles.

“...Train…?”

He stopped doing push-ups and moved to stand up properly. He turned to Aizawa and tilted his head, “Yeah. Training.”

“...You are marrying into one of the most powerful families in the Kingdom, possibly the world. There’s no need for you to… train,” Aizawa said.

“A strong body houses a strong mind,” Midoriya recited back, remembering a time when his mother told him so he would go to sleep before ten, “And besides, in a place like this, ‘powerful’ just means ‘lots of enemies’.”

Aizawa arched an eyebrow at him for that, and crossed his arms over his chest.

“Oh? Is that your way of saying that you also don’t want guards?”

Midoriya thought about it, and nodded.

“Yeah, then, all the guards would be available to protect the Todoroki’s, right? More so than me, aren’t they more important?”

“...Nine times out of ten, having guards would just get in their way,” Aizawa replied back.

Thinking about it logically, that made no sense. Because, after all, the Todoroki’s are all human. However, thinking about how ridiculously OP the Todoroki family was made, he’s inclined to believe that statement. But he knows better. Soon enough, there will be a long list of awful circumstances and terrible story-writing that will, in the worst case-scenario, lead to all of their deaths.

“I am young and ignorant of the world,” Midoriya blurted out. “But even I know that the thought of ‘I could have helped’ is one of the worst ones in the world.”

The dark-haired man stared at him, “And what, are you going to ask me to train you?”

Midoriya’s eyes shined as he turned his head to face him, “Will you say yes?”

“No. I don’t do pointless things.”

The green-haired male sighed back, a little disappointed at the easy rejection, but then perked right up.

“Then, this isn’t a pointless conversation?”

It was the wrong thing to say. The look on Aizawa’s face was absolutely thunderous and Midoriya shrunk in on himself.

“Ahaha,” he forced a laugh, trying his hardest not to cry and wail at the expression on the older man’s face. “I was a fool, sorry about that, oops haha. Better go and put away the laundry, haha.”

Later, he would realize that he didn’t really do any training and would do it while he waited for the laundry to dry instead.

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As a fully independent and full-fledged adult (before his death), Midoriya can comfortably do all of his own chores. Of course, being put into a much larger area with many more people did put a damper on things, but he didn’t realize how awful it was.

Made even worse because while everyone had a quirk or some sense of magic, Midoriya literally only had himself. And majority of the time, he couldn’t even keep up, despite the fact that he was barely managing to do some of the chores for himself and some of Dabi’s. He missed the conveniences of modern-day technologies.

Luckily, however, the academics of this world was fucking easy. With the exception of history, which was interesting enough that he absorbed like a sponge especially after his initial camp-out in the library, everything was a review from the third grade. But, he would say that the curriculum moved by really fast. Had he been learning this for the first time in this world, he’s certain that he would have never kept up.

But, that wasn’t the case. He wasn’t one of the top scorers in Japan for nothing. And all these lectures and exams were a walk in the park for him.

After how badly everything was going for him, it was nice to finally secure a victory for himself.

### Dabi’s Return

When Dabi returned, it took two whole days of aimlessly wandering through the castle before they ran into each other. At the sight of him, Dabi took a step back and Midoriya frowned back.

“Don’t run!”

“I’m not running!”

He turned around to say that, and realizing that he fell for it, scowled at Midoriya’s grin.

“Good,” he said, “Because I caught you.”

Dabi stared at him, but before he said anything, dropped his gaze to the ground.

“... I wanted to say, ‘Welcome Back’, but it took me some time to find you,” Midoriya said, even though both of them knew that Dabi was actively trying to avoid him. “So welcome back, dear beloved.”

Dabi’s eyes dragged from the ground to his face and then back down.

“Whatever. Leave me alone.”

Midoriya frowned, wanting to say something else, but the older man was already walking away.

“I heard that the subjugation was a success, but more than that,” the young man called out to his backside, “I’m glad that you returned safely, my Lord.”

The first son of the Duke stopped. For a moment, Midoriya thought that the corridor would be painted that beautiful blue and he would have to deal with Aizawa’s impassive stare and Yamada’s teasing again. Instead, the man just kept walking forward.

He probably didn’t hear him, and it was clear that he didn’t want to talk.

Midoriya sighed deeply through his nose. Even though he didn’t get burned this time, it didn’t feel like a victory either.

Next time then.

### Rei - Healing is a Long Process

Reality is a harsh thing. And for Midoriya, being at the castle was a constant reminder of his reality. With that in mind, he worked hard. He studied hard, trained hard, and never let a day without Dabi pass by. Of course, his fiance had other plans, but Midoriya left notes for him at the end of every day if he didn’t physically see him.

But if he went on subjugation, he placed a small pile of love letters on his desk.

He never sees the letters in the trash or ever again, so he assumes that the man burns on contact. The thought makes him a little more giddier than he thought. The image of Dabi burning the paper because he was embarrassed was just too much, and although Midoriya knew that it would never happen, it was an entertaining thought that he wrote incredibly mushy-gushy things down.

Should anyone see it and read it, he would probably die from embarrassment, but at the time, it was just funny.

All in all, he felt better. Like he was progressing.

It was a slow progress. But sometimes, he felt like he was really making progress.

And then, one day, he came across a corridor he had never been to before.

Despite what other people may say, he wasn’t actually a noisy person. And he wasn’t especially unlucky either. It’s just that when he runs into misfortune, it was just that much worse than anyone else’s unlucky days and landed him in the infirmary for a couple of days. He was, before all this marry-a-noble business, was very good at keeping to himself and far away from other people.

But he felt that something was wrong and when he opened the door, found a sickly woman in a dark room.

“...Are you alright?” he asked quietly.

She laid on the bed, unmoving, and despite himself, he crept closer. He didn’t really know what he was doing, but couldn’t shake the feeling that this woman needed help.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing!?”

One of the maids found him. Apparently, even though they used to be fine with ignoring him and his entire existence, this was more important. Two hands grabbed him by his shoulder, and with little regard for his level of comfort or former injuries, and forcefully dragged him out of the room.

“Who was that?”

“It’s none of your business! You should have known better than to come to this wing!”

“How am I supposed to know anything when no one speaks to me?!” Midoriya snapped back, because while he was glad that the maids were (sorta) talking to him, he was too frustrated and confused to deal with it.

The maid stared back at him, and she must be a kind woman, because her eyes turned pitying. She sighed back.

“That’s the Lady of the house. She has lost her mind. You will do well to leave her alone.”

And Midoriya wanted to scoff at that, of course she would lose her mind. She was stuck in a dark room and everyone that could talk to her was apparently chased away.

But Midoriya was a good kid, and he didn’t want to cause any more trouble so he stayed away. Or so he wanted to. But no matter how hard he tried to make himself a better, stronger person, his thoughts trailed back to that thin woman in that dark room.

The Lady of the house…

She’s Dabi’s mom, right? Vaguely, he could remember his mom telling him about how important it was for the daughter-in-law to get along with the son’s parents. If they didn’t move out immediately, they would have to be living with the son’s family, as was tradition. He remember her telling him that she’s certain that any girl Midoriya brings will be kind-hearted and easy to get along with, since she would be an incredible sensible person to see the gift that Midoriya was.

He didn’t know what he saw in him, in those moments, but he did know one thing.

The Lady of the House needed help.

-

He came back, bright and early after his usual training stint. He had to wait for Aizawa to let him be. And then, he rushed for the kitchen as the others were leaving to deliver food around the castle. With that, he managed to beg one of the chef’s to let him cook.

Lunch-Rush hesitated a little, but ultimately relented.

It wasn’t much, but he didn’t think that the thin woman could eat much. So with the knowledge of what his mom would like, he cooked something from his childhood. He was so focused on the creation that he missed the contemplative look on the chef’s face.

He filled a bowl, grabbed a spoon, and headed for the corridor. As he thought, the soup that she didn’t eat today was this cold and murky thing. He hid behind a wall, barely managing to hear some of the maids complain about how the Lady didn’t eat anything today too, and he feels a little sad.

He thinks to his mom. The one he left behind, and wonders if she’s doing okay.

“Good morning!” he cheered brightly as he walked in, “I hope you slept well!” He placed the tray to her side as he walked around the bed to open the window. It was clear that it hadn’t been open for a long time, and he had to put in a lot more strength than he thought he would need.

He nearly fell out of the window as a response but swung right back to his feet. He turned over, a nervous laugh on his lips, but she didn’t even look at him. Her eyes remained locked onto the soup next to her.

She must have been starving. Not for food, although she was definitely hungry, but for something else.

He just wishes that he could help with that.

-

Midoriya made changes. The maids in charge of that area hated him. The guards belittled him. Aizawa looked more and more increasingly frustrated with every passing day he blew by him. But at least, they will be spared even if he wasn't so he wisely kept his distance. He was secretly glad about that.

If he saw Dabi, the man didn’t want to see him. He didn’t know if this was normal, but sometimes it felt like he was always out on a subjugation of this or that sort.

He didn’t dare slack off on his other self-given duties either. He did all of his and Dabi’s chores. He kept up with the readings at until late at night and woke up early to make sure his body was getting stronger. His wounds were healing, except the ones on his hands and arms because of how hard it had been to do all of the chores.

But, with the window open so that fresh air came in, and fresh, hot soup made by himself with the memories of a mother who always had time for her son, Midoriya made the first step in progress when the sickly woman finally looked at him and spoke.

“...Thank you.”

He looked at her, felt his eyes tear up but held it all in and grinned back instead.

“No problem!”

It was so obvious. Of course she never got better. Her food was stale and cold at best. She was in a dark room coated in a thin layer of dust, and the maids went out of their way to chase away anyone that got to close.

If he had been in her situation. Midoriya was certain that he would have already lost his mind and died. Without a doubt, he would have never been cured, from whatever it was that she had.

She’s not cured or anything. Not even close. But she finally spoke, she finally looked at him, she was finally feeding herself the warm soup that he brought her, and he thinks that his efforts are bearing fruit.

-

### Laundry - DabiDeku

“...It’s unbecoming of a Lord’s Fiance to be doing laundry. We have maids for this.”

Midoriya felt his heart nearly stop when he heard the voice come up behind him. He wheezed, surprised and shocked all in one, but somehow managed to keep his hands moving. To think that Dabi would be the one to close the distance between the two of them. He couldn’t believe it.

And he wasn’t burned yet. They have really come a long way, huh?

“Ahahaha,” he laughed robotically, hoping that he didn’t sound nearly as shocked and as startled as he felt. “Beloved, isn’t it obvious that I would be the one to handle your laundry?”

Dabi frowned at that, and Midoriya continued to scrub his Lord’s clothing. This was awkward and awful beyond belief, so he must quickly say something that will make him leave. Hopefully, with how much better control Dabi has now than before, it will result in minimal burns.

Maybe the subjugations were really just helping him get in control of his flames. It was an interesting theory, but that would imply that Dabi is actively not trying to burn him and Midoriya didn’t know if he bought that.

“I don’t like the idea of anyone else touching the clothes that you have worn,” he said, and not for the first time, wished that he was at least cute.

Then, it’ll feel good, right? It’s always better when a cute girl says something like this, not someone like him. It would also result in minimal burns, but Midoriya really doesn’t think he’s in any place to complain about pain anymore.

He did spare a glance up to the Duke’s Eldest son, and gave a little smile before looking down at his work.

“I don’t look like it, but I get jealous pretty easily.”

“Even though you know that we are to be wed? In the end, isn’t that what matters?”

Midoriya gave an outright laugh at that, probably still high off the adrenaline since he was still alive, unburned, and talking to Dabi.

“What’s so funny.” It wasn’t a question.

Okay, not really, but Midoriya couldn’t help it.

He stopped washing the clothes, hoping that he appeared a little more humble and modest instead of some crazy man cackling at his pyromaniac fiance, and looked up to the older man. Older in body, but in Midoriya’s eyes, he looked like a child experiencing the world for the first time.

So, he apologized for lying to him in advance, in his head, and proceeded on.

“...My dear, you overestimate me. Besides, marriage is not the end,” Midoriya said, “People can still get divorced, after all.”

The older man snorted at that, “With my shitty old man? Doubtful.”

The green-haired man stared at him. And gave a little chuckle. He couldn’t help it. Dabi was True End for a reason, and that being because he was the most Dere-Dere character in all of the epilogues. None of the other routes would ever reach the teeth-rotting fluff that came from Dabi’s Ending.

“...You, are you mocking me?”

The younger man shook his head, “You’ll get it one day, beloved,” he said. He returned to the laundry, something light in his chest. “One day, you’ll fall in love with someone. They’ll be the first thing you think about when you wake up, and the last thing you think about when you sleep. They’ll encroach on you, snag your heart, and the world will only be bright when you see them. You’ll see the world only in terms of them.”

“...Are you cursing me?”

“It sounds like a curse, doesn’t it?” Midoriya nodded back, laughing again.

His eyes fell back to the shirt and he lifted it out of the water. He shook it a little, and thought to himself that although he didn’t really ship the Heroine with Dabi, he thought that it would be wonderful if the man could get a happy ending without the world being burned down or him dying.

“But I think a life without love is much worse,” he said. “It’s far too lonely.”

“...This is pointless,” Dabi decided.

With that, the man left. Midoriya could have cried in joy.

Look at that, not a single new burn, and Dabi was the one that had initiated conversation.

He was moving up in the world.

