Warning: messy feelings, fake yakuza aesthetic, no semblance of reality

Disclaimer: I don’t own anything.

Summary: Cannon Divergence. When Midoriya Inko falls terminally ill on the day of UA admissions, Midoriya tells All Might that he cannot be his successor. Yet, Midoriya still loves heroes, even as the boss of the reformed Shie Hassakai.

Alt: Midoriya takes more after his mother. To the best of his ability, he tries to take care of his family. Even if that means he has to destroy the hero society that he grew up loving.

Paring: Chisaki Kai/Midoriya Izuku, Dabi/Midoriya Izuku, Shigaraki Tomura/Midoriya Izuku, Bubaigawara Jin/Midoriya Izuku, Everyone/Midoriya, let’s be real here.

A/N: sigh.

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### Notes

* Midoriya Izuku (Heroic Villain Midoriya)
  + His mom gets really fucking sick. Collapses the day of entrance exams. Midoriya decides not to go pro-hero.
  + Wants to save people still. So he follows the Yakuza thing under lawful ways and brings back that Chivalry, super charismatic, and operates under the weight of the law. Smart & knows how to use it like a weapon. Also knows how to Use Tech & gamble
  + With that said, there’s more people who dont like him but those who do will die for him.
  + Ends up getting taken in, for being too smart, too crafty, figures things out too fast, by the yakuza
  + Haves a lot of ‘friends’ that owe him things.
  + Eventually his folks die. His mom dies and his dad dies on the way (heart attack that causes an accident and leaves him with more debt, actually. It’s so perfect that he’s certain that there’s some foul play and he hates being smart). Officially Shie Hassakai’s afterwards.
  + Eventually becomes the public’s last line of defense.
    - “...So why did you come to me? You should have gone to the police.” “I wanted justice.”
* Bubaigawara Jin
  + Midoriya’s first bodyguard. He’s unified on three things 1) protect izuku, 2) stay by Midoriya’s side, 3) movie night mondays
  + His split-stuff is much more manageable, if only because there is something that they can agree on and focus on
* Chisaki Kai
  + Midoriya’s greatest support (eventually). Likes working for Midoriya, since he takes over the whole yakuza thing and he can just be a lab-rat for whatever he decides to do
  + The Eri-testing thing is put to an end quickly. Because Midoriya doesn’t want to lose his one edge in the world. Chisaki, charmed by this, agrees not to test on Eri (also due to a bet because he’s a man of his word, swears to pull a fast one on Midoriya, but has yet to make a move).
  + Of course, after his initial angry whatever
* Shigaraki
  + Sleepy & lazy. Former Hikkomori. 2YL Ichigo long hair. Ties it back (murasakibara) later
  + All Might won against AFO (when his teacher died). So was suddenly homeless and lost at 20
  + Midoriya accidentally crashes into his room via window (it really was an accident), and Shigaraki takes a step outside.
  + Will eventually become one of Midoriaya’s lieutenants
* Dabi
  + Eventually heals all his scars for Midoriya
  + The stray-cat who goes full Guardian (read: possessive)
  + Silent unless he’s mocking someone.
* Stain
  + Midoriya’s cleaner. Stain’s infomat. (eventually joins his side. Not yakuza.)
* League
  + Joins Midoriya as his extra. Not Yakuza. Just Midoriya’s.
* Eri
  + Midoriya saves her from experimentation. Drops her off at Gentle’s place.
  + Tech-wiz.
  + Wants to be useful to Midoriya. Learns how to use her quirk (heals Dabi’s scars), learns how to hack & shit, offers to be experimented on again
* UA Grads: fell into the same trap as everyone expected them to
  + But they’re all so young and inexperienced for some time.
  + Hero Ranking: Endeavor, Hawks, Jeanist, Mirio…. 15 - Shoto, 50 - Bakugo, etc
  + Bakugo “ Ground Zero “ : the Villainous Hero
  + Iida still hasn’t gotten his priorities straight (he’s usually fine, just sometimes shit gets too personal)
* Shie Hassaki Rises:
  + Takes down all the other yakuza
  + Provides support and protection for the people who (pay protection money or owe him cough) slip through the cracks
    - Also makes sure kids in bad situations (abandoned because of quirk, abused at home, neglected, etc) have a future and that’s not something any Hero could understand, right?
  + When natural disasters hit, one after another, Midoriya is first to take immediate action and care, pulls back and lets the govt/hero take the credit, but the people who were helped know better

**So from meeting -> joining: it’s Midoriya & their Villian/Hero names**

**Chisaki’s side is exception. They’ll all be Midoriya & Last Names (with exception of Kumicho)**

**From joining+ : Midoriya.**

**Hero Names: Bakugo -> Silence & Todo -> Absolute Zero**

### Notes Otherwise

* 13yo Midoriya: post sludge, mom collapses
  + Meets up & spends time with Yagi, gets OFA, but it’s dormant.
  + Newspaper Delivery Boy
* 14yo Mido
  + Doesn’t get government aid because of dad, but he’s not contactable
  + No UA. Doesn’t go to high school at first because $$$.
  + Deep debt. Makes blackmail web (Hiruma-style). Gets caught by Yakuza (Shie Hassaikai)
    - Also by Stain, but they have a weird relationship
    - Also Giran, who is his #1 customer.
    - Giran sends Stain’s peeps (Dabi, Himiko, Twice, Spinner). They’re loyal to Midoriya.
  + Mom taken care of, debt cleared, taken in clothed/fed/high school paid for
  + Told to clean his debt. Cleans it in 6 months.
    - Goes collects information. Stocks.
    - Collects the LOV. (they are all aware of each other by summer) & chill together since.
  + Meets Gentle & Brava. They think he’s a pitiful guy who’s stuck in an awful place and getting in deeper shit. Learns how to run away.
  + Collects League & gives them something to do for the next few years.
    - League, Gentle, Stain, and Yakuza are unrelated.
* 15 yo
  + Debt cleared.
  + Mom dies. Dad dies on the way to see mom die. Sad all around.
    - Still a Midoriya.
  + Given to Chisaki because Chisaki needs $$, Midoriya wants Eri. They compromise.
    - Yay eri isn’t being experimented on anymore. “Buys her”
      * Six months that he doesn’t remember, but no one wants to talk to him about what happened in that time (he got notes that tell him what he did, but not what he actually did)
    - “I don’t want you to get this experiment. Because then, I’ll lose my edge.”
    - Hands Eri to Genle & Brava for the most part. Eri goes and becomes tech-handy
    - Chisaki is super interested in him. And relies on him way more than he ever meant to.
  + LOV worries at how hard Midoriya works. It’s almost as if they have learned how to care about <one > person.
* 16yo (2nd year in high school)
  + Midoriya did want to be a hero. Wanted to be his mom’s hero. That’s why he did all of this shit. Goes and decides that he still has someone he wants to protect.
    - AFO & OFA takes each other out. Increased number of Natural Disasters begin here.
      * Endeavor’s #1 Hero now. (And it ruins Shouto, not that anyone knew)
    - Takes the sake bond w/ kumicho and wants to save as many people as possible and make the world a better place (“I had a friend, when I was a kid, he… he always made it feel like we could do anything.”)
      * Loses his virginity - and then watched that prostitute get decaputated in front of him. To “teach him not to leave his feelings to those he cannot protect” and he just.
      * Sex can’t have meaning to him so...
    - Offers a hand to Dabi and co. They agree (not Yakuza. But as Midoriya’s personal guards)
    - Stendhal is his go-to to get rid of particularly troublesome people. Stain wants his info on scum. Akaguro Chizome becomes his #1 patron tho (and likewise).
      * “You want to purge hero society, but I want to make the world a better place. The darker the shadow, the brighter the light, don’t you think?”
  + All Might retires
* 18: Graduation & Territory
  + Midoriya: shateigashira & given Yokohama ports to govern. He overthrows current and takes over in six months. Grows from there.
  + Given territory as a graduation gift. It’s a test to see if he’s worthy of being named successor. And boy does he do that.
  + LOV joins him officially as <his> generals. Takes sakezuki
    - Eri (10) volunteers to finish the experimentation to help Midoriya. Chisaki sees himself in her. And has much better control over her quirk
    - Dabi gets his face fixed.
    - Shigaraki brings Nomus
    - Daruma and Chisaki are trading research notes
    - Kouta (eri’s classmate(?)) comes to swear allegiance to the guy who took down Muscular.
  + Reduces crime down to 3% & has 70% public opinion. To the point that civvies trust him more than police/government.
  + Pressures senator to quit so less corrupt people go in instead. They all hate him, but they’re all working together to make civilian life better
  + Is named in the hero rankings (way way low, but the fact that he was listed at all…)
  + Literally the walking proof that the yakuza is still thriving. The good old days can be preserved. Everyone hates him though.
  + With every Natural Disaster, the yakuza stands taller and firmer.
    - Orphans become his (since the people who save them might be heroes but the people that cloth them and give them an opportunity to make something of their life is Midoriya)
* 20: Mido becomes the boss
  + slowly but surely growing in size, rank, prestige, and respect. Officially a candidate to be the next Oyabun (kumicho) and he wants it.
  + Suddenly can’t find/get into contact with All Might
  + Lots of internal struggles and Midoriya smoothers them. Untouchable by the law (since quirkless) with the largest
* Taking over the southern tip, starting at Kanagawa and expanding out (takes Chubu before Kanto)

## Twice - Bubaigawara Jin

### Enter Dabi

When Twice returned, an entire fucking month later, Dabi stayed. He didn’t understand why it made him so uncomfortable. He decided it’s probably because Dabi’s hard to read and has nothing better to do. And more importantly, he trusted Midoriya. This was a good thing. This had to be a worthwhile thing.

But still, bored guys were the worst. They were a loose cannon.

Their mood was like the wind, unpredictable in strength and direction. Some days, he could be a cool breeze on a hot summer day, and could bring a tornado another day, dooming all of them to a fate worse than death. The doubt in his heart increased and spreaded through his chest like a poison.

For the first time since Midoriya told him to go left on that day, he realized that he’s lost.

“...You’re really uncertain around him.”

Twice arched an eyebrow at him, “Do you blame me? You know what they say about him? The Cremator? // Let’s just kill him right now.”

But before Midoriya could say anything else, Twice shook his head.

“But I know. You’re smart. I know that. You’re not dumb, and you don’t want to die, and you don’t want me to die either.” He looked at his boss, who trusted him with his life everyday he had the cash to do so, and remembered the warmth around his hand when he woke up. “So I’ll trust you more than I don’t trust him.”

The shine in Midoriya’s eyes… did he put that there?

“...Thank you, Jin,” he said.

“// Let’s kill him tonight.”

Midoriya blinked, and sighed deeply. That exasperated and fond smile returned, and Twice finally felt like he was better.

“Jin,” he said, voice as sweet as honey, “Welcome back.”

Twice gave him a prouds thumbs-up.

“Nowhere else for me to go!” he said, “//I’ll always stalk you!”

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“We’re doing what?”

“Getting… ramen…?” Midoriya said, holding the noren out of the way for Twice to clamor in.

“Ossan!!! I’m back to eat your delicious ramen! // It tastes disgusting, you alcoholic!” Twice’s voice rang out, and if Midoriya wasn’t used to this, he would have missed Dabi’s next words.

“Why are we getting ramen?” Dabi hissed out. His eyes narrowed, blue eyes holding a smoldering fire of his own.

Twice stuck his head out, “Because we’re hungry! Because it taste good! Because we have time to waste! Why, Dabi, you never had dinner before? // Just shut up and eat!”

“...He just had that whole conversation by himself,” Dabi noted.

Midoriya shrugged back, “It never gets boring.”

Blue eyes flitted to his employer.

“But if you think it’s more fun, you can stand out here or leave,” the young man replied back. Without another world, he walked into the stand. While his words were far more polite than Twice’s, there was a level of familiarity that was returned.

And so, Dabi joined them.

The man took one look at Dabi and asked him what he wanted instead.

“The monster special! // Put the weird white powder in his!”

“I don’t put any white powder in my ramen!” the man yelled right back.

Midoriya leaned to the side to avoid a stray wooden chopstick that the standowner chucked at Twice and missed terribly. From the casual way he whipped his phone out to check on something or another, this was clearly a normal occurrence.

Dabi, silent like ash, took the seat next to Deku and waited for the ramen.

It didn’t taste nearly as delicious as Twice and Midoriya made it look. They were blowing on the noodles, panting hard and taking large gasps of air between obscenely loud slurps. Dabi rolled his eyes, but calmly finished his noodles.

“It’s good, right?” Twice asked, leaning over Midoriya while their employer leaned backwards to get the cash for their meal out. “Of course it’s good! I was so surprised when this shabby place-”

“-Hey!-” the stand owner shouted back.

“-actually had good food!” the blond continued back. “// I’d rather die than eat this shit again!”

“It was fine,” Dabi shrugged back.

“Don’t be stupid, of course you liked it. You ate it to the last drop!”

Blue eyes snapped to the bowl, as though he didn’t realize it himself.

“C’mon,” Deku said, “We got places to go.”

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“I can’t believe you made me run errands,” Dabi sighed when he returned to their Love Hotel.

Did they go to the other Love Hotels that Twice and Midoriya go to together? Was nothing sacred? He took a deep breath and banished the thought when Dabi tossed him a Gari-Gari-Bar.

“Ooooh, you got the nice one!” he said, “ // I hate it.”

The man didn’t look at him as he plopped down next to their employer. He passed him a soda ice crem, and took one out for himself. Twice could hardly believe it. They got matching ice cream flavors? While he got his own?