He must have looked crazy, if the way the maids were whispering behind his back was any indication, but he was okay with that.

He was still alive.

### Rei’s Words - Fuyumi & Natsuo

“Good morning, My Lady!” Midoriya cheered with the same amount of energy as he always did. “We got a new shipment of tomatoes last night, so I sneaked a couple today!” he said. “This morning’s soup is a little bland and the same as always, but prepare yourself to be wowed for lunc-”

He cut himself off, nearly biting his tongue in his shock, as the only daughter of Endeavor looked up at him in surprise.

“...Lady Fuyumi,” he whispered, and immediately ducked his head, “G-Good morning. Please excuse me.”

“...No need for that, Izuku-kun,” Rei said, her voice warm like the morning sun. “This is Fuyumi, my daughter.”

“Good morning, Izuku-kun,” Fuyumi greeted gently, “I… I have heard you have been looking after my mother while I was out studying. Thank you.”

Oh fuck, Midoriya thought to himself. How had he fucking missed out that the other Todoroki Children have finally returned to the estate? They were only talking about it all fucking week, and like an idiot high off the fact that Dabi still hadn’t burned him once this week, he completely forgot about it.

Wow, and he expected to live to 80? Ha!

“Not at all,” Midoriya replied back, keeping his head down like a good, lowly peasant, “I am humbled that you could give me such kind words.”

“None of that,” Fuyumi said, “You are going to be married into this family soon enough.”

“Oh?”

Rei spoke up, looking genuinely shocked. Fuyumi turned to her in confusion. And now that Midoriya thought about it, did he ever properly and formally introduce himself to her?

“...You’re… going to be wed into the family?” Rei asked, and there was a hint of something in her voice that made him wonder if he did something very, very bad.

“Ah,” Midoriya said, out of turn and then ducked his head again when they turned to him, “Uhm, it has come to my attention that I may have neglected to tell you about myself.”

Which was fake as fuck, because for the longest time, all he talked about was himself. He had thought that speaking in general in the same vicinity as Rei would help her get used to some human interaction, but to think he had forgotten something as vital as this. He felt his face burn with embarrassment.

“I uhm… I am but a lowly peasant that has the highest honor of marrying the First Son,” he said. He nervously looked between the soup in his hands and her before the words caught up to his mind and he blurted out, “But this-this isn’t like, a bribe or anything to make you like me or whatever! I did really want you to like me, Izuku! And not just by extension of Lord Dabi but it would be sort of super amazing…” he stared at the cold shock on her face and finished rather lamely, “...if you could accept someone like me as your son-in-law eventually.”

Fuyumi looked hopelessly endeared, her hands coming up to cover her mouth, but Rei looked so incurably sad.

“...Touya’s…?” she asked quietly. “That... monster?”

Midoriya’s whole world slowed to a halt. Excuse me, what? His eyes widened. He placed the food down, in fear that he would drop it and he took a deep breath.

“Mom,” Fuyumi whispered back, “He goes by Dabi now.”

Midoriya took a moment to digest this. Someone had… had just referred to her own son as a fucking mosnter and her other kid’s only concern is that she’s using his name instead of his Battle Title. What? Where did he even begin with this?

“...I will be marrying… a young man with a fire as blue as the seas, as bright as the stars, and as hot as the desert,” he said quietly. His eyes flashed protectively and he took a step forward. “So no, not a monster. A man who speaks honestly and has gotten far too used to being alone.”

Fuyumi’s jaw dropped, and Rei’s eyes widened. Midoriya squared his shoulders and looked at her straight on.

Fuck formalities and being a good in-law.

While he wasn’t telling the whole truth, he doesn’t think that this is something that he should be letting go. Everyone, each and every single one of them, carried a scar that he couldn’t hope to fix or even attempt to help. He knew that, but causing more wounds on each other because of their own pain was something that he had no intention of sitting back and letting be.

“...And I thought that I would be happy with his family, who blessed this world and myself by bringing him into the world, but it would appear that I have yet to meet them,” he concluded. He could be put to death for his words, for this upfront rude behavior, and he was fine with that. He would rather die young than die without anything to stand for.

He gave a polite bow.

“Excuse me.”

-

Outside the doors, however, he ran into the third child, the second son, Natsuo. He gave a polite bow, really not in the mood to deal with anyone at the moment, when the man spoke up.

“You’re the little peasant doll that we bought for Dabi, right?” he asked.

He froze where he was, in the middle of a bow.

“Don’t try to develop a heart. You’ll just burn to a crisp. You’re not really much to look at either, so why don’t you just keep hidden in Dabi’s bed or something?”

Today, Midoriya decided, is not his day.

“...I will be happy to do so,” Midoriya said, straightening to meet Natsuo’s eyes, “since it appears that there are no humans here to speak to.”

“Don’t get cocky just because they let you run free for a little bit. At the end of the day, it’s not Dabi that’s going to be taking the seat of a duke. Know your place.”

“My dearest apologies for concerning you. I am so incredibly fortunate to know that someone of your level is willing to look after my insignificant self with your carefully articulated words. Truly, you are living up to your name as the “summer” Natsuo. I will put forth further effort in order to be a stronger person worthy of serving under the Todoroki name.”

He gave another bow.

“Excuse me.”

Natsuo narrowed his eyes after him, but Midoriya didn’t think about it. He grumbled and muttered under his breath as he kept walking forward. How dare all these people say and do things like this? No wonder their entire family is a shitshow mess by the time the Heroine comes out. And…

And Midoriya is going to have to live with these people for the forseeable future.

Fuck.

### Shoto

There he was, the number one most popular guy on any forum, Todoroki Shoto.

He was sitting against the wall, curled up in a tight ball, crying.

And it was amazing how much Midoriya related to him with just a single action.

### Sleep-cryer

Izuku didn’t know it, but he cried in his sleep often.

The first time it happened, Dabi thought he was hallucinating. That bright, almost dopey-always-smiling guy? Crying? It sounded like a set up for a bad joke.

He reached over, ready to wake him up, and then stopped himself. What was he going to do? Comfort him? The thought made him sick to the bone. He wasn’t the type to do things like that, and first of all, wouldn’t waking up and seeing a face like his make things worse?

No, it was better for Dabi to lay there and listen to the kid cry. He didn’t know why he did it. But every night he couldn’t fall asleep or woke up in their middle of the night, he would hear the soft cries.

And without fail, every morning, Izuku would be all smiles and joys again anyways.

But tonight was a little different.

Tonight, Dabi came in late, and he didn’t know why he came in at all, but while he was distracted wondering why his feet led him here, the door clicked shut behind him. While it wasn’t loud enough to bring guards, it was loud enough for Izuku to be fully awake and sit up.

He stared for a moment, and Dabi didn’t know what kind of expression he must have shown.

However, he never thought that someone could look at his face, his scarred, hideous face, and relax. From that, he wanted to claim that Izuku just didn’t know who he was, but when he leaned back to his pillow to sleep, his name was on his lips.

It was a sweet sound.

### Fixing Rei and Shoto

“This, this is easy,” Midoriya said, pointing at his arms. “Spit on it, eat well, and sleep well. It’s all gone in days.”

“No, that’s not how the human body works-”

Midoriya cut him off and forged forward.

“But injuries to the heart?” he placed his hand over his chest, as though to help make his point, “No one else can even see the damage. That’s not something you can just hope it gets better. It’s a long journey and a long, uphill battle.”

“...Then what should I do?”

“When you do something wrong, the first thing you do is apologize. And then you wait for the other person to accept it. Then you can do something about it.”

“And if she doesn’t accept it?”

Midoriya shook his head. “She will."

### Dabi’s smile

If Midoriya Izuku had to pinpoint a single moment where his heart started to falter, it would have been the moment he saw Dabi smile.

It was a terrifying thing. Dabi’s smile was a cruel thing that twisted his lips. It brought a light into his eyes that made him look absolutely horrifying. Truly, he was befitting of the role < Villain >.

But, when he saw the way his lips quirk up, the way his eyes met the ground, the way his shoulders slouched just a little bit, Midoriya didn’t think he would ever go back to who he was before.

No CG could ever come close to ever matching the sheer magnitude of power Dabi’s smile had over him now. And these days, Dabi smiled noticeably more, and Midoriya is just glad that he has found his smile again. His heart ached at the sight of something so tender, and he prayed that he would be strong enough to protect it.

He will apologize to the Heroine at a later day, but he doesn’t think it’s a bad thing that he has started to smile more, a little earlier.

-

“...The First Son?” Aizawa frowned, “He only smiles when something dies.”

### 

### Kidnapped

15 kids, including Shoto and Midoriya.

1 captain.

29 kidnappers.

-

Midoriya is truly and honestly incredibly thankful for Dabi. Normally, this kind of phrase would ring in his head sarcastically, but this time, it’s true.

After all, if it wasn’t for his fiance constantly and consistently always burnt him, he probably wouldn’t have the courage to do this. The fear of pain and dying an excruciatingly painful way would have won against all of his other thoughts. But since there were at least seven more children including Shoto, he knew that he had to do something.

What was a hand in comparison to their lives?

Midoriya looked at his hands, and hoped that his deadline was still in place. And if it is, hopefully this won’t kill him. Meaning, someone was coming to save them, and all he needed to do was make sure they were all alive to witness that.

However, to stay any longer would absolutely ruin the mental state of these kids. Things weren’t going well for the kidnappers that had them. The food was getting more and more meager. Winter was fast, cold and brutal, but there wasn't any effort for them to try and move them. They, the prisoners, were being visited less and less.

With that in mind, he pulled one more time at the rope around his wrists. It was tight enough that he had lost feeling in his fingers once or twice. He had read somewhere once that people can just tear through rope, if desperate enough. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He was desperate. There was a pattern, there is always a pattern, and remembering it, he knows to wait for the door to swing open down the hallway…

And with a strength that only came to desperate people, he broke his hand getting it out of his binding.

The cracking sound was far too loud, however, and when he heard Shoto gasp next to him, he realized that he probably should have spared him this.

“...It’s okay,” he said, pulling his hands out of the binding and taking the rope over his shoulder, they may need this later. “I will definitely get us out of here.” He pulled and scratched at the knots by his feet until they were free and he gave the youngest Todoroki the most reassuring grin he could.

If the look on the dirty and young face was any indication, it wasn’t reassuring in the slightest.

Midoriya stood up, stretched his legs and got some blood back into them and turned to the rest of the kids.

“I got some ideas on how to get us, all of us, out of here.”

-

One, get everyone out of bindings and check for injuries.

-

“Shoto-sama,” Midoriya said, kneeling in front of him, “Duke Endeavor… Enji-sama will be coming. He will find you. So right now, your duty is to stay with all these children and ensure their safety. That is your duty as the future heir to the Todoroki name.”

Shoto stared at him, pale-faced and trembling, like he had grown a second head and Midoriya felt bad. However, the most important thing that he does is make sure that Shoto lives. In the furthest corner of his mind, he thinks that this whole endeavor is useless since there is no fucking way the universe will let Shoto will die before he meets the heroine.

And yet, here he was. Throwing around his uselessly worthless self around knowing that it’s futile and meaningless in the grand scheme of things. But the overwhelming majority of him just wished to spare Shoto at least an ounce of all the shit his original backstory dumped on him.

What can he say? He personally loved Shoto's OG route.

“When Enji-sama gets here, please let him know that there is a slave-trade brewing within the southwestern border. There were 30 men total here, and of them, one of them was a captain who answered to a commander back at the base. Yet, there are only 20 horses, but two are sick.”

He kneeled down, and gave him a smile. He hoped that this one was a little stronger, and could actually provide some relief for the younger man. He reached over and grabbed one of his hands, lifting it up and squeezed hard. His other hand throbbed even against the snow and ice around it. His eyes came to meet Shoto’s mismatched ones.

Somehow, he was reminded of someone else.

“...I know that this is presumptuous of me, but I … my selfish request… if you would… please let Dabi-sama know that I did not leave him because I wanted to.”

With that, he released Shoto’s hands and took a step back. He has seen Shoto’s sprite plenty of times, but in front of him right now is a young boy who has never experienced a childhood. His heels clicked together, he placed his fist over his heart, he stood tall and proud and beamed back.

“Midoriya Izuku, present. I will complete this duty bestowed on me. ...Long life the Empire.”

“W-Wait-”

With that, Midoriya turned and ran right back through the forest.

-

"C'mon, you have to have something interesting to say, don't you?"

Unshockingly, he got caught. But with how hard and desperate their methods have gotten, Midoriya is certain that he did a great job and that the kids have yet to be found.

“What the fuck did they even give you? What did they promise you? Why bother being so loyal?”

Midoriya stubbornly kept his mouth closed. When the blows rained down, when he lost his nails, when they yelled and pulled and grabbed and shoved, he kept his mouth shut. The feeling of his teeth burying into his lips was no longer foreign. Something was running down his face, he was lucid enough to recognize it, but he didn’t know if it was spit, blood, or his own tears. He would be pretty impressed if it was his tears, since he didn’t think that he had enough water in him to cry anymore.

“We don’t have the time for this. Captain, the Commander is going to eat us alive. Even if we leave right now, abandon everything and don’t take breaks, we will miss the rendezvous point by at least an hour.”