Well, he could forgive it. Since Midoriya absently took the treat but didn’t open it. He was too busy looking at something or another on the screen, so Twice would forgive him.

Until, until Dabi leaned over Midoriya’s back to stare at whatever he was looking at on the laptop. If they turned their heads towards each other, their faces would just be inches apart. Twice felt oody cold, and chalked it up to the ice cream. It had been a while since he got convenience store ice cream, since he wasn’t with Midoriya and all.

“Is that next?” Dabi asked.

“Yeah, probably.”

“We should head before the Cranes return then,” he said. “They go to that bar a lot.’

“What?” Midoriya’s head whipped up to him. Their proximity didn’t bother him, though Dabi did lean back a little. “No way, they only go Friday nights. Saturdays are spent in clubs, not bars.”

Dabi shook his head. “They’ve been recruiting aggressively all week. It’s only a matter of time before the heroes come to check it out.”

Midoriya grimaced. “Damn it.”

And Twice didn’t even know that Midoriya could make that expression.

“Give me a second,” Midoriya said, “I have a phone that…”

“On it,” Dabi said, turning back to grab a box of phones that Twice had gathered. He flipped open one of the phones while Midoriya dug around in his bag for some earbuds. He tossed them to the taller man, who wasted no time plugging it in.

They shared a pair of earbuds, while Twice sat in the open closet, staring at them. When did he become the third-wheel?

Midoriya’s hand came up to cup his earbud to his ear. Closing his eyes to listen better, but Twice didn’t see that.

Twice could only focus on how Dabi’s eyes trailed to Midoriya again. Does this guy ever get tired of looking at his employer? Can’t he leave and go get his own somewhere else that wasn’t here? The words sat lodged in his throat, unable to come out.

“...No updates on police channels yet,” Midoriya said, pulling the earbuds out of his ear. “Let me know if something changes. We’re listening for codes 0058 and 7711.”

Dabi rolled his eyes as though this was something Midoriya told him a thousand times before, but didn’t say anything. He kicked back to lean against the pillows on the heart-shaped bed. The two of them, together, sat on the same heart-shaped bed in a Love Hotel. One of Dabi’s leg was bent, resting against Midoriya’s back.

Listening with only one ear in, Dabi’s eyes met Twice’s gaze and he smirked.

His arm, ridiculously long, reached to snag the back of Midoriya’s shirt. He tugged twice and their employer looked over, his eyes flitting from him to the laptop screen on his lap.

“What?” he said quietly.

“C’mere,’ Dabi said, his voice low and smooth.

Midoriya frowned back, his eyebrows furrowed. “No. Get to work.”

He returned to his laptop, missing the way Dabi’s face fell and Twice grinned victoriously.

Trusting Midoriya was always the right decision.

### A Month Break

“So, are you usually this slow?” Dabi asked.

“Huuuh?”

Blue eyes stared at him, bored and emotionless despite the mocking smile hanging on his lips like the silver of a crescent moon. “Hm, no wonder he was so desperate to hire me.”

...Desperate? Oh no, Midoriya wasn’t desperate. Why would he be?

“I got hurt in line of action,” the blond hissed back. “Not all of us know a plastic surgeon like you. // And you’re still ugly so it’s not like it was a good one.”

Dabi snapped his fingers, his fire burning brightly for a brief second before it disappeared. If he heard Twice’s unkind comments, he didn’t even twitch. Right before the blond could say anything, however, he spoke up.

“Hm… okay.”

There was a brief moment of silence, and Twice really hoped that Deku wasn’t getting harassed by a squirrel or something and that wasn’t the reason why he was late. Or if he was, he would get harassed in front of him so he could get it on tape this time.

“So if you get hurt in the line of action, you’ll be gone again, hm?”

And Twice didn’t like this guy.

“Yeah, I just said that. Are you stupid? //Nah, you’re a smart dude.”

Like seriously, could he get any stupider? More likely, it felt like Midoriya was a little interested in his quirk, like he was with Twice. But no matter how interesting it was to have fire, his clone ability was so much more practical for someone like Midoriya. They were perfect for each other.

The faster Dabi figured that out, the better. Or maybe not, since that would mean that he left.

“But if you finished the job with Midoriya, why are you still here?” he asked, remembering what his employer mentioned earlier.

The laugh that left Dabi was like broken glass shards.

“You don’t even know what contract I signed with him, do you?”

Twice stopped. It was like the whole world was slowing down. A contract? That Midoriya? Who was in debt and picking up coins off the streets but always covering Twice’s bill and leaving a substantial amount of tip? He hired another man? He hired someone who was thin and long and had a criminal record?

“No way,” he gasped.

It was strange to think that someone with a quirk like Dabi’s blue fire could be so cold, but the man in front of him was like a glacier. From his ice blue eyes to his sharp grin, it was a warning that anything that comes close will crash and sink. Twice couldn’t believe it.

“You’re a prostitute?”

Dabi’s grin fell.

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“...Ouch! // That feels good!”

Midoriya sighed back, and dabbed a little harder. “Good.”

“Waaah! Midoriya, you don’t mean that! // Oh baby, you know I like it harder.”

Unlike usual, however, Midoriya didn’t have his usual exasperated smile. Instead, the young man had a firm frown as he cleaned up and wrapped Twice’s arm with great care and caution. As always, he treated Twice carefully and gently, like he was valuable and fragile. Yet, there was something different about this.

“...What did you do to him?” Midoriya asked quietly.

“Eh?”

Twice felt his heart slip into his gut.

“W-What do you mean? Me? What would I say? Why-”

“Because Dabi isn’t someone that would lose control over his fire like that,” Midoriya explained gently. “Please tell me exactly what happened so I can figure out what his fuselight is so that this never happens again?”

Vaguely, Twice thought that it was unfair that even now, even in their dirty world between alleyways and blackmailing businessmen, people with flashy and powerful quirks were still treated differently than the rest of them. He clenched his jaw tightly before he caved. More than how much he didn’t like Dabi and the situation, he wanted Midoriya to look at him favorably. Because he was his employer, obviously.

“I just wanted to know what kind of contract you signed with him? He made… He made it sound like you and he had a different contract than what we had.”

“...He’s commission,” Midoriya explained. “I pay him by the job. I pay you by the week.”

Twice nodded, because that made since but something about this whole thing made his stomach twist uncomfortably.

“So you won’t fight about this anymore, right?”

“He started it!”

Midoriya kneeled down in front of him, took his now bandaged hand into his, and looked up at Twice. Meeting his eyes, the blond thought it was so incredibly unfair that Midoriya could do this to him even though he couldn’t do the same to him in response.

“Please, Jin, promise me you won’t fight about this anymore.”

But that wasn’t fair. Of course it wasn’t fair. And the words caught inside of Twice’s throat because he and other-him couldn’t get it out in time.

“Jin?”

“Alright, fine,” Twice sighed, standing up and shaking Midoriya off of him. He couldn’t believe this. He couldn’t believe himself. He was Twice! He was a one-man team! He was never alone and he was never lonely. He didn’t need this job. He never needed this job.

Midoriya needed him. That’s why he signed on. But now there was another guy. There was another guy because Midoriya needed him? Because Twice wasn’t enough? What happened in a month?

There was too much about this going on, but Twice gave his word. He’d finish out this contract. He’d finish out this job. He didn’t want to, but he could do it.

Midoriya went out to buy more medicine and supplies for him and his arm when he realized that Dabi singed him in the three minutes he was in the bathroom. Their whole schedule was pushed back because Midoriya prioritized Twice and his health over the job. So that much couldn’t have changed in a month, right?

He’ll believe that. He’ll hold onto that.

Midoriya said that Dabi was going to be temporary. When was ‘temporary’ over? He didn’t know, but his job wasn’t to ask questions.

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“Ossan! This tastes so good! // Bleh, awful!”

### Smoking

“Hey, Jin, do you mind if I grab a smoke?” Midoriya asked, coming up next to him.

He doesn’t even hesitate, and he’s reaching into his pocket before he knows what he’s doing. “Oh, you smoke now? // This will give you cancer,” He flicked the box out of habit and one slid out perfectly. It took him weeks to get this down to a skill.

The young man, clearly exhausted from whatever it was that he came from, gave a wilting smile. From the way Dabi just slumped in the barstool closest to the door, it -must have been pretty bad. His hands were covered in ash, and gave a little huff as he came closer. In fact, he came a lot closer than Twice thought he would.

“Yes, if you could believe it. The Anikis all say that it’ll make me more manlier.”

“Nah, but you’ll just never run the same again,” Twice replied back, extending his open case to Midoriya so he could take the offered stick. “But, I guess you’re already hooked. // Unhooking is so easy!”

And then, to everyone’s shock, the young man leaned in to take the cigarette directly into his mouth from the case. One of Midoriya’s hand came to the bar and the other hand came to the back of Twice’s chair. He leaned in until his chest nearly knocked into his shoulder. Twice’s eyebrows shot up, and he could feel the heat of Dabi’s gaze from across the bar.

“Thanks,” Midoriya said, hands going into his pants pocket and pulling out his lighter. He lit it up and took a deep breath, looking like a seasoned vet than a kid who started smoking last week. He relaxed as he took the drag in and exhaled upwards.

He watched the smoke trail up to the ceiling before it dispersed under the wind of the spinning ceiling fan. Twice couldn’t pull his eyes from that scene, and for a moment, everything was quiet except the sound of Midoriya exhale.

“Alright, we’ll go through the rest of the footage after this smoke.”

Twice stared at his cigarette pack, uncertain what he was feeling. He looked at Dabi, unable to place a word at the expression on the Cremator's face.

So, like he always did now when he didn’t want to think about something that had no answers, he turned back to Midoriya and waited for instructions. The young man gave him a smile, small and gentle, and he grinned back.

“My apartment has this huge roach! I keep trying to kill it but it won’t die! // I named him Calamari!”

“Please don’t eat that.”

### Caught

“...Dabi?” Twice squinted as the man walked in. He walked around and undid the handcuffs on him.

The blond couldn’t believe it. Dabi was a contender for Top 10 Most Likely to betray the group. Why was he here?

Dabi’s blue eyes stared at him. “Because he asked me too. You coming?”

“How come you stayed?”

Standing before him wasn’t the Cremator. Standing before him wasn’t the person who personified death and fire. Right now, in front of him, there wasn’t someone who was bored.

It was Dabi, who shrugged back as his eyes narrowed.

“Because I’m bored,” he said.

Twice couldn’t find the words to describe the feeling that Dabi brought out in him. He couldn’t quite grasp the terminology that explained the ruthless fire that sprouted out and incinerate every single person that they encountered here.

“Wowwie,” Twice whispered, “You’re pissed-”

Dabi turned back and back-handed him with a turn of his heel. To the blond’s shock, his face didn’t melt off or ashen or even catch on fire. This guy had impeccable control over his fire. And looking at the ashen remains of the people that dotted the floors, that was scary.

“I’m not pissed,” Dabi said. His voice was as relaxed and bored as Twice always remembered hearing, but the look in his eyes promised a swift death. “I’m bored.”

He turned back on his heel, wasting no time to kill everything that they ran into and bursting all the doors down. It took Twice a moment, but there was a brief second where Dabi’s eyes swept through the room before he burned everything away and moved on. This guy was looking for something.

The screams that echoed through the corridors evaporated with their bodies.

“Midoriya really knows how to pick them,” he sighed.

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They burst the door down in an instant. It was the only time Twice felt actual gratitude for Dabi.

“Midoriya!” he shouted when he ran in. “You alive? // You dead?”

His boss, who he had just seen, who he had promised to protect, nodded at them. He was gagged by some dirty rag, his arms were tied behind his back with rusty chains and to the pole in the middle of the room. One of his ankles was shackled to another pole across the way, making sure that it was always extended. Twice felt the processes in his brain slow down as he took in the sight of Midoriya’s shirt torn open down the middle, his missing pants, and the collection of purple marks decorating his skin.

“...I’m going to kill all of them,” the blond decided.

“Not if I get them first,” Dabi replied back, turning on his heel and back out the door.

Midoriya tried to say something, and Twice immediately reached over.

“Oops, lemme get that for ya boss. // Can’t wait to hear your sweet voice again.”

And as soon as the gag was off, Midoriya looked up at Twice, as though Twice had done something good and amazing, and gave him a kind smile. His shoulders relaxed, his green eyes warmed up like spring grass under the afternoon sun, and he said.

“Thank you for coming for me.”

Something inside of Twice that he didn’t know he had ached. Without thinking much about it, he leaned in to smash their lips together.

“Guwaah?”

Leave it to Midoriya to have the most unattractive sounds when he’s being kissed. Or at least, there wasn’t anything attractive about it, but Twice wanted more. He wanted so much more. He tilted his head and forced his tongue into Midoriya’s mouth. Greedily, his tongue swept through as though he was about to consume Midoriya.

The touch made him hot, hotter than the sun, and adrenaline coursed through his bones. The image of smeared ash and the sound of dying screams haunted him, but all that could vanish in an instant because he could taste the takoyaki of their midnight snack inside of Midoriya’s mouth.

“J-Jin…!”

He wanted that again.

“W-wait, Jin! Stop-”

No, no, Midoriya meant go. He meant.

“Jin!”

He jerked.

“What?! // I don’t wanna wait any longer!”

“Jin, it’s cold. I’m half-naked in a metal tin of a warehouse. Get me out of these,” he shook the shackles on his ankle, and wriggled his arms, “first, okay?”

Which, in Jin’s mind, translated into something else.