“I fucking know, alright?! This damn brat…”

A hand came to grab him by his hair. Midoriya is honestly surprised that he still has any hair left, with how harshly they grab him by it. He managed a ragged breath through his teeth, nearly choking on the sudden influx of blood rushing down his throat because of the angle they yanked his head up by. His head swam, but he managed to anchor himself to the pain in his scalp.

“Look kid, you don’t want to be in anymore pain right? We can end all of this, so just tell us where did the other kids go?”

Midoriya's bottom lip trembled but he didn't say anything.

"...This is getting nowhere. How about this, if you don't tell us anything, then we'll take your arm, okay?"

Midoriya, with some effort, pulled his teeth out of his bottom lip and finally spoke.

"...Then I guess I won't have arms anymore."

Once they went through each of his fingers, breaking them in all sorts of different angles, they realized it was futile. Within the hour, they returned to the whip out of desperation. Four hits in, he thinks that he’s actually going to die, when the door suddenly burst down.

“Hey!” the blond’s voice was unmistakable. “We heard that you guys were throwing a party, and thought you would appreciate the company!”

Just like that, the tables had turned.

The surge of guards that came running in was thunderous. In his pain-filled haze, Midoriya felt it more than he heard them. The wooden floor creaked and strained, and he could feel the vibration through his chair. He swam, in and out of consciousness, and couldn’t help but laugh when he heard the men before him panic.

“Fuck, then, at the very least-”

One of them turned around, intending on at least killing Midoriya before they all got ruined, when he was knocked out by a blur of black sending him crashing into the wall.

“...It seems you took very good care of our own,” Aizawa said. He turned around while Yamada sent another vocal-wave to knock over the last two. He walked over to Midoriya and grimaced at the sight before him.

Midoriya imagines that he wasn’t looking his best, or smelling it for that matter. He tried to contain his pants, breathing through his nose, but it proved futile when he snorted down clumps of blood. He went back to panting after that, but more importantly-

“Shoto an… and the kids… were 13 others-”

“Already found. You make 15,” Aizawa said, his hands making quick work of the ropes. “We wouldn’t have found this place if it wasn't for the Shoto-sama.” He grabbed Midoriya when he began to pitch forward, and gave a sharp intake of air through his teeth.

Ah, he probably saw the mess that was his back then. It was probably gruesome.

“...You did well, holding on,” he said. “We got it from here. Take a break.”

“E-Endeavor-sama,” Midoriya muttered out, “G-gotta tell him… there’s a… an organized slave group… at the southwestern-”

“At the southwestern border? Yeah, Shoto-sama already told us. I’m telling you, just take a break. You’ve been through enough-”

But Midoriya’s patience was paid off when Endeavor himself walked into the room.

“...Endeavor-sama, I don’t think you should-”

Midoriya, not knowing how much longer he had, threw away rules, regulations, and everything else by using the rest of his strength to push past Aizawa. But one of his feet were broken and his other knee was swelling to the size of a small ball, so he just face-planted right into the ground instead.

“Endeavor-sama!” he shouted out, over everything else, and when Aizawa’s hands came to his shoulders, kept his head against the floor.

The blood rushed to his head, and he forged on, time was of essence. He just barely managed to tuck one of his legs underneath him, and bent his left arm behind him, because there were some habits he couldn’t break even if all the joints in his arm were.

“Midoriya Izuku, reporting for duty! There were 14 kidnapped people and 30 total kidnappers. The one with brown-hair and an eye-patch is the Captain of this force. They mentioned that they had to meet a quota, and that their rendezvous is about 80 km towards the southwestern area. They are going to meet…” his stomach lurched painfully and his ears rang for a moment, but he quickly regained his momentum again. “They are going to meet with three other forces by tomorrow sundown, and regroup with their Commander at the capital. I have… I have reason to believe that there are other parties that are kidnapping young children in the area. That is the conclusion of my report, sir!”

“...I see.”

Midoriya didn’t move. He knew that, if he really wanted to, Aizawa could pick him up and just leave, but the fact that he didn’t meant a lot to him. A hand came to his back, warm and comforting even if it landed right on an open wound. He centered himself.

“...Is there anything else you would like to say?” the duke asked, “Speak freely.”

“...Please, save them,” Midoriya said.

“If we go right now, there is a good chance that we can do that,” Enji said, voice strong and words cold. “However, that means that we will have to leave you in your state until we grab them and can make the round trip back. Is that truly okay with you?”

The green-haired man didn’t hesitate. “Yes.”

“...Why do you say that?”

The blood-loss was making his head swim, and he wondered how the room was getting colder, despite the fact that the human furnace was standing just a few feet from him.

“...I have abandoned my duties, and my neglig…” he fumbled over the word, and couldn’t stop the way blood spewed from his mouth like a stream, and took a deep breath before continuing, “In my negligence, I allowed Shoto to be kidnapped and sub...subjected to something terrible. There is no excuse for my behavior and inadequacy. There is clearly no benefit in my continued life. But out there, there are children who have… have a future. Please. I have… no place to demand this but please… please save them.”

Endeavor stared at him for a long moment, he could feel that burning hot gaze at his head, and the tension in the room was thicker than the stench of blood.

“...I will take your words into consideration. Aizawa, Yamada, I leave him to you,” he said. He raised his voice and gave out his heavy word, “Dismissed.”

In an instant, Yamada was at Midoriya’s side, gently and gingerly lifting him onto his back with Aizawa’s help.

“Alright, you did great, little Listener,” the blond said. "Just hold on, okay?"

“C’mon, let’s get you out of here,” Aizawa added.

“S-Sorry,” he muttered, feeling the older man’s heat through his clothest. “Your uniform-”

“Nothing a wash can get out,” Yamada chirped up, “Don’t worry, you’re going to be okay now, alright? What you just did? Really stupid. Don’t ever do that again.”

“But the kids…”

“...Will be saved,” Aizawa said, “but it was something that we would have eventually extracted from the others.”

“Men!” Endeavor’s voice rang out from one of the top rooms, but the three scurried outside, “We leave six of you to take care of the rest. The rest of us have the rest of this bandit group to capture. Get ready to leave in ten minutes! Mobilize!”

“Yes, sir!”

And then, and only then, did Midoriya close his eyes.

-

“...I’m alive..?”

“Midoriya-shounen!”

The golden bunny hopped right up to his chest, and Midoriya groaned. Yagi hopped right back off, and curled up in a small ball right next to his head.

“I’m so sorry, I was… I was just… I was so worried,” he whispered quietly. “Oh lord, Midoriya-shounen. I could feel our link weakening. I… I am so sorry that I couldn’t help you.”

“...I’m alive,” Midoriya said, and tried to sit up. His entire body ached, but it didn’t hurt nearly as much as he thought he would. Sitting up took all of his energy, and he could feel a trail of sweat run down his face. He lifted his hand up, and realizing that he could move it without pain, frantically grabbed his shirt to peer down at his chest.

There were a lot of scars. There were in all shapes and sizes, but there were no bandages. If he didn’t know any better, he would say he must have been unconscious until his body was pretty much all healed.

“I don’t… I don’t think you should be getting up. I-”

“How long have I been out?” Midoriya asked quietly. Surely, it couldn’t have been months or something. There’s no way. Did he seriously miss two months worth of events and training? Seriously?

God, he’s be shocked if anyone even remembered his face then.

“A day and a half.”

“Oh, just a day and a half,” Midoriya sighed and then the words caught up to his brain, “One second, you mean I healed all of this in half a day?”

“Yes, Recovery Girl is amazing, isn’t she? She can accelerate someone’s healing capability,” he explained.

“Wow, that’s… amazing,” he said, feeling all of his thought processes slow down. He groaned a little, clutching his head as he tried to think through the last few things that had happened to him, and wondered why it was so hard.

He grabbed his head, and seeing no end, banished all thoughts out of his head and took a deep breath. A full body shudder racked through his body, and almost every pore in his body suddenly started to excrete sweat. He shivered, and the act made his entire body seem to convulse.

He needed… he didn’t know what he needed, but he figured that getting up would be the first good option. He pulled the blanket off of him and swung his leg to the side of the bed. So focused on the task on hand and the way his world spun, he didn’t even notice how Yagi yelled for him.

But two hands grabbed his shoulders, and pushed him back to the bed.

“Give me a break, we left for a fucking minute.”

Ah, Aizawa then.

“Ai...Aizawa-san?”

“Yeah, just get back to the bed. Yamada’s bringing you something to eat right now.”

“...Then, the kids?”

The man paused, but his hands didn’t budge from his position.

“...We got them all. Your information was spot-on. Now, go get some rest.”

“I … How long was I out?”

“Day and a half. Now, are you going to go to sleep or am I going to have to knock you out?”

Midoriya gave several deep breaths, his chest heaving.

“...Thank you.”

“...Yeah,” Aizawa said, “Get some sleep.”

-

Midoriya woke up in the middle of the night. Shivering and gasping, he woke up and someone was immediately at his side.

“You’re good, Listener. I got you.”

“W-What?”

“It’s okay, Midoriya. I got you. Alright, it’s me, Yamada. You’re back at the Duke’s Manor, alright?”

Midoriya took a few slow breaths and nodded.

“Can you tell me what my name is?”

“Yamada. The kindest guard I know.”

“Aw, shucks, listener. I guess you’re alright after all.”

He gave a little laugh.

“I know it’s a little early for breakfast, but you think you can stomach anything?”

Midoriya nodded.

“It’s a little cold, but it’ll be better than nothing. Too bad none of those fire-quirkers can be here right now, huh?”

The soup he ate that night was by far one of the worst things he had to eat ever. But it filled his stomach, and it was something he didn’t think he would ever do again.

“...Thank you.”

“Yeah, anytime,” Yamada said. “Go ahead and sleep. We got a couple of hours ‘till dawn.”

"I guess my laundry will have to wait till then," Midoriya said, heaving a long sigh.

He doubts that anyone missed him, so he's going to make them something so delicious that they will have to compliment him. The thought of That Dabi begrudgingly telling him his food tasted good had him smiling as he went back to sleep.

-

The next time Midoriya woke up, it was like there was nothing ever wrong. Yeah, he was a little hungry and still felt some aches, but he felt otherwise fine.

Judging by the fact that Yagi was nowhere to be seen, he supposed that his spirit animal really pulled through for him.

He got to his feet and slowly began his katas in the place next to his bed.

“Looks like you’re pretty much all better, huh, little Listener?”

He turned to where Yamada was leaning against the window, watching the sunrise.

“Yes,” Midoriya nodded, straightening up and giving a full bow, “Thank you for looking after me.”

“...You know, after everything we went through, I don’t really think that I’m the one that you should be thanking.”

The green-haired man frowned and tilted his head in confusion, “If you didn’t come when you did, there was probably no way for us to save the other kids.”

“Yeah, you know, that’s the thing,” Yamada said. “I don’t get you.” He got up to his feet and walked on over to Midoriya, a strange grin on his face.

He stopped just a foot away from the younger man, and through his glasses, Midoriya felt paralyzed.

“I don’t get it. You’re like, 11. But, when you were captured and tortured, you fought your way out. You withstood torture, never even once telling them anything, and at the end of it, gave a full report to Lord Endeavor himself before you passed out. On top of all that, you’re healed and trying to move around in less than two days? To what, return to your duties?” the blond said. “Recovery Girl or not, we got lots of knights here that can’t even do that.”

The younger man frowned, “Then, what was I supposed to do?”

The blond shook his head, a huff of laughter pulling at his lips but there was no humor in the situation.

“You totally just missed the point.”

Midoriya felt all the hair on the back of his neck stand up. There was no way, but he couldn’t help but think that Yamada was dangerously close to figuring something that he really shouldn’t know about. Unconsciously, he took another step back when Yamada took a step forward, and when his back hit the wall, felt a shiver run down his spine at the predatory look in the blond’s eyes.

“...I don’t buy the thought that you’re just an eleven year old. I don’t know what you’re hiding, but I hope you know that my loyalties are to the Todoroki family,” he said. “And if you threaten that, we’re going to have some problems.”

“...I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Midoriya replied back, unable to meet his eyes.

Yamada snorted back, but pulled back. “Don’t worry, I think I’m the only one onto your little secret. Besides, this time won you a hundred brownie points from Endeavor-sama. Good job.”

Midoriya stared at the older man, wondering what the fuck just happened.

-

Okay, now that he’s experienced it, he can say it with upmost confidence.

Getting third degree burns from his fiance was nothing. Dislocating both his arms and losing all his fingers stung a little, but Midoriya could live with it. His feet were broken and there was a knife in his side. These are all things that Midoriya could say with certainty that it wasn’t that bad.

But seeing Dabi’s face when he woke up, he was certain about it.

The eldest son of the duke sat uncomfortably in the chair next to his bed. His arms were crossed in front of his chest and his neck was bent forward so that his chin rested against his sternum. He breathed slowly and deeply, and Midoriya doesn’t think he’s seen anything more beautiful.

This didn’t hurt at all.

### 12 Year Old Midoriya, the Bride

When Midoriya Izuku became Todoroki Izuku, he was 12 years old.

He could only imagine how awful this must have seemed. The unloved eldest, skipped for his younger brothers, with a deadly quirk he couldn’t control, was going to be married to some commoner’s brat, quirkless and male.

It was clear to anyone with eyes that it was beyond cruel. It was literally telling Dabi that he will never be loved, that his life will never bear fruit under the blessings of matrimony, and has no importance at all to him. The only people who would marry him had to be bought to do so.