“Oh, you want to touch me too?” he said. “Yeah, that makes sense. // I think you’re hot tied up.” Still, he kept one of his hands to Midoriya’s face before he pulled away. The large collection of keys that Dabi tossed his way after leaving would be of great use right now...

“Jin,” Midoriya said as soon as he was released. “I’m glad you’re okay.” He placed his hand on Twice’s knee and his other hand to cup his face.

The blond purred as he leaned into the touch, already puckering his lips to kiss him again.

However, Midoriya didn’t notice, as stars appeared in his eyes. “But this guy told me everything! We got a lot of information on the Murasaki’s.”

-

“So… they didn’t force themselves on you?” Twice asked, inching closer. “I mean, one of them had tentacles, you know? And your shirt’s all ripped up. I best they were like animals. Was it gang-bang? // I could do all of that, too! I might need some help with the tentacles but Dabi knows a great plastic surgeon-”

“Jin, they just smacked me around a little,” Midoriya said, cutting him off with a mildly disturbed expression on his face. “And you need to stop watching so much hentai.”

“It’s not hentai if their feelings are real! // I’ll show you real hentai!”

“Oh Jin,” Midoriya sighed back.

Walking around them, looking mildly annoyed, Dabi shrugged off his long overcoat and placed it over Midoriya’s shoulders. The casual way he did it looked so cool that Twice wanted to hit him.

“Okay, so I did all the heavy lifting,” he announced, motioning to the warehouse that was burning down behind him. “And I let one of them go as you ordered.”

“Thank you,” Midoriya said, His hands came up to hold the jacket closer to him. It completely engulfed him, much like Twice would, if he could just get his arms around him…

“But this is going to cost you extra,” Dabi said, a smirk twisting on his lips.

“I’m… sure,” Midoriya sighed. “But, wasn’t it exciting? I haven’t ever seen you that panicked.”

Dabi wasted no time in swatting Midoriya over the head, “Don’t push it. I’ll fine you for harassment.”

Midoriya laughed quietly, a small puff of air that Twice wanted to taste in his mouth. His eyes trailed to the warehouse and then back to the other two.

“C’mon, I wanna get something to eat before I go back.”

“Aren’t your… people going to say anything about you?” Dabi asked.

“If they do, come live with me. // Eloping is romantic!”

“As long as I pay them back, I really don’t think they care,” Midoriya deadpanned.

### (summer) Altogether Now

This was… different.

He called himself Compress, a man who was graciously saved by the devil himself from the pits of hell. Apparently, someone took an interest in him, and had bought out his entire debt in exchange for an evening together. It was a type of story that usually resulted in a tragedy, but the guy sounded so genuinely excited about it that Twice managed to keep his mouth shut.

Also because he wasn’t really paying attention at all, and was instead keeping his eyes darting on the clock to his phone and then to Kurogiri impatiently.

It was Thursday. Midoriya never asked to meet up on Thursday.

The bar door jingled and he turned and right next to him, Compress shot up to his feet.

“My lord, Midoriya-san!”

“Ah, Compress. Please, Midoriya’s fine.”

“Then, Midoriya-san!”

The young man gave an exasperated sigh, Twice’s exasperated smile that he wasn’t giving him, to the stranger. “Well. I suppose that’s better.”

Again, Twice felt that sinking feeling. It seemed to just get worse and worse as he eyed the two behind his employer. He recognized Patchwork there, but not Scaley behind him. He had light purple hair and green scales, and a lizard-like face. In a white hoodie and black jacket, jeans and sneakers, and a face that looked like he had made a wrong turn somewhere and was regretting all of his life decisions, he looked like he was going to pass out right then and there.

“...Another newcomer?” Dabi asked, half a step behind him with a disinterested look on his face, “We just got this lizard here, too.”

Compress was nearly vibrating where he stood, barely managing to keep himself under control, and Midoriya turned away from him to look at Dabi behind him. “His name is Spinner, Dabi. At least pretend to get along during shifts, okay? We’re going to get a little busy.”

“Are we?” Spinner, the lizardman who looks like he was going to faint, asked breathlessly.

In that moment, the ashen-haired statue that normally stood next to Kurogiri walked out of the back, in black jeans and a sweatshirt. He yawned before he surveyed the room. “...At least those crazy bitches aren’t here.”

“Toga-chan and Magne are running late, Shigaraki-san,” Midoriya replied back, eyes gliding over his phone screen. “It’s fine, I want to double check my data before we run into this.”

Who?

It was clear, the tension, the confusion, as everyone kept looking at each other and then to Midoriya.

“Midoriya, are you here?”

The door swung open, and a blond girl with double buns on her head came running in. She squealed at the sight of Midoriya and ran for him, her arms extended.

In an instant, there was a flash of blue as Dabi stood in front of him, and Shirgaki pulled a glove off to reach for her and Midoriya grabbed them both by their shirt. Looking at them, Twice didn’t know where he should even stand.

“It’s fine,” he said, tugging at them. He turned to the young girl, “I’m glad you came, Toga-chan.”

“Ara? Are these your boys?” she asked, “Kya~ I didn’t know I was going to be joining your harem! Ne, let’s cut them up, okay?”

Spinner spluttered and Twice’s eyebrows shot up.

“...Harem?” Shigaraki repeated and Dabi shot him a look.

Midoriya sighed, “It’s not a harem, Toga-chan,” he replied back, as though this was a conversation that he has had many times before. “They’re my employees, and your new team.”

“...Whoa, whoa,” Dabi turned around, “Team?”

The green-haired man nodded, “Working in a team will help cover all our bases. And it’ll make it easier for me if everyone knows each other.”

The door swung open and a large man walked into the room. He looked at the bar, and when his eyes landed on Midoriya, grinned.

“Mou, Midoriya, I thought you were going to come and pick me up from the train station. I was waiting there for so long for you!”

“Sorry about that, Magne-nee,” Midoriya replied and Twice choked on his spit because it wasn’t a man?

At that, Midoriya put his phone back into his pocket and clapped his hands together. He was easily the smallest person here, but gathered the attention of everyone at the bar in a second.

“Everyone, I know that it’s exciting to meet each other for the first time, but we have to prepare for a big job this week. If it all goes well, we’re all getting a bonus,” he said.

Twice remembers a time when Midoriya could only carry himself with confidence when someone was standing behind him. He thought back to those moments, and now he’s standing opposite of him as he begins his explanation on the job for the week.

The only thing that hasn’t changed is how focused his eyes looked.

He looked around the room at the other people, unable to find his voice. What about him? Had he changed? He must have, if Midoriya had brought in all these people.

He shook those thoughts out of his head. Midoriya trusted them.

That was enough for Twice.

### Festival

“Ooooh! Look! Look!” Twice tore the paper off the wall and thrust it into his boss’s face. “They got festivals here and stuff! // Betchu it’s gonna be lame!”

“Hm, shall we go? We only got to see the fireworks from afar last time, didn’t we?”