And yet, Izuku couldn’t help but think that this was also a kindness. For someone like Dabi, who traces the horizon with his eyes at every opportunity, he thinks that this is the closest way for Enji to give him freedom.

Of course, Izuku is also probably the only person that thinks like that, for good reason.

(He would never tell anyone, but he's a little sad that the one time he managed to get married in two lifetimes, it's a loveless marriage. At the very least, however, he's comfortable with the thought that they are indifferent to each other and together, then in love with a memory.)

-

After their marriage, and honestly, Izuku is shocked that Dabi even showed up at all, they reconvened in their new, shared bedroom.

He sat down on the bed, with his legs swinging off the side. In his pajamas, a simple white-button-up and some silky pants, Izuku wondered what would happen. If he sleeps tonight, will he wake up? Will Dabi be kind enough to make his death instantaneous and courteous enough to make sure the ashes don’t stray so that the maids will have an easy time cleaning the mess?

No, no, no, there’s no way.

“...You’re not going to cry?”

Izuku blinked out of his surprise and turned to Dabi. He was still standing at the door.

“...I’m sure that, if you beg that Man, he would make an exception. You could just return back to that shithole you crawled out of.”

“...Why… would I do that?”

“Do you understand your position here? From now on, do you understand what will be expected of us? Even if we don’t do anything, they’ll label you a certain way,” he said, voice dark and eyes hard.

In Izuku’s honest opinion, Dabi looked like he was the one who was going to cry.

“...We are wed now,” he said slowly. “It’s okay if you don’t believe me or trust me. If you, one day, were to decide to throw me okay, that’s alright too.”

“Wh-what?”

The look of surprise on his face never failed to make him look so young.

“I am yours. Your husband, your ally, your shield. Please use me as you see fit. From the moment I walked in, there was no other place for me. The vow I took today, I meant it,” he said. “I… am married to you.”

Did he sound genuine?

“...So, if I gave you a knife and told you to kill Shoto, would you?”

Izuku’s heart twisted painfully. He was certain it showed on his face.

“Of course not. I'm not your servant. I am your husband," he tried to clarify. “But if it meant your happiness and well-being, I’d consider it."

When Dabi hesitated, Izuku smiled back. He knows that, one day, Dabi will understand love. It will be a vicious and terrible thing that ends with him losing his mind, his life, and his heart, but until that moment, he would do his absolute best to stay by his side.

For the Midoriya of another lifetime, he'll prove to the whole universe that Midoriyas can keep their vows and their promises.

Earlier that night, Midoriya made a vow.

“But you know, I’m pretty weak. I still don’t know how to fight and I’m not that smart. I don’t have any assets, connections, or a penny to my name. My life is meaningless, my worth doesn’t exist,” he continued, and gave a big grin to Dabi, “and I’m so carved up that no one would ever want me anymore!”

Saying it aloud like that made him really feel like shit, but this was important. He wanted them to be on the same page. He wanted someone, anyone, to say this to Dabi and mean it, so it might as well be him. He got off the bed and kneeled down in front of him, like a knight to a king, and offered everything.

“So all I have is my word. I swear to you, with all that I am, that I am yours.”

“...You’re an idiot.”

And just like that, he turned on his heel and left.

The first night after getting married, Izuku spent it alone in bed.

-

### The Battle with barbarians - farewell

"I am going to the frontlines," Dabi announced right when he was about to come to bed.

Izuku looked up from his book, from where he was already in bed. It was still a little strange to think that he has a husband or that he is married at all, but even stranger that Dabi was here too. The man rarely actually comes to share the bed, and most of their interactions are short or painful or both.

He hopes that today will be neither.

"Yes," Midoriya said, "uh… have a nice trip?"

Dabi, who had been leaning against the window frame, turned his head to stare at Izuku in shock. His arms remained crossed over his chest but his legs were positioned as though he was ready to run at any given moment.

Izuku didn't really get it. There was no way in hell that someone as weak and powerless as Izuku could ever hurt Dabi. He would never want to either, the man has clearly suffered enough as it was.

"Your husband is going to battle barbarians in the north," Dabi deadpanned, "And that's all you have to say?"

The green-haired boy frowned back, "What did you want me to say?"

Dabi hesitated, but before he could continue, Midoriya began to list things on his fingers.

"I mean I guess there's a lot of things I could say… I could ask for a souvenir but I think that's a little inappropriate for the occasion. I'll miss you, but to ask someone going out to protect our borders to return quickly just feels wrong. I would rather you take your time to completely and cleanly win rather than rush the process and return injured. At the same time, wishing for your safe return is just dumb, since I already know you’ll come back, safe and sound."

Dabi stared at him in absolute shock, but right as Izuku opened his book up again, found what he wanted to say.

“...How… How can you be so certain that I will return?”

“Of course you will,” Izuku replied back, surprised that Dabi would say that, “There’s nothing in the world right now that you can lose to. And then, because this is you we are talking about, you’ll come back to rub it in everyone’s face and let them know that you won’t lose against anything. Like come on, you? Lose? The sun would sooner rise from the west."

The way he spoke was certain, like he was explaining how the moon turned the tides. It was obvious and simple, and Dabi honestly and truly had no idea where this confidence even came from. He wanted to write it off as an ignorant child making a big claim, or that Izuku is trying hard to get into his good graces, but neither one of those made any sense. He was too… flippant about this entire situation.

Like how Izuku had this questionable but unshakable belief that Dabi would return alive, well, and successful, Dabi had this strange amount of belief that Izuku wouldn’t lie to him.

“...Anything? You don’t think I’d ever lose, ever?”

Izuku paused, as though thinking really hard about it. And he tilted his head to the side. “...You’re right, I can think of only one way you would lose,” he said.

After all, everyone knew why Dabi was so taken by the heroine. It was something that the fandom clutched and raved about. There were analysis essays and Izuku is certain someone wrote a thesis about the <Reasons Why Dabi Lost to the Heroine> and now that Izuku has seen and been with Dabi in the day-to-day for several years, he thinks he understands it.

“The only person that you could lose to is yourself,” he said. “But I can’t imagine you losing to anyone else ever.”

Dabi was, in the game at the very least, ridiculously and almost godly powerful. In the mobile game, he ranked at the top of the tier list for a long time.

Right now, however, it was a little early for that. Dabi was staring at him like he had never seen Izuku before and couldn’t fathom why he was on his bed. And then, he looked away, back outside, and Izuku took this chance to continue reading his book.

Dabi didn’t talk to him for the rest of the time. But, when they were marching out, Midoriya swears that he saw a green handkerchief in his breast pocket instead of Dabi’s regular blue one.

...Nah, no way.

(Later, he would realize that he was missing a handkerchief. He wondered where he left it and hoped that no one noticed.)

### Reentrance of League

"...You know who we are right?" Shiragaki asked, his facial features carefully blank, “We organized that kidnapping nightmare. And instead of letting us die like dogs, you took us in? Why?”

"It's good to see you again," Izuku responded, like he wasn't staring at his former kidnappers. “I’m glad that you’re doing well.”

".... that's it?"

Izuku gave them a polite but confused smile.

"If you are Dabi-sama's allies, then its fine,” he replied back. “If you weren’t, you wouldn’t have come back, right?”

All the people that tried to ruin Dabi, all the people that tried to hurt him, all and everything, Izuku wants to make everything a happier memory. He’s certain that Dabi has seen enough shit in his life, so he would like to spare him that pain.

It was selfish, yes, but he was Dabi’s husband. This is what a husband should do.

-

“...You know, we’re like the same level of scumbag, right?” Toga asked, staring at the blade in her hands, “That means that, we could have had someone like that too, right?”

“...Toga-”

“Don’t think like that,” Shiragaki said, “That bastard is clearly the exception here.”

Toga looked up from her blade and stared out the window.

“...Izuku…”

### A Date - DabiIzu

These kinds of things happened a lot more frequently than they used to. But, what has changed is probably the way other people react to it.

“Thanks again for accompanying me out to the town, my Lord,” Izuku said. “I am truly blessed that you are taking time out of your busy schedule to spend it with me.”

Next to him, Dabi looked on impassively. His eyes slid over to the younger man and then back down to his lap.

“There’s no need to be so formal while we are out,” he said.

“...I would never dare to be so disrespectful to you in that manner,” Midoriya said, looking at his hands.

-

“...Izuku,” Dabi said suddenly. Just the sound of his voice saying his name was enough to set his face on fire. He didn’t dare look at the older man, fearful that his face had already given him away.

“Yes, my Lord?” he asked, hoping that he could keep the surprise out of his voice.

“...If I said I wanted to be king, what would you do?”

Izuku’s heart stopped in his chest for a moment, and his mind raced. He thought about the current state of affairs, and thinks that for someone who is as respected as Dabi in the guard force, it might just be possible. It would really depend on Enji though. Even if Dabi could win in a fair fight against him, it would not be without great casualty. When he thought about the might he would need to fend off the Royal House and the entire kingdom, he thinks that guerrilla tactics would be what matters.

It was then that he realized that he was muttering his thoughts away and flushed. Had anyone heard him, he could be hung for treason for this. That would be the ultimate shame to bring upon Dabi, and he had no wish for it.

“I mean, I… If that…” Izuku paused and took a deep breath. Should anyone hear their conversation, they would be charged for treason. If that was the case, then he must first calm down.

Dabi waited for a coherent response. He must answer his patience.

“...I would say that we should start with the corruption among the nobles who are unsatisfied with the current reign. Then, we should move for the uncertain ones. Once we have secured the flight risks, we should come in through the north and shut down the water supplies before winter. The battle during the winter will be harsh but the most rewarding, if we would like to have a harvest that year,” he slowly. This would be the way to do it while minimizing casualties for both sides.

He knows, because there will be an outbreak of disease in the crops and famine will be rampant in the summer. There’s a hundred other ways to do this as well, and if he has a moment to think, he’s certain that he can iron out better details.

Finding his mind calming down, he isolated all the facts and reasons away from his feelings and prioritized what he wanted to say over everything else. “And more than anything else, I wish to stay by your side,” he said.

“...Then, why are you so loyal to me? I have done nothing to deserve it.”

“...Sir, you do not need to deserve love,” Izuku said, frowning. “We do not choose who we fall in love with, but we do choose who we decide to give it to.”

“Still, with a choice like me… your loyalties and affection would be better used somewhere else,” Dabi said.

“Perhaps,” Izuku nodded, “but I can’t imagine being anywhere else.”

Dabi met his eyes at that, and his lips quirked upwards, like he didn’t know what to do, but felt an overwhelming amount of warmth. And then, after thinking about it, he stopped and frowned.

“...Isn’t that regrettable? To live only as an extension of someone else?”

“...My Lord, one day, you will fall in love, and I think you’ll understand it a little better than.”

Dabi, so shocked that his husband could speak of him falling in love without any form of jealousy or possessiveness, forgot his words. He didn’t question how his much-younger spouse could speak with such finality and wisdom.

By this point, Dabi had already long-forgotten how to question this man, but he didn’t get it at the time.

### Night Songs -

“...Sing me something,” Dabi said.

Izuku blinked back and titled his head, “Pardon?”

The older man stared at him and then looked away. “...Whatever, it was a dumb request-”

“No, no,” Izuku shook his head, “It’s not a dumb request. I was just… caught off-guard?”

“You’re asking me?”

The corner of his lips titled up and Izuku’s heart nearly leapt out of his chest. He scoffed and closed his book.

“I’m not much of a singer,” he said, and Dabi shrugged back.

He didn’t leave yet so Izuku leaned back into his seat. He sighed and thought about all the songs he could sing and sang the one that he missed the most.

The Hero Theme song from his favorite show as a kid.

“...What was that.”

He stopped singing, not sure when he started to dance along and strike poses, but felt all the blood rush out of his face at the look on Dabi’s face.

“...You said … a song?” he tilted his head, did he… offend him?

“You can’t actually be that bad at singing,” Dabi said, squinting at him, “Forget lullabies, I will only have nightmares now.”

“H-How rude!” Izuku gasped, his face flushing in his embarrassment. With how much all the blood rushes to his face and out of it, it’s no wonder he’s sick so often. As it was, he tried his best not to pout and turned back to his book instead.

And with how deliberately he was trying not to look at Dabi, missed the smile on his face.

### A Ball

“...Do you want to dance?”

Izuku’s head snapped over to where Dabi had approached him from the otherside. He blinked owlishly at him and crystal blue eyes stared back.

“What?”

“...Do you… want to dance?” Dabi repeated himself, slowly.

“...Uh… with you?”

“...Yes, that was the idea.”

“You… want to dance with… me?”

The man readjusted his stance, looking progressively more and more annoyed by this entire ordeal, and sighed in frustration.

“Yes. Will you, Izuku, dance with me, you fiance?”

“...But why?”

Dabi arched his eyebrow back, “You always watch other people dance all the time. Did you think that I wouldn’t notice?”

Yes, Izuku thought to himself as he stared at Dabi in shock. He knew that Dabi could be attentive, he was a popular route for a reason, but Izuku didn’t realize that he would count as ‘someone important enough to be attentive to’.

“...Don’t look at me like that. If you don’t want to dance, then just say no.”

He turned around, fully intent on abandoning this conversation so that he could go curl up somewhere with alcohol and pretend he didn’t try to make a massive fool out of himself.

“And if I said yes?”