The blond jerked to a stop, turning to Midoriya and looked wholly confused.

“I uh…”

He stared at his employer for a moment longer, and seeing his calm expression, closed his mouth and nodded curtly. The memory of flashing lights and a weight on top of him made his entire body run hot and his mouth dry.

“Yeah, that sounds great.” He took a deep breath and grinned back, “Yosh! I’m sure the others have no lives so let’s invite everyone! // They’re all going to die alone!”

“...No,” Midoriya said, dragging his eyes up from his chest to his eyes. “Just the two of us.”

And how could Twice ever say no?

### Giran’s Worries

“...Jin, you look better,” he said suddenly.

Twice looked up from his drink to his friend. He looked at his casted arm and then back at the man, “Uh… Really? Thanks? // I feel like shit.”

The other man stared at him, and despite his compliments, does not smile. He stared for a longer moment and then he looked back to his hands.

“No, seriously,” he said, “You… and that other you, have gotten more unified in what you’re saying. I noticed it before when you were on a job, and I always thought that if I had something that you could really focus on, you wouldn’t need to have such a headache anymore.”

Twice’s breath caught in his throat at the admittance.

“So you introduced me to a kid with a huge debt…”

“I… never thought that he would be able to pay it off, and you at the same time,” Giran said simply, taking a drag from his cigarette. “He went way above my expectations.”

Twice squished down the surge of pride he felt, but it must have shown because the look Giran gave him was absolutely withering.

“... Just be careful,” he said. “Jin, you’re a little fucked in the head, but you’re not actually a bad guy. We’re friends, so I’m going to say this, but you gotta be a little more careful okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, I haven’t gotten in a fight like that in a while but-”

“Not about that,” Giran said, shaking his head, “But that Midoriya guy… He’s the type that invites trouble in and tames it. And I’m just scared that you’re going to give all of yourself to him.”

The blond laughed outright at that. “Midoriya? No way, he’s the one that doesn’t belong, you know. He’s such a good kid, always trying to save people that he has no business talking to and stuff. You should be worried about him, you know? I feel like as soon as I take my eyes off of him, he’ll find himself in another bad patch.”

Just thinking about the previous weekend when they tried to have a picnic at the park at midnight and ended up in the middle of the largest drug transaction made him giggle. That was fun, and they made bank that night.

“... That’s the thing.” Giran said, “Jin, you’re a big boy, so I don’t want to tell you how to live your life, but… Guys like Midoriya never last. They either die naive or they become what’s hunting them. Eat or be eaten. But Midoriya? He’s exactly the same as he was before, if a little smarter.”

“Giran, stop beating around the bush. What’s it that you really want to say?

Twice didn’t want to throw their friendship out the window because of Midoriya, but he had his limits. He was sick of people always putting Midoriya down, when the man only propped other people up. Just yesterday, Spinner even offered to light his cigarette. They were pretty much best friends.

“...There’s a lot of rumors about him,” he said, “It’s gotten even worse now that Dabi’s entered the stage, and that other guy… Shigaraki? They’re really making a name for themselves on the streets. Jin, if you’re not careful, there’s going to be a fate worse than death waiting for you if you carelessly enter the fray.”

“...Sounds good,” Twice replied back with a nod. He flashed a big grin to the man, “It’s better to go out with a bang, isn’t it?”

Giran stared at him for a moment longer, clearly not convinced.

“Alright,” he said, nodding, “I’ll take your word for it.”

“...Don’t sweat it Giran, we both know that guys like us don’t live long anyways. What’s wrong with living how we want to?”

Giran took another drag, and neither brought this up again.

### 

### Clone (2)

“...Midoriya, how do you do it?”

“...Hm…?”

Midoriya slowly lifted his head up from the files and rubbed his face tiredly.

“What’s up?”

He asked clearly despite how hard it seemed to even keep his head up at this point.

Twice’s lips twitched at the sight that he’s gotten so familiar with, but couldn’t let this go.

“My clones are… almost perfect copies. They are identical to the original piece. So… How do you always know which one is the ‘Real’ me?”

Midoriya blinked his eyes really slowly, and Twice watched as they focused on his face. Had his gaze always felt so sharp?

“...I don’t know,” he said, shrugging. “I just… have a really good gut feeling.”

It was the same answer he always got, and he just couldn’t accept it. It was hard to. Midoriya was a smart guy, so Twice was so certain that there was something that he could pinpoint on, and he would be able to explain this to him, too.

More importantly, if Midoriya could see and recognize something like this, there was a good chance that someone else could too. Someone, no matter how many copies and clones he has, will be able to find him, the original. This could devastate their plans, but looking at Midoriya, he doesn’t get why he has to explain to him that this is a bad thing.

“Jin,” Midoriya’s soft voice broke through his head, and the use of his first name brought him into hyper-focused attention immediately. His eyes traced Midoriya’s face, the split lip, the bruise on his jaw, and then his eyes flickered to those clear green eyes. “I… I understand that you’re worried that someone can pick you out in a crowd of yous, but you don’t have to worry about that.”

He frowned, turning around and a little surprised that he needed to explain it at all, but the smile on Midoriya’s face stopped him.

“I’ll protect you,” he said.

“...I was hired to protect you,” Twice replied back, unsure what to do with the dizzying amount of warmth inside of him, “Remember that?” In these moments, when it was just Midoriya and Jin, and he said things like this that made him feel too much all at once, he doesn’t think he’ll ever be able to be anywhere else. “What do you think you’re doing? // I’m not ready to be fired.”

Midoriya laughed back, a bright sound.

“Fire you? I could never,” he said. “If you leave me, I don’t think I’ll ever get over it.”

Twice’s heart stuttered for a moment, betraying him, and he sighed dramatically instead.

“As long as you understand that we’re going to be stuck together for the foreseeable future.”

With that, he gave a big yawn and promptly returned to his nap.

-

Twice thinks that, if he had met Midoriya a long time ago, he would have never doubted himself. He would have never come to this.

“I like Midoriya,” he admitted, “I like being with him. I like who I am with him. I feel that, as long as I’m with him, I don’t care what I have to do or who I have to be.”

Because, for the first time in a very, very, very long time, Bubaigawara Jin feels whole.

“But why,” Kurogiri sighed, “Are all of you telling ME this?”

“You’re like our getaway bar,” Twice said. “One of us without being one of us. //Like a double-agent!”

“That’s not what that word means.”

Which was fine, because Midoriya was the guy who took care of those kinds of things.

## Kurogiri -

One day in between one tab and another, his window shatters, his blinds break, and a young man is literally thrown into his room.

“Augh…” the young man groaned as he slowly rolled onto his side.

He was bleeding all over his floor, and shocked, Shigaraki Tomura did nothing but stare back.

As far as he was concerned, this was the first person he has seen in years.

“Shigaraki, is everything alright?”

Kurogiri’s voice sounded from the other side of the door. He opened his mouth and then closed it. He hadn’t needed to speak in so long, that for a moment. Shigaraki didn’t think he knew how to.

“...Shigaraki, I’m coming in,” he said, and forced his way into the room.

### Little steps

These days, Shigaraki has shown up to work.

Kurogiri was shocked the first time, but it wore off quickly when he saw Shigaraki’s lazy way of working. He wiped down glasses and washed supplies. And of course, that meant he never left the bar, leaving Kurogiri to still go and wipe down the tables and glass as needed. He never helped with the setting up or taking down at the beginning or end of the night.

However, he has seen Shigaraki more this week than he has in the two years Shigaraki had holed up in that room of his above the bar. He has yet to decide whether or not this was a good thing, since he frequently gets in the way, doesn’t make eye-contact (or any contact actually) with anyone, and scares away some of their less-violent-prone customers. However, whenever he thinks about saying something, he remembers his old friend and keeps it on the inside.

Patience, he thinks to himself. Shigaraki was finally recovering so he must be patient.

The door cracked open, and the bell rang to signal that they had a new customer. A welcome distraction, even if a little early and they weren’t completely set up yet. No matter.

“Welcome, ah… Midoriya.”

It was subtle, and if Kurogiri was a lesser, unobservant man, he wouldn’t have noticed the way Shigaraki stopped wiping the glass. But as always, as soon as <Midoriya> was mentioned, Shigaraki lifted his gaze just a little bit.

He doesn’t know what the white-haired man sees, and it's not like he would ever get an answer if he asked. He pretended that he didn’t know what was going on.

“Ah, good evening Kurogiri-san. Do you need any help?”

Kurogiri suppressed a laugh, “So that I’ll allow you to to loiter here without buying anything?”

“Nothing gets by you, huh?”

The mist man, despite himself, chuckled back. He couldn’t help it. Just a few months ago, he would have said that someone as kind and as honest as Midoriya would have been eaten up and spat out.

As it was, the kid’s eyes remained as bright as they were when he first came in, and was amassing an undeniable strength.

“Get mopping. We’re already open.”

“Yes sir!”

Midoriya was a thousand times more helpful than Shigaraki, who was still wiping the same glass he was ten minutes ago.

-

### Shira v Dabi

“Good evening,” Midoriya’s voice, as always, carried in as soon as he walked in but today was a little different.

By his side, instead of Twice, was another man.

He shuffled in, silent and confident, barely a foot behind Midoriya. The sight of him had the bar silenced and focused in a heartbeat. Moreso of the man, it was his scars that confirmed who he was. Just the sight of him made Kurogiri’s mist to fray around a little and his eyes narrow.

“Welcome back, Midoriya-kun,” Kurogiri called out with a calm that could only come from a lifetime of dealing with unpredictable and volatile things, and gave a polite nod to his patron, “And I see you brought in someone new.”

Dabi, the Cremator.

Where he walked, nothing but ashes would remain. For every person that hated him, there was a trail of ashes and a grin on a face made of nightmares. He was known for those scars, his color disfigurement and the stitches that held it all together, and in terms of street-danger level, he sat near the top.

Run on sight, and if you’re lucky, he won’t even notice you.

“Ah, Twice is taking the night off,” Midoriya replied back, like he was explaining to the man about the weather. “This is Dabi-san. He’s my guard for the night.”

“I see. I wasn’t aware that Twice needed to take nights off. Well, no matter, I will save his drink for the next time. Nice to meet you, Dabi-san,” Kurogiri said with impeccable manners as always. However, he wondered if the young man could set fire to him and his bar faster than he could open a portal to send him away. At the thought of his portal getting singed, he hoped that he never needs to find out. “I would like to remind you both to keep the fights out of the bar.”

“Of course, Kurogiri-san,” Midoriya replied back. He turned to the man behind him, a hesitant look on his face, “Do you want anything?”

Dabi’s eyes looked around the bar, relaxed despite the tension before his eyes fell back to the younger man he followed in, “This is a waste of time.”

The young man gave a nervous laugh back, and shot a look to the bartender, who pretended that he wasn’t looking. “We’ll leave soon, then,” he said, like he wasn’t the boss in the relationship. He turned to Kurogiri and pulled his thin planner out. He opened it and pulled out a small photo, “Sorry to cut to the chase, but have you seen this before?”

Kurogiri leaned in to stare at the photo. It was a small calico, in the arms of a young child, but the face was cut off. From it, he can be certain that Midoriya was asking about the cat.

“There’s a lot of strays all around,” he said, “Between alleys nearby restaurants will be your best bet. You finding lost pets now?”

“Aren’t I always?” Midoriya replied back. He looked at the picture for another moment and gave a sigh as he put it back into his pocket. “Thanks, though, Kurogiri-san. See you later,” and right before he left, his eyes found Shigaraki’s figure.

The young man was holding his rag to the glass, but wasn’t moving. In all honesty, he might as well have been a statue. A really ugly, poorly proportionate, scarred and slouched statue that may serve better as a scarecrow or gargoyle than anything else.

“...Have a good night, Shigaraki-san.”

“...You too.”

Kurogiri, if he had one, would have choked on his tongue and died in that moment, out of sheer shock.

It had been five long years since he had heard his voice. He whipped around to Midoriya, but the young man and the strange guy he was with, was already out the door.

### Shira’s Graduation

And just when Kurogiri thought he was finally accustomed to Midoriya and the changes he brought into his life, he was proven so, so, so wrong.

“Kurogiri-san, we’re here!”

These days, his regulars aren’t here to drown their sorrows away. These days, his regulars aren’t people who are stuck in a tragedy and diving in deep to the next one. In fact, these days, his regular was a young boy who can’t even legally drink, and the strange assortment of rotting corpses he hauled in with him.

Today, they’re all there.

Dabi, looking like he would rather be anywhere but here, Toga eagerly snuggling Midoriya’s arms in between her ample assets, Midoriya and his embarrassed flush, and Compress was humming something this and that, practicing a variety of card tricks next to Dabi towards the back. Twice, who was carrying a box like it was the world’s greatest treasure.

That better not be another bomb.

The door pushed open and Shigaraki walked in.

“Hey,” he said as a greeting. He walked around the bar and immediately, Twice put the box on the counter so he, Toga, and a reluctant Midoriya, could form a circle around him and skip merrily around him. “Stop that,” he said without any energy.

What was going on.

“Congratulations!” Midoriya said, his laughter bright and genuine whereas the other two with him sounded more deranged even after they disentangled from each other.

“...Congratulations?” Kurogiri repeated back.

Dabi slid into one of the barseats, and despite how far he was from the festivities at the other side of the bar, looked more relaxed than he had ever seen him. “Scotch,” he said, quick to get down to business as always.

“Midoriya-kun’s tab?”

Dabi nodded, it was a formality between the two, but Kurogiri was never good at breaking habits.

“Yeah, I can’t believe they’re making it such a big deal though. It’s just graduation.” the man said.