Dabi stopped cold, and turned around. His eyes wandered from the ground up to Izuku’s eyes and he stepped forward.

“Then, come with me.”

-

They walked to the center of the garden, and in the brisk winter air, were alone. The fountain wasn’t even running, because of how cold it was. Izuku absentmindedly rubbed his hands together, eyes boring into the back of Dabi’s head as they made their way to the empty garden.

Dabi reached over, placing his hand onto the inside wall of the fountain, and released his fire.

In an instant, the blue fire flooded the fountain, illuminating them and providing a much needed warmth. The blue light licked up the sides of the fountain, and it looked as though it was mimicking the pull of ocean waves. Izuku stared in awe as he stepped forward to the warmth, and stood close enough so that their sides were brushing against each other.

“...Most people step away from a burning fire,” Dabi said. He didn’t pull away from Izuku though.

“Why? It won’t hurt me,” Izuku said, tilting his head in confusion as he looked up at Dabi. He gave a little smile as his fiance gave him a blank stare in response. He looked back towards the fire, letting it warm his face evenly.

It was strange, to be able to see his breath even though he felt so warm, and he giggled.

“Izuku,” he heard. He turned his head where Dabi gave a polite bow with his hand extended out towards him, “...May I have this dance?” For a moment, he looked like a normal man, and nothing like the villain he was supposed to be.

“Yes, I would enjoy that greatly,” Izuku teased back as he took the hand. This much was okay, right? There was nothing wrong about Dabi having practice before he met the Heroine, right? It was okay to be happy even though this wasn’t his, right?

They stepped just a little bit further from the fountain to have the proper space to dance.

With the crackle of fire as their only music, Dabi took him into a slow rhythm. He tapped out the rhythm against the small of Izuku’s back, and the younger man bit his lip in a poor attempt to hide his smile. In front of him, the handsome Dabi was quietly counting out the beats underneath his breath, and it was a rather adorable sight.

One day, Dabi will be a phenomenal dancer. He would be graceful and smooth. He will be the apple of everyone’s eyes and people will line up for the opportunity to dance with someone as proficient as him. The people who can’t will stand to the side, biting their handkerchief out of pure jealousy when they are unable to dance with him.

Today, Dabi was a beginner dancer who made jerky movements and couldn’t quite keep the beat despite how hard he tried. The hand at his waist strayed often, like he didn’t know how to make a firm grasp around someone, and he occasionally made a misstep here and there so that there was too much space between them and then they awkwardly bumped into each other. His brow was creased in an unusual show of nervous concentration. No wonder he was brought here, Dabi probably hated the idea that someone could see him do something he wasn’t good at.

It made him wonder why he was here.

“What’s so funny?” the older man said suddenly.

“Ah, nothing,” Izuku said and seeing the dark expression cross Dabi’s face, conceded defeat. “I just… thought it was a little strange that you’re not a good dancer,” he said.

“...I’ve never done this before,” Dabi replied back after a moment, “And with my face like this, most people steer clear from me to begin with. With how long I am gone at the borders, it never felt like there was a good reason to practice either.”

Izuku looked up at him, gazed into his face, and wondered why.

“...You know, you’re the weird one for thinking that,” the man said, and Izuku turned pink at the thought that he was heard. The older man stopped the dance and stepped back. He gave a proper bow that Izuku returned in the name of tradition, and the two straightened to stare at each other.

Like a phantom, he could feel the remains of Dabi’s heat through his clothes, and he wondered if Dabi would continue to leave scars on him like this. It didn’t sound too bad.

“I… I really enjoyed the dance, My Lord,” Izuku said. “You don’t have to be a good dancer to be a good partner, you know?”

The older man stared at him, and the blue light from the fountain danced across his features.

“...Yeah,” he said. “I wanted to be your partner. So I learned.”

“...Really?”

The older man scowled back.

“Of course,” he said. He took a step back, half turned away as though that could stop Izuku from seeing the uncharacteristically impatient look on his face, “And I’ll get better at it too. So you don’t ever have to look like that again.”

“...Like what?” Izuku blinked back. He thought he did a good job keeping most of his feelings off his face, but it appears that he had a lot to work on if even Dabi noticed. If someone who didn’t care about people as much as Dabi noticed, he really messed up.

“Like you want something you can’t have,” Dabi said. “You don’t have to hide anything from me. If there is something you want, tell me and I will get it for you.”

There was a short pause. The younger man felt his heart race, his eyes widening comically at the older man, who was doing everything possible not to stare at him.

“...Anything?” Izuku asked quietly.

Dabi gave a short nod.

“Wh-whatever I want?”

He finally brought his eyes up to meet his, and shook his head, “Everything,” he corrected.

Izuku felt the weight of tears begin to weigh in his eyes. To think that, after all this time, Dabi would be able to say something like that. He couldn’t believe it. Dabi, that Dabi that once burned buildings to the ground if anyone just looked at him funny, was offering to get him whatever it was that he wished. This Dabi had learned how to reward people, and he was going to be one of the first people to be presented with this opportunity.

Izuku pursed his lips as his throat tightened painfully. He was so happy and so sad all at the same time. So happy that he would be the first to be given this, but so, so, so infuriatingly sad because this wasn’t his.

Why? He wondered. Why did he have to fall in love with someone who would never be happy with him?

“...Why are you crying?” Dabi almost sounded exasperated. “It’s not that surprising that I would do this for you, is it?”

Izuku took a deep breath, trying to calm down and instead smiled. He scrubbed his eye with his gloves to keep anything from spilling out.

“Then, my request, My Lord … will you please hear it?”

“...I suppose I could,” Dabi replied back, entering a faux professional tone, “Speak freely.”

Under his tender gaze, Izuku choked on his words. There was so much that he wanted, but he couldn’t get them out of his chest. He wanted Dabi to join him for dinners now, and come home for the nights. He wanted Dabi to live selfishly and far away from all of this mess. He wanted Dabi to be happy and content for the rest of his days. He had a thousand more requests too. Instead, what came out was a request that he would have never been able to even dream of asking for.

“...Could I have another dance?”

Dabi looked a little disappointed, and he wondered what he was expecting. As it was, Dabi’s hand extended to him again and Izuku took it.

“Of course,” he said. “As many times as you want, for as long as you want.”

They danced together again, content to think and believe that Dabi’s words were about dancing and that Izuku only wanted this dance.

It wasn’t though. Of course not. But Izuku was scared to dream and scared to hope. And so, he will be satisfied with this and only this.

His traitorous heart prayed that this frozen night would never end. That this fire would remain his. Even if it was only this night, he wanted to pretend that this was his.

The look in Dabi’s eyes was so warm, like he was looking at something truly wonderful when all he was looking at was Izuku.

-

“...Sorry,” Dabi said.

Izuku, panting hard as he laid in their bed with a fever, managed to give a smile back. Spending the night outside in the blistering cold for so long without anything over his suit and tie did bad things to him. As a result, he was bedridden with a fever from hell.

“It’s okay,” he wheezed out. “This… This doesn’t even … bother me…”

How could it? This time, he wasn’t alone.

### Joke Books

“What did the… ahaha,” Izuku tried to calm his laughter as he tried to get the joke out. “This is…” he heaved, “very clever!”

Dabi stared at him, very tired.

As it was, Izuku had brought out a joke book of all things. He told him that it would be good for him to laugh more, and so, here was Izuku, trying to read a funny joke for him. Needless to say, Izuku is not good at reading aloud to people.

He stumbles over his words. Sometimes he missed a couple of words. Other times, he’s giggling too much and forgets about Dabi until the older man clears his throat and he flusters in an attempt to try and then reads the punchline before the joke…

Honestly, he doesn’t know how reading a joke book could be so much trouble.

“I guess that one was really funny, huh?” Izuku asked, pulling him out of his thoughts.

“What makes you say that?” he replied back, because honestly, Izuku had yet to even say a full joke, so he’s really curious about what he’ll say about this.

“Because you’re finally smiling.”

Dabi stared at him. The whole world seemed to stop just for a moment and in a fit of an emotion he couldn’t name, stormed out of the room.

-

“My Husband?” Izuku tilted his head and then smiled back, “He smiles all the time.”

With the way the other Todorokis looked at him, he didn’t think they believed him. When they all shared the same expression like that, the family resemblance is staggering.

“Truly,” Izuku nodded back, eyes shining, “In fact, he has a stack of joke books.”

“Joke books,” Shoto repeated.

“My brother?” Natsuo tried.

“Huh.” Fuyumi tilted her head.

They tried really hard to think about their blood-stained brother, someone that they only saw when he was going out to battle, and tried to add a joke-book to that scene. Needless to say, as soon as the Imaginary Dabi began to read through the book, their imagination could not keep up and mosiac’d his features out.

“I can’t imagine it,” Shoto blurted out.

-

“What are these?” Dabi asked, frowning at the stacks of books that Yamada were carrying in. “You’re kidding me, right? There’s no way that Izuku would have bought all of these from one trip.”

“These are gifts from your brothers and sister, My Lord,” Yamada said. “Where would you like me to put them?”

Dabi took one of the books off the stack and ignored the comment. He stared blankly at the book.

...Joke books?

### Schooling

“And starting next year, you and Shoto both will be attending the academy,” Enji reminded them over lunch.

“...What?” Izuku blurted out, forgetting himself. When Enji’s sharp gaze fell onto him, he flustered and drop his head, “Excuse me, that was inappropriate of me.”

“Not at all,” Enji said, and then added with some difficulty, “I was just surprised. Please, share with me your concerns and I will…” he paused, as though searching for the proper words to say, “I will try my best to alleviate it.”

Natsuo, who never got used to the sight of his father showing kindness, went slack-jawed while drinking. Needless to say, the juice poured right into his mouth and onto his lap.

“No, no, I guess I was just surprised that I would also be in attendance,” Izuku said as Fuyumi and one of the other maids rushed to Natsuo’s side.

“Of course you will,” Shoto replied back, completely oblivious to what was going on with one of his brothers across the way. “It’s… like a rite of passage of some sort. While we most definitely have the proper education, we attend the school more for political reasons, like seeing the world and interacting with other people.”

Izuku smiled back, but that wasn’t his concern at all.

“...You won’t be a stain on the family,” Dabi said suddenly from his left, “Don’t think that, just because you’re quirkless or can’t use magic, that you are inferior to anyone. You’re a Todoroki now, hold your head up high. Unlike us, you earned your place here.”

Which uhm. Ow. That was a low blow for most of the family, but they looked oddly pleased at the words. They were all kind fools, if they think that Izuku wouldn’t drag their name through the mud.

“Thank you for your kind words,” Izuku said, but that wasn’t even a worry and now it was. While he knew that Dabi, like everyone else in the family, was doing their absolute best to be more supportive and positive, Izuku didn’t even consider that.

He… He would be a fucking disgrace, wouldn’t he? And to begin with, the thought that he would be alive to the start of the semester was a shock, wasn’t it? In the original game, Midoriya Izuku was just some poor sacrificial pawn that didn’t even have his own sprite. In fact, he died as a side-mention. Would it be different? Had he made a difference at all?

Lunch passed by in a blur after that. He knew that he shouldn’t be absent-minded, but he couldn’t help it.

With the Heroine’s entrance, everything will really be put to the test. He spared a glance at Dabi over his book and then back down to the text. He wasn’t reading, but he didn’t know how to stop his heart from aching.

Would… Would Dabi still kill him? No way, right? They were pretty good almost friends now, right? And more importantly, Shoto and Rei wouldn’t let that happen, right? At the very least, someone would try to protect him, right? Or at least help him escape?

He thought a little harder about it and shook his head. No way. In the game, the Game-Changer is the heroine. Always has been and always will be. So short of helping the heroine stop an entire rebellion before Dabi turns him into ash, he’s going to die.

Izuku suppressed the urge to just start crying. How had he missed this?

Fucking christ, has anything changed? Yeah, the Todorokis’ eat together now and they stopped a couple of human-trafficking circles, but it wasn’t anything that he did. He made some pushes and gave them some words of encouragement, but that was something that anyone would have done. Those were all things that the Heroine would do for them anyways. It was inevitable. It would have happened anyways, it was just a little earlier because he cheated.

He spared another look at Dabi, who flipped through his book and looked incredibly handsome doing it.

His death… it was inevitable, wasn’t it? That ridiculous handsome man was going to kill him. He didn’t do it when they were strangers, but he was going to do it now that they were married.

His eyes watered at the thought and he sighed. To abandon Dabi, as a widow before the man was 30… that was too sad. Of course, someone as gentle and handsome as Dabi would have no problem getting another person who loves and cares for him, and if all else fails, Dabi would get together with the Heroine for the happiest possible ending…

Oh.

Izuku felt so stupid. Just thinking about it made his heart ache in a terrible way, but there was only one answer.

If he was going to die anyways, he needed to make sure that Dabi will be well-taken care of in return. If he was going to leave Dabi, then he needed to ensure that the Heroine was on his route.

It was selfish. He didn’t even know who the heroine was. But, he had to do it.

For Dabi, who finally smiled and has learned to make banter with the guards, who the maids don’t run from anymore, who had a squad of guards fiercely loyal to him and him alone, Izuku would do it.

“...What are you thinking about?”

“Huh?”

“You keep looking at me,” Dabi said, closing the book, and looking at him,“and you look like you’re going to start crying. What are you thinking about?”

Izuku stared at him, his casual posture, and thinks that Dabi is so kind, to care about the husband he’s going to kill.

“...My Lord,” he started and a million things raced through his head. It started with blurting out that he wasn’t actually <Midoriya Izuku> and it extended all the way to begging and pleading with the man to not kill him or to just kill him now and be done with it. Instead, he found the right words, “I… I think you look very handsome today.”

It held the desired effect. No matter who it was, if they were truly unloved and unwanted, a genuine comment like that had people flustering. Dabi was no exception. He dropped his eyes, a blush spreading across his face as he turned away. It was a low blow. It never failed him.

“Shut up.”

Midoriya would treasure this moment, and use it as a reminder of what he wanted to protect. He prayed that the Heroine would do the same.

### Fire-Up the Rumor Mill

“Hm…I only have two years left, huh?” Izuku sighed, completely oblivious to how Aizawa was rounding the corner.

He sighed, rubbing the back of his neck.

“I hope I can get this done in time,” he muttered, squinting at the cloak in his lap.

It was for Dabi. This was long overdue, because this was something he should have had ready for his coronation. He missed that since he wasn’t even at the Dukedom at the time, and right when he appeared, he was too burnt to hold a needle. And when Izuku thought he could have it prepared for their wedding, he got injured. And well.

Well, now it was different. He clearly had slacked, and wanted it to be prepared for the day he became an <adult> here, but that wasn’t possible anymore. He did want to at least do the proper duty, and embroider this cloak with Dabi’s color and the Todoroki dragon.

When Dabi marries a beautiful girl, he’s certain that this will be trashed and that wonderful girl that Dabi fell in love with will create something a thousand times more beautiful.

No matter how hard that thought prickles his heart, he embroidered on.

He would really like it if he did something right for Lord Dabi, for once.

### (Almost) Functional Family -

Today was an exceptionally beautiful day.

The first flowers of spring were in full bloom, but because of the sudden drop in temperature the previous night, they had frozen just like that. It was beautiful.

Today was a rare day. Not only in its unfathomable beauty, but because the entire Todoroki Family had assembled together at the table before he had gotten there, including Dabi. And Dabi was talking about something or another, and it must have been interesting, because he was nodding along to what the others were saying and even talking back.

Rei giggled behind her hand at something he said, and even Enji looked vaguely amused at the entire conversation. Natsuo buried his head in his hands and Fuyumi gave him a pitying stare while Shoto laughed, bright and open.

It was such a beautiful sight, and Izuku couldn’t help but think that they would be okay. No, he realized, they were already okay. They had reached something comfortable and content. He’s certain that one day, they would even love each other, like a family should.

Standing right at the edge of the garden, he stopped behind a bush. Next to him, Aizawa noticed that he had stopped a moment too late, and had already stepped out from behind the bush and onto the main path for them to walk in. He stopped and turned to Izuku, his eyes narrowing.

“...Are you alright, My Lord?”

Izuku nodded his head, even though his heart stuttered, and he gave a shaky smile.

“I’m fine,” he said quietly, “Just a little light-headed.”

Aizawa frowned and he turned around to fully face him, “...If you would like, I can arrange you lunch to be inside,” he said. “Assuming you are actually feeling unwell.”

“...What makes you say that?” Izuku asked, voice sharper than he intended.

“...I don’t know what you’re thinking right now,” Aizawa said, “But you stopped now, only when you saw them. I didn’t think that you had gotten into any trouble with anyone else, and if I let you go without due reason, the good atmosphere they share now will dissipate into nothing.”

“...What are you talking about?” Izuku frowned back, feeling cold and exposed as the older man read right through him. “They’re plenty happy and peaceful without me. I don’t think that they would notice if I take my leave.”

“Nonsense,” the older man snapped back. His eyes narrowed. “I don’t know what scheming rat put that notion into your head, but you’re not dumb enough to fall for that. You, moreso than anyone else in this kingdom, belong at that table.”

His head snapped up, and his eyes traced the way Aizawa looked at the table.

“To think otherwise would be to deny the truth, and there’s no merit in that.”

He took another moment and turned back to the younger man.

“So? What’s your answer?”

“...I’ll eat.”

-

“What made you hesitate?”

Izuku looked to where Dabi was staring back at him.

Again, they were just sitting around in Dabi’s office. While the older man looked through some of the reports at his desk, Izuku was sitting at the chair with a book in his lap.

“...Huh?”

“Did you think I wouldn’t notice when you were standing around the bushes?” he asked, arching one of his eyebrows at him. “It’s fine if you don’t want to tell me, but I’m going to be upset. So I ask again, what made you hesitate?”

Izuku looked like he swallowed a toad whole. His eyes darted left to right and then they settled back into his lap.

“I just… I thought that you-”

“Don’t deflect.”

Izuku pouted a little.

“I…I just thought that everyone looks a little happier than they did before.”

“Yeah,” Dabi nodded, “It’s a result of your hard work. Good job. Now, why did you hesitate.”

He hesitated again, and the temperature dropped. He pursed his lips and dropped his gaze.

“Uh.”

“...Am… I unreliable?”

His head snapped back, “Of course not, sir.”

“Really, because I can’t even get my husband to talk to me,” he deadpanned.

And well, hearing the word <husband> from Dabi’s lips sort of felt like a dream come true and he could feel his heart fluttering away. He flushed at the words and the other man gave an exasperated sigh.

“We’ve been married for years, why are you still flustering over that?”

“I-I can’t help it!” Izuku blurted back out. Abandoning his book in his laps as he covered his face with his hands, “It… It still makes me really, uhm… warm, sir.”

“...Then, will you tell me why you hesitated?”

“...Is it that big of a deal?”

“It must be, if you aren’t telling me.”

Dabi talked without looking at him, but his eyes weren’t moving across the paper anymore. He was just staring at them like he didn’t want to stare at Izuku and pressure him or make him run away with a glance.

“I…” he fell silent, as he tried to find the best way to say it, “...I just thought that you all looked peaceful and happy enough, even if I wasn’t there.” His hands held each other tightly in his lap, like a prayer. He doesn’t even know who he was praying to or what he’s praying for.

The silence was deafening.

“I-I’ll take my leave-”

“...Izuku, come here.”

He grimaced, but deciding that running now and getting caught later would be a thousand times worse, he walked over to the man to stand in front of his desk like a chastised child. In the meantime, Dabi stood up from his seat and walked around the desk to stand in front of Izuku. Izuku didn’t dare lift his eyes.

“...I… I know that I was a piece of shit to you at first. And that… that’s probably the reason why your self-esteem is a fucking mess,” he said quietly. He reached out to take one of Izuku’s hands in his and lifted it so that he could hold it against his heart as he looked into Izuku’s eyes. “...But I swear to you that I am becoming a new man. So you… So I don’t want you to think like that anymore.”

He dipped down then, and pressed a kiss to his knuckles, and smiled against them when he saw the bright blush crawling up Izuku’s face.

It was okay, right? Izuku wondered.

It was okay if he thought that something was different, right?

### MHA - Start

Here it was. Everything that he has done so far has been for this moment. All he needed to do now was make sure that the main heroine ended up with Dabi. Somehow. Someway.

Then, the world won’t end, this kingdom won’t plunge into despair, and most importantly, someone can actually give Dabi the help, love and support he needs.

Izuku wasn’t certain when it had happened, but at this point, all of his plans aligned with Dabi’s happy ending. He is certain that this is the way. The heroine’s love, true and pure, can heal everything and anything. And with all the support that Dabi now gets from his family and even the other castle guards, he knows that it’s just a matter of time.

And then, Bakugo Katsuki comes bursting into his life and neatly explodes all of his plans away.

Thanks, Kacchan.

### Dabi’s confusion -

The fifth time Dabi catches Izuku staring at him, he sighs and finally puts the report down.

“Yes, what is it?”

“What’s what?”

His eyes narrowed and he pinned Izuku with a stare. The young man dropped his eyes, and Dabi wished they didn’t play this game.

“...Sorry, I just… I was just thinking about something.”

“Like what?” Dabi asked, and lifted the report up again.

Augh, he wishes that, if Natsuo was going to go through the arduous process of writing a report, he would have the decency to write bigger if he won’t fix his chicken-scratch handwriting. The report itself was about the findings of the last subjugation, and how well the water-pump system has been treating the situation. It was a report that he had already filed and processed, but he pretends to read again anyways, and hopefully, his patience will last long enough for the young man to just spill the beans already.

Funny, just five years ago, he wouldn’t think that he or Natsuo would still be hauling ass for the betterment of the dukedom.

“...I uhm…” Izuku stammered out. His fingers take a white-knuckled grip on the tax reports in his hands, and he finally sets them down on the table, “I… I have something to tell you.”

“Go ahead,” Dabi said, all but leaping at the opportunity to hold a conversation with his husband.

“...You know, I’m really happy,” he said, despite his paling features as he gnawed down on his bottom lip. Dabi frowns, but thinks it’s too early to put the report down just yet. “And I think that… that everyone here has gotten much nicer and friendlier these days. It’s very… very warm.”

The older man patiently waited. It was the least he could do for the man who can thaw a dragon’s heart.

“And I would never, ever, ever do anything to disgrace you. And I often feel that it’s… you’re a little dazzling. Sometimes, when I walk around, I’m honestly shocked that I’m still here and uhm welcomed.”

Dabi, who had patiently waited for his husband to return from school for the breaks, had worked doubly hard these last couple of weeks so that he wouldn’t have to go subjugating during his time at home. He knows he’s not the only one. Their corruption, crime rates, and scandals were at an all time low, and there should be no problem for the coming winter.

They worked for this peace.

With that, Dabi wanted to take Izuku for a walk through the ice gardens further north. He wanted to watch Izuku’s face when he saw the Northern Lights for the first time. He wanted to wake up next to this man, snoring and drooling onto their pillows. He waited and he waited.

If at all possible, he would like to hear what his name sounds like from Izuku’s lips.

“It’s just that… should you ever uhm… fall in love with someone. It’s definitely and totally okay and I’ll get out of the way. You just… just have to let me know and I’ll get out of the way, okay? So just let me know, if you want to uh… divorce me.”

For the first time in years, Dabi lost control of his fire.

The sudden burst of flames destroyed his desk, all the reports he had painstakingly set aside, the windows shattered open and he stood up in his absolute shock. No sound could come out of his mouth, and he didn’t understand why Izuku looked so surprised.

He’s the one who’s surprised.

“My Lord, are you alright-”

“Wha-What the fuck have they been teaching you at that school?!” he shouted out, finally finding his voice. He felt his heart waver, cracking in all the places Izuku had touched, and wondered if there would be anything left if this man were to leave him. “Where the hell did you even get this idea?! That’s fucking bullshit! I would never-”

“It’s not the academy! You can’t say that!” Izuku snapped back, turning around, and he hated how these were the moments where Izuku could stand up and fight back. He couldn’t do it for himself, and he couldn’t do it for little things, but he never failed to stand up for someone else. “A-And you don’t know that! Things can change! If you want to inherit the dukedom or if-if you get your own land, then it’s only right that you get someone who you love and can have your children!”

“I have you!” Dabi shouted back. His fire flinging out, and everything on the wall to his left was ash. Izuku didn’t even flinch at the sight. “You- you swore to me! That you will be with me for the rest of our lives! You swore that to me!”

“And I will!” Izuku said, “There is nothing more that I want than your longevity, blessed with prosperity and happiness! So I don’t want to become an obstacle! So I’m just saying, if there is someone who truly makes you happy, then please choose them!”

“Then why would you say this to me?!” the other man said. And at the peak of his emotions, swung his hand out, “If you think that this would make me happy, then get out!”

And thus, winter break began with the door to his office quietly clicking shut behind Izuku.

### Shoto & Deku

“I’m sorry, what? You told Nii-sama what?”

“That he doesn't have to feel bad if he wants to get a divorce,” Izuku said quietly. “I just… I've been thinking about the future, Shoto-sama. I just… I know that I can’t give it to him.”

Because he’ll be dead. If at all possible, he would like it he could avoid that altogether and just run away and live quietly on his own with a herd of sheep or something.

“...Izuku, you’re… really nice and one of the smartest people I know. I didn’t… I didn’t ever dream that I could have breakfast with my entire family without dreading it,” Shoto said, but his eyes were pitying, “but holy shit, you’re dumb.”

He turned in shock, and the young master gave a long sigh.

“Wow. I can’t believe I’m saying this, but poor nii-sama.”

### Weak, Useless, Quirkless, Worthless, Fearless, Deku

“I just don’t get it,” Izuku sighed, wiping his sweat with his towel, “Why do people feel so…. Intimidated by me? I’m quirkless, weak, useless, and whatever the other things that they call me all the time.”

Shinsou gave him a withering look, and for a moment, Izuku thought that he was going to focus on the not-important everyday, mundane things again, but the man looked away instead.

“It’s because of that. All of that, your standing and everything but you’re not scared of them.”

Izuku frowned, “Why would I be scared?”

Aizawa gave him a dry look in response as Izuku tilted his head, racking all his thoughts and emotions to try and get an answer.

“I don’t get it.”

The teacher grabbed his towel and suddenly began to roughly tousle his hair with it. Izuku yelped in surprise, his hands flailing a little to the side, but ultimately sighed and accepted his fate.

“It’s your kindness,” his teacher said suddenly.

“...Kindness, huh?” the younger man mumbled, and when Aizawa stopped, straightened with a grateful smile to the man who was always looking after him. “Thanks, sensei. Do you think that I’m kind?”

“I think you’re stupid. What else do you call an idiot who keeps putting his hand into a fire? All you ever do is invite trouble.”

Izuku winced at that. He really wished people would forget about that already. It’s been years. He gave a self-deprecating laugh though, because it wasn’t like he had anything to say otherwise.

“You butt into problems that aren’t yours. You get into everyone’s business. It’s like you lose all common sense the moment you see that someone might be in trouble. You make a lot of paperwork too.”

“S-sorry.”

“But, I don’t think what you’re doing is a bad thing.”

Izuku sighed, ready to apologize again when he stopped as the words registered in his brain. He looked up and gawked at Aizawa in shock. The older man stared back and sighed.

“Keep up the good work, Izuku-sama,” he said. “And know that, at the very least, I will take your side.”

The young man gaped back and Aizawa, with a loose grin on his face, ruffled his hair with his hand before he walked away.

He turned to Shinshou, who looked just as shocked as he felt.

Who was that?

### Troubling - ShinDeku

“Augh, this is just so annoying,” Izuku sighed dramatically as he rubbed the back of his neck. “Why can’t they just ignore me? I know they don’t like me, so why can’t they just ignore me?”

Shinsou looked at Izuku from over his glass and sipped it quietly. His best friend whined and sighed a little more, trying to throw a tantrum as quietly and inconspicuously as possible, even though they were carefully tucked away from prying eyes. He stopped drinking and eyed it impassively.

“...Do you want to leave?”

“We gotta at least wait for midnight,” Izuku sighed back, “I hate being an adult.”

“No, I mean, do you want to leave this kingdom?”

Izuku blinked and tilted his head to the side, as though he was actually thinking about it. And then, he sighed, “No matter how much of a dream come true that is, there’s no way we could manage to pull it off.”

“We could,” Shinsou said. “We’re both smart and strong enough to make it as wandering bodyguards or adventurers until we get far away enough to settle down.” It was, and he was ashamed to admit it, one of the things that he spent a lot of time thinking and reading up on. His eyes flickered from Midoriya’s face to his drink and gulped before continuing with the same level voice. “We’d make great farmers. And you know how to sew.”

“Haha, very funny,” Izuku chuckled back, “But yeah, if I was going to start over in a new place, you would definitely be one of my top picks.”

Shinsou was certain that Izuku didn’t see it, but the words made him smile.

“No good though?”

“If it’s not me, it’ll just be someone else,” Izuku said. “So I might as well play meat-shield.”

He turned and gave a cheeky grin to his friend.

“At the very least, I’m not alone though. Thanks, Shinsou.”

Shinsou, somehow, managed to smile back, even though his hand was clenched tightly into a fist under the table.

### YamaMido - Todoroki Loyalty

“I told you, didn’t I?” the blond said, looking at him, “I’m loyal to the Todoroki’s.”

The green-haired man deflated a little and a hand came to grab his shoulder and shake hard.

“You understand? So, go. I’ll cover for you.”

“But… But I’m-”

“You’re not a Todoroki,” he said, “But you definitely ignited their humanity back.” The blond grinned back, “So, do me a favor and consider this… my late wedding gift.”

Izuku’s eyes watered, and he nodded.

“Go. He’s waiting for you, you know.”

### Confession - an ending but also a beginning

“...Izuku, did you know? I spent twenty years in near solitary confinement. Since the day my quirk manifested, I’ve done nothing but hurt and kill. I know that this is long overdue, and I know that it’s my fault for not being clear about it but I...” he said, speaking clearly and slowly, “I want to spend the rest of our days together. You and me.”

“...If we… If we don’t get divorced, you will never have a happy ending,” Izuku said, his voice breaking. He couldn’t imagine how weak he sounded, with how his shoulders shook as he imagined a future where Dabi was happily in love with someone else.“I don’t want that. I want you, of all people, to have a happy ending. And I… I can’t give that to you.”

Dabi gave this choking laugh, like he still hadn't figured out what he wanted to feel and how to express it. He took a deep breath as he shook his head.

“If I had never met you, I would have kept going on that blazing warpath. I would have kept living never knowing that... that I could be happy. That there was happiness in the world for me,” he said, “Do you understand? I don’t care about getting a happy ending, or having a fulfilling life, because if I had you, I will be happy. I’m certain of it.”

Izuku’s bottom lip trembled, his eyes watering and Dabi reached his hand out.

“...Izuku,” he said, “I love you. Please, believe me.”

This time, when his husband agreed, he didn’t really say anything moreso he nodded his head as tears ran down his face. And this time, Dabi was the one to close the distance between them, he was the one who wrapped his arms around Izuku’s body, kneeled down next to him on the ground when he fell, and clutched him close to his chest.

In these moments, when he can wrap his arms almost all the way around him, he thought that Izuku is much too small for him to be able to lift his burden. He thought that the small figure in his arms is so much stronger than he claimed, even as he cried against his chest.

“Thank you,” he whispered, meaning every word. “I swear I will cherish you.”

Izuku , sobbing in his elation and in his guilt, nodded his head against Dabi’s shoulder. He was a selfish man. He didn’t want to release Dabi. He didn’t want to see this man marry someone else or watch his fire burn for another. He wanted him and he wanted all of him.

“Dabi, I will make you happy,” Izuku whispered against his chest, like a secret promise that he was telling his heart. “I swear that you won’t regret this. I swear that I will protect you.”

“Idiot,” Dabi whispered against his top of his head. “I should be the one saying that.”

From this moment on, Izuku took a promise to his heart. If lies could become reality, if there are truths in his lies, then he will lie and lie and lie.

And make this his reality.

This was just the beginning.

-

Following that was the Winter Solstice Ball. In the game, it marked the first time the Heroine goes to a ball. It’s an incredibly important part of the game that shows her how awful the world is, riddled with corruption and rotting from the inside out, especially when she compared it to her hometown.

And, if you were gunning for Dabi’s route, like Izuku was trying to make her do, then this is when she would meet Todoroki Touya for the first time.

However, unlike the games, Dabi is dressed sharply, a dark, midnight blue face mask for everything under his eyes, and his proper military uniform. He looks every bit prim and proper, even going as far to style his hair down and back, looking every bit his title of the Duke’s Commander, the First Son of Duke Todoroki Enji. He is on time, greeting people as they come in. He is handsome and confident, quiet and content.

Looking at him, Izuku can’t imagine anyone not falling in love. When he told this to Shinsou, the man grimaced back, which was fine, Shinsou was probably a little young for this kind of thing.

And when he sees Uraraka, she’s so beautiful that he felt the world slow down as though to treasure the time it has with her. Every bit the beautiful heroine that could banish any evil with a pure smile, he thinks that it’ll be hard for anyone to not crumple under her radiance.

When Uraraka sees Touya, it’s after she excitedly power-walks to Izuku’s side. It’s clear that she’s uncomfortable and about to jump out of her own skin in her nervousness, and had fled to Izuku’s side because he was the only person she knew here aside from Shoto, who was busy. She stared at Dabi, and despite everything, Izuku’s insides tightened uncomfortably.

After everything, it was okay, right? Even if Uraraka and Touya were to fall in love at first sight right now, it would-

“Good evening. Shoto is with Mother right now, if he’s who you are looking for,” Touya said.

“Oh, is he? I’ll make sure to say hello and make my way over,” Uraraka said. “My name is Uraraka Ochako, nice to meet you. I am one of Izuku’s and Todo…er, Shoto’s classmate,” she gave a polite courtesy, and the only word Izuku had to describe her was beautiful.

Izuku couldn’t quite bring his eyes up, and his hands tightened into fists at his side. On occasion, the thought that he dared to stand in her beautiful presence and Dabi’s handsome company should be enough to warrent the death penalty.

Suddenly, an arm was draped around him, and he turned to stare in shock as Dabi pulled him right against him.

“I see,” he said, like this was normal, “I’m Todoroki Touya…. First son of Duke Todoroki and presiding Commander,” he said, introducing himself clearly, “And Izuku’s husband. Thanks for taking care of him at school.”

Unlike most other nobles, Dabi did not ever touch people. During the time of the dance, he did not dance with anyone. If someone brushed into him, they would be burned or cremated within seconds and his reputation ensured that everyone gave him a five-foot berth around him. In the game, Uraraka is the only one that broke this rule.

But right now, with Dabi’s arm tight around his shoulders, clear in its claim, Izuku thinks he’s falling in love all over again.

“Ah! You’re the Dabi-sama that Izuku talks about all the time at school.”

Touya’s eyes brightened a little at that, surprised and pleased all in one, “...Does he?”

Uraraka beamed back, and Izuku thought that she’s beautiful, but really hoped she wasn’t going to be saying something embarrassing as she kept going, “Yep! He’s always going on and on about how wonderful, cool, handsome and strong you are,” she said. She gave a big grin, “We have a saying in our friend group, ‘If Deku is smiling, he’s thinking of Dabi’, she continued while Izuku stared at her in mortification. She took a moment to sober up a little and dipped her head forward again, “Please take care of him, he’s my best friend.”

Somehow, the Commander next to him relaxed a little more, “I see,” he said, expression unreadable.

Izuku wanted to die.

“Oh, I think I see Tsuyu! Let’s catch up later, okay?”

Izuku stared as she all but floated away to her other friend, and his eyes fell back to the ground.

“Hm… wonderful, cool, handsome and strong, huh? You think of me that often?” Dabi said, and the smaller man could just hear the smile in his voice. “...I wish you wouldn’t lie to other people like that. It raises their expectati-”

Izuku straightened suddenly, and raised his head to meet Dabi’s gaze head on. “It’s not a lie,” he said.

“...You finally looked at me,” Dabi sighed back, moving his arms back to his side. The cold immediately settled where his heat used to be. He looked at Izuku, a smile growing on his face, “You look great.”

His gaze was tender.

Izuku, as though he wasn’t already embarrassed from Uraraka’s words earlier, felt it come back two fold and he dropped his eyes again.

“I… I know blue isn’t my color,” he said, motioning to the tie he was wearing, “But I wanted to match you. I feel like a fool.”

A hand came out, and Izuku stared at Dabi’s extended hand.

“You’re not a fool. You’re my husband-to-be. Come, join me in a dance or two,” he said. “I wanna show you that it’s not just our clothes that match.”

Dabi is a great dancer.

### Name -

“...Touya,” Dabi said quietly one day.

“...Pardon?”

Midoriya looked up from the book he was reading while his fiancé crawled into bed next to him.

“...I want… I want to hear you call me by my name, Touya.”

Midoriya immediately blushed back and his eyes dropped down to the book in his lap, “I-I could never-”

“...Alright,” Dabi said, flopping onto his side so that his back was facing Midoriya. “But one day.”

Green eyes stared at the man in surprise, it wasn’t like him to give up so easily.

“Don’t think that I’m giving up,” he said, like he could read him without looking at him. “But I won’t do things that you don’t like. I’ll… I’ll be patient.”

“...Oh?”

“Yeah,” Dabi said. “Don’t push it. And I expect rewards.”

Midoriya stared at him and put his book onto the nightstand to his side. He scooted onto the bed a little more, and leaned in to give Dabi a kiss on the cheek.

“It’s not much, but I-”

He paused as Dabi’s head had slowly turned back to him. His eyes were comically wide, so that the whites of his eyes were showing all around those blue eyes, and for a moment the two just stared at each other.

“Fuck,” Dabi whispered, “Don’t do that. I won’t have any patience anymore.”

Midoriya blinked back, and gave a small smile.

“It’s fine,” he said, gaze exceedingly warm, “I know you said you won’t do anything that I don’t like anymore, but I don’t think there’s anything about you that I don’t like.”

With that, he laid down next to the man he loved, blissfully ignorant to the flustered mess he made out of his husband.

### The King

“You are, by far, one of the most innovative, creative, smartest individuals I know,” he said. “In addition to that, you are one of the kindest people, who never forgets about the people we do it for. I have… I have learned so much from each and every single one of our conversations.”

And in his head, he felt it. Yagi was thrumming with energy, eager and enthusiastic about the latest turn of events. Midoriya understood it. He really did.

“Consider it,” King Tsukauchi said, “Become apart of my council, stand beside me, and help me build the strongest our kingdom has ever been.”

This was probably the most surefire way to make sure his knowledge didn’t go to waste. This was single-handedly the best way to make sure that this world progressed a little faster but overall better within the next twenty years. He knew this.

“...I’m… My deepest apologies, sire,” he said, dipping his head forward, “I cannot do that.”

“...If I really wanted it. I could mandate it and bring out here. There’s a lot of dirty tactics that I could do.”

Izuku’s smile somehow turned warmer, “Perhaps.”

“You don’t seem that concerned.”

“...I’m pretty certain that you cannot bring people back from the dead. At the very least, I will always have that option.”

The King jolted out of his chair in his shock. “Surely you jest!”

“My Lord, my place is by my husband’s side. To be anywhere else is a death sentence.”

He gave a little laugh, like he didn’t know what else to do at that time. The threat of death, or suicide of that matter, was not something that people often lingered on, but given Izuku’s track record, he’s certain that they would belive him.

A life without Dabi is not a life at all, after all.

“...That’s… an amazing sense of loyalty.”

“That’s a kind way of putting it.”

### Sickness

Izuku was fine and dandy, a little sad at his impending doom, but overall he was okay.

When he looked at Enji, the way he looked at the people who talked to him and asked them how they were doing, he felt good. Natsuo and he bickered now too, and he has seen him on more than one occasion getting scolded together with Touya by Fuyumi. Both Fuyumi and Rei compared ice-powers often, and left Shoto and Izuku in a daze some days. The entire family would be out in the garden almost every day for lunch or afternoon tea, and Izuku could cry at how far they all had come.

But, life wasn’t that simple.

Perhaps, he wasn’t meant to be happy. The world has decided that he was far too selfish, and it was coming to take it’s payment in flesh. He only regretted leaving Dabi’s side like this. He couldn’t bear the thought of his husband being left alone so prematurely.

But looking at the blood in his hand, the blood that came spewing out of his mouth, he wonders what else he could do.

### Mineta

"Easy, Izuku-shounen. You have been pushing yourself too hard these last couple of says."

"Ugh, I gotta though. It's better than letting this world end."

"...Midoriya?"

Shit. Izuku thought. He didn't even have any way to hide or explain this. Perhaps he could just run away and pretend this didn't…

No he couldn't do that.

He turned his head to the person who called out to him, keeping his hand over his mouth and prayed that Mineta would just abandon him. He wasn't a girl, hell, he wasn't even attractive. So surely, Mineta wouldn't berate him or blackmail him or grope him. He would just walk away and pretend he didn't-

"Hey, Midoriya are you…. Is that blood? Oh my god, are you dying no wait we should get you to the infirmary. We need to get some… I'll go call for help-"

Fuck.

Izuku reached out with his unoccupied hand, and grabbed Mineta's wrist. He must have used more strength than he thought, since the young man winced at the grip but Midoriya couldn't afford to mess this up.

"...Fine. I'm okay-"

"You're not!" Mineta snapped back, "Look at yourself! You're not okay!"

"Mineta, please!" Izuku snapped back, blood spraying as he pushed himself just a little bit more. "Please understand. I don't have a lot of time. I don't want to spend it counting down."

Mineta hesitated.

"Mineta, please. I beg of you."

"...Does anyone else know?"

And Izuku, who was getting very good at lying these days, nodded. "...Recovery Girl, Aizawa, and some of the other knights know."

Mineta hesitated, probably thinking about their interactions and nodded.

Izuku was so lucky that Mineta was smart. A dumber person would have questioned it more and gone to check for themselves while futilely looming for a way to help. But Mineta is smart. He probably didn't consider the fact that Izuku would lie to him or haven't already tried everything. He knows that Izuku is smarter than him with better resources, if Midoriya hadn't found anything and suffered with this, then it was naturally because there was no other option.

So Izuku was secretly glad that, if anyone, the person who found him was Mineta. He was a selfish guy who only looked after himself in the game.

Had Mineta not changed, had Mineta not known and understood Izuku , had Izuku and Mineta never met, Izuku would have been correct. In another world, he would have been.

This was not that world.

-

“...What did they do to you?”

Fucking christ, Izuku thought to himself mournfully, of all the people Mineta had to snitch him out to, why did it have to be Bakugo?

This man, he literally couldn’t even try to hide or pretend. He just knew Izuku too well. It was ridiculous. All his memories of this man, back when they were just children, was filled with burns and explosions and awe. How did he grow up to be such a perceptive man?

He wasn’t at all this preceptive in the game. He was just your average tsundere route with a heavy dosage of bad-boy aesthetic.

“Close your mouth and answer the question, you fucking nerd.”

### 

### Shit:

The fifth time Dabi catches Midoriya staring at him, he sighs and finally puts the report down.

“Yes, what is it?”

“What’s what?”

His eyes narrowed and he pinned Midoriya with a stare. The young man dropped his eyes, and Dabi wished they didn’t play this game. He's been like this since he had gotten back from school.

“...Sorry, I just… I was just thinking about something.”

“Like what?” Dabi asked, and lifted the report up again.

Augh, he wished that, if Natsuo was going to go through the arduous process of writing a report, he would have the decency to write bigger if he won’t fix his chicken-scratch handwriting. The report itself was about the findings of the last subjugation, and how well the water-pump system has been treating the situation. It was a report that he had already filed and processed, but he pretends to read again anyways, and hopefully, his patience will last long enough for the young man to just spill the beans already.

Funny, just five years ago, he wouldn’t think that he or Natsuo would be hauling ass for the betterment of the dukedom.

“...I uhm…” Midoriya stammered out. His fingers take a white-knuckled grip on the tax reports in his hands, and he finally sets them down on the table, “I… I have something to tell you.”

“Go ahead,” Dabi said, all but leaping at the opportunity to hold a conversation with him.

“...You know, I’m really happy,” he said, despite his paling features as he gnawed down on his bottom lip. Dabi frowns, but thinks it’s too early to put the report down just yet. “And I think that… that everyone here has gotten much nicer and friendlier these days. It’s very… very warm.”

The older man patiently waited. It was the least he could do for the man who can thaw out his heart.

“And I would never, ever, ever do anything to disgrace you. And I often feel that it’s… you’re a little dazzling. Sometimes, when I walk around, I’m honestly shocked that I’m still here and uhm welcomed.”

Dabi, who had patiently waited for his fiancé to return from school for the breaks, had worked doubly hard these last couple of weeks so that he wouldn’t have to go subjugating during his time at home. He knows he’s not the only one. Their corruption, crime rates, and scandals were at an all time low, and there should be no problem for the coming winter.

They worked for this peace.

With that, Dabi wanted to take Midoriya for a walk through the ice gardens further north. He wanted to watch Midoriya's face when he saw the Northern Lights for the first time. He wanted to wake up next to this man, snoring and drooling onto their pillows, starting from now until they were old and wrinkly. He waited and he waited.

If at all possible, he would like to hear what his name sounds like from Midoriya's lips.

“It’s just that… should you ever uhm… fall in love with someone. It’s definitely and totally okay and I’ll get out of the way. You just… just have to let me know and I’ll get out of the way, okay? So just let me know, if you want to uh… divorce me.”

For the first time in years, Dabi lost control of his fire.

The sudden burst of flames destroyed his desk, all the reports he had painstakingly set aside, the windows shattered open and he stood up in his absolute shock. No sound could come out of his mouth, and he didn’t understand why Midoriya looked so surprised.

He’s the one who’s surprised.

“My Lord, are you alright-”

“Wha-What the fuck have they been teaching you at that school?!” he shouted out, finally finding his voice. He felt his heart waver, cracking in all the places Midoriya had touched, and wondered if there would be anything left if this man were to leave him. “Where the hell did you even get this idea?! That’s fucking bullshit! I would never-”

“You can’t say that! Don't say that about the academy!” Midoriya snapped back, turning around, and he hated how these were the moments where Midoriya could stand up and fight back. He couldn’t do it for himself, and he couldn’t do it for little things, but he never failed to stand up for someone else. “A-And you don’t know what could happen in the future! Things can change! If you want to inherit the dukedom or if-if you get your own land, then it’s only right that you get someone who you love and can have your children!”

“I have you!” Dabi shouted back. His fire flinging out, and everything on the wall to his left was ash. Midoriya didn’t even flinch at the sight. “You- you swore to me! That you will be with me! My ally, my shield, my tool! You gave your word!”

“And I will!” Midoriya shouted back, “There is nothing more that I want than your longevity, blessed with prosperity and happiness! So I don’t want to become an obstacle! So I’m just saying, if there is someone who truly makes you happy, then please choose them!”

“Then why would you say this to me?!” the other man said. And at the peak of his emotions, swung his hand out, “If you think that this would make me happy, then get out!”

And thus, winter break began with the door to his office quietly clicking shut behind Midoriya.

Some time ago, when Dabi was still more confused than anything else, he learned something about his supposed fiancé.

Midoriya probably didn’t know it, but he cried in his sleep often.

The first time it happened, Dabi thought he was hallucinating. That bright, almost dopey-always-smiling guy? Crying? It sounded like a set up for a bad joke.

He reached over, ready to wake him up, and then stopped himself. What was he going to do? Comfort him? The thought made him sick to the bone. He wasn’t the type to do things like that, and first of all, wouldn’t waking up and seeing a face like his make things worse? Dabi's face gave the maids' here nightmares, and that was in broad daylight.

No, it was better for Dabi to lay there and listen to the kid cry. He didn’t know why he did it. But every night he couldn’t fall asleep or woke up in their middle of the night, he would hear the soft cries.

And without fail, every morning, Midoriya would be all smiles and joys again anyways. He didn't get it. He didn't really understand anything about Midoriya, but the more he learned, the less he knew.

But tonight was a little different.

Tonight, Dabi came in late, and he didn’t know why he came in at all, but while he was distracted wondering why his feet led him here, the door clicked shut behind him. While it wasn’t loud enough to bring guards, it was loud enough for Midoriya wake up enough to sit up.

He stared for a moment, and Dabi didn’t know what kind of expression he must have shown.

However, Dabi never thought that someone could look at his face, his scarred, hideous face, and relax. His own mother shied from his face. It was such a distant idea that he never even considered the notion. The least anyone has ever felt when they saw his face was discomfort. And even then, it was just thinly veiled disgust and pity.

So obviously, he wanted to claim that Midoriya just didn’t know who he was. It was dark. It was in the middle of the night. Midoriya was clearly not in the right state of mind when he but when he leaned back to his pillow saw him. But when Midoriya laid back down, deciding that there was no threat, Dabi's name was on his lips as he wished him a good and quiet night.

It was a sweet sound. It wormed its way into his heart.

“...Izuku, did you know? I spent twenty years in near solitary confinement. Since the day my quirk manifested, I’ve done nothing but hurt and kill. I know that this is long overdue, and I know that it’s my fault for not being clear about it but I...” he said, speaking clearly and slowly, “I want to spend the rest of our days together. You and me.”

“...If we… If we don’t get divorced, you will never have a happy ending,” Izuku said, his voice breaking. He couldn’t imagine how weak he sounded, with how his shoulders shook as he imagined a future where Dabi was happily in love with someone else.“I don’t want that. I want you, of all people, to have a happy ending. And I… I can’t give that to you.”

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After everything, it was okay, right? Even if Uraraka and Touya were to fall in love at first sight right now, it would-

“Good evening. Shoto is with Mother right now, if he’s who you are looking for,” Touya said.

“Oh, is he? I’ll make sure to say hello and make my way over,” Uraraka said. “My name is Uraraka Ochako, nice to meet you. I am one of Izuku’s and Todo…er, Shoto’s classmate,” she gave a polite courtesy, and the only word Izuku had to describe her was beautiful.

Izuku couldn’t quite bring his eyes up, and his hands tightened into fists at his side. On occasion, the thought that he dared to stand in her beautiful presence and Dabi’s handsome company should be enough to warrent the death penalty.

Suddenly, an arm was draped around him, and he turned to stare in shock as Dabi pulled him right against him.

“I see,” he said, like this was normal, “I’m Todoroki Touya…. First son of Duke Todoroki and presiding Commander,” he said, introducing himself clearly, “And Izuku’s husband. Thanks for taking care of him at school.”

Unlike most other nobles, Dabi did not ever touch people. During the time of the dance, he did not dance with anyone. If someone brushed into him, they would be burned or cremated within seconds and his reputation ensured that everyone gave him a five-foot berth around him. In the game, Uraraka is the only one that broke this rule.

But right now, with Dabi’s arm tight around his shoulders, clear in its claim, Izuku thinks he’s falling in love all over again.

“Ah! You’re the Dabi-sama that Izuku talks about all the time at school.”

Touya’s eyes brightened a little at that, surprised and pleased all in one, “...Does he?”

Uraraka beamed back, and Izuku thought that she’s beautiful, but really hoped she wasn’t going to be saying something embarrassing as she kept going, “Yep! He’s always going on and on about how wonderful, cool, handsome and strong you are,” she said. She gave a big grin, “We have a saying in our friend group, ‘If Deku is smiling, he’s thinking of Dabi’, she continued while Izuku stared at her in mortification. She took a moment to sober up a little and dipped her head forward again, “Please take care of him, he’s my best friend.”

Somehow, the Commander next to him relaxed a little more, “I see,” he said, expression unreadable.

Izuku wanted to die.

“Oh, I think I see Tsuyu! Let’s catch up later, okay?”

Izuku stared as she all but floated away to her other friend, and his eyes fell back to the ground.

“Hm… wonderful, cool, handsome and strong, huh? You think of me that often?” Dabi said, and the smaller man could just hear the smile in his voice. “...I wish you wouldn’t lie to other people like that. It raises their expectati-”

Izuku straightened suddenly, and raised his head to meet Dabi’s gaze head on. “It’s not a lie,” he said.

“...You finally looked at me,” Dabi sighed back, moving his arms back to his side. The cold immediately settled where his heat used to be. He looked at Izuku, a smile growing on his face, “You look great.”

His gaze was tender.

Izuku, as though he wasn’t already embarrassed from Uraraka’s words earlier, felt it come back two fold and he dropped his eyes again.

“I… I know blue isn’t my color,” he said, motioning to the tie he was wearing, “But I wanted to match you. I feel like a fool.”

A hand came out, and Izuku stared at Dabi’s extended hand.

“You’re not a fool. You’re my husband. Come, join me in a dance or two,” he said. “I wanna show you that it’s not just our clothes that match.”

Dabi is a great dancer.