“Ah, I see, Shigaraki-kun graduated,” Kurogiri nodded, and then, as the words registered in his head, spun around, “Graduated?”

“Ah, I forgot to tell you,” Shigaraki said. He lifted his bare hand threateningly and Twice dropped Midoriya’s hand so that he could leave their stupid circle. The man left the room for a couple of moments and came back with a crumpled piece of paper. He handed it to the bartender. “I graduated.”

Kurogiri took the paper gingerly in his hand. He flattened it against the counter and, if he were capable of it, would have started crying.

To think that, this Shigaraki, after all this time, would go and get a certification that he completed high school. He gaped in absolute, awestruck amaze. It was a little annoying to think that he had gotten to abide by the societal norms and got a fucking GED but he did something. He did something, worked with a goal in mind, and achieved it.

He thought about how often Shigaraki was leaving at night. He always assumed and believed that Midoriya was the cause of it, and while he was right, he never thought that it would be like this. And working so hard on trying to process this, he missed the joyous celebration on the other side of the bar.

“So, what are you going to do now?” Toga asked, “Go to college?”

“Eat the cake, the cake!” Twice cheered back, “C’mon Kurogiri, we gotta break out the big guns tonight! // I’ll kill all you bitches who try to eat my cake!”

“Wait, I want my shot first,” Dabi replied back, though he didn’t look nearly as annoyed as he sounded.

The door swung open, “Sorry we’re late,” Spinner called out.

“Oh! Shigaraki! Congratz on being a nerd!” Magne called out, blowing kisses all along the way, “I’m so proud of you!”

Shigaraki shot Midoriya a look as he ducked behind him in an effort to avoid everyone. The young man shrugged back, “The more the merrier.”

“Augh,” the man sighed back. He looked at their empty hands, “I just graduated, where are my gifts.”

“Don’t be so callous,” Spinner replied back, “Our good wishes are more than enough for you.”

“But if you want to join me in the bedroom, I won’t mind,” Magne added, giving him a wink. “You can graduate properly.”

Shigaraki, instead of disintegrating them on the spot or yelling or fighting, just snorted back and rolled his eyes. Kurogiri wondered who this was.

“Yeah, whatever. You don’t get any cake.”

“Noooooo, you don’t mean that,” Mange pouted back, and then eyed the box, “Oh wow, you guys really went all out for this huh?”

“What do you mean?” Shigaraki frowned.

“That’s the expensive cake store down the-”

“Waaaaah!” Midoriya yelled out, sudden and loud, startling all of them. He blinked, and realizing that he had all of their attention, turned to the man next to him, “A-Anyways, instead of just staring, why don’t we just get started, right? Uh, ahaha, what are you planning to do now, Shigaraki?”

He gave pleading eyes to Magne, who gave a predatory smile back. He paled, but Shigaraki scowled.

“Jeez, it’s always about the next shit with you guys. I’m not going to go to college, I have no way of paying for it and I hate people,” he said, missing Midoriya’s sigh of relief as the attention focused back to him. “So I was thinking that I’ll just work here for now and eventually get back to Giran or the Doctor’s side.”

“I thought you wanted to be a villain?” Midoriya asked, “And destroy all the heroes?”

The man stared at him for a long, long moment, and Kurogiri felt something click into place when he looked away.

“...Yeah, I’ll get to that eventually. But I don’t think that’s what Sensei wanted me to do.”

“What did he want you to do?”

Shigaraki stared at Midoriya really hard, like if he just stared at the young boy long enough, he would have an answer. He didn’t get what he wanted though and looked away. He scratched at his neck a little as he gave a quiet, “I’m figuring that out.”

Midoriya tugged on his sleeve, as though to remind him not to scratch at his neck and the man scowled back.

Kurogiri felt something tighten in his chest. “Ahem,” he said to his fist, “Your scotch,” he said, giving Dabi his drink as he pulled a knife out, “and the knife for the cake.” He opened a gate and pulled out his nice plates, knowing that they will all be broken before the end of the night, but didn’t mind it. It would be wrong to use anything else for the occasion. “Ready?”

“Yay! Cake!”

“Ohhh, about time,” Dabi said, happily downing the alcohol.

“You know, you probably should have told him first,” Midoriya said quietly to the man next to him.

“...I wanted to surprise him,” Shigaraki said. He shrugged, “It’s funnier.”

“Tomura-kun,” Kurogiri said, lifting the plate with a modest slice of cake on it towards him, “Congratulations.” He hoped that the young man could feel it, his pride, his joy, his warmth, through a single word. He wasn’t as adept at the whole, being understood by others, like Sensei was, but it also felt like for the first time, time was beginning to move again for them.

Shigaraki stared at the cake, like it was so much more than the pink frosting and vanilla bread, and accepted it into his scarred hands.

“...Yeah… Thanks.”

-

“Midoriya-kun,” Kurogiri called out, quietly and right before he left.

The young man stared at him, his hand still on the door, ready to open it and join the others outside, where they were going to go information-hunting and leave Kurogiri to do his actual job.

He… He hasn’t felt the bitter loneliness of saying goodbye in a very long time. He hasn’t felt the serene type of joy that comes from welcoming someone back in even longer. These are all things that he didn’t even realized that he didn’t have anymore.

“Thank you,” he said, even as he washed the remaining plates they used for cake. The residue frosting came and floated into the sink, stopping right at the drainage. It was disgusting, but right now, he was grateful.

“Eh? Uh, I’m still in school, Shigaraki-san did all of this-”

“No, I mean,” Kurogiri started and took a deep breath. He turned off the water, placed the plates into the sink, he truly wanted to convey to Midoriya that he was genuine. He wanted to convey it properly. “What you brought to him, what you did for him, what you did for me, it…” but how does he explain this into words?

How does he tell Midoriya that he brought something to him that he didn’t think he would ever have again?

“...Thank you. Truly, Midoriya-kun, thank you. I am…” this would be a risk, but when he thinks of how fondly sensei used to speak of Shigaraki, “...I am in your debt.”

Midoriya smiled back, flashing his pearly whites, and said, “Of course, Kurogiri-san, anytime.”

He didn’t get it. Kurogiri was certain that he didn’t get it. Because anyone else, when shown such a vulnerable side to someone else, would have taken advantage of it. It was only natural. The person who showed weakness is always in the wrong, and deserved every ounce of pain the universe sent.

“But at the same time, Kurogiri-san. I’ve been meaning to pay you back, for letting me loiter here and helping me out with everything and stuff anyways. So maybe, we’re even now?”

They weren’t. Not even close. Kurogiri let him stay because he was a shitty customer but not as bad as some of the other shitstains that dragged themselves into his bar. Unlike everyone else, he at least paid his full tab without complaint and always left a 30% tip. And if he could, he would go back in time to beat the shit out of his past self for ever thinking to take advantage and leaving him abandoned on his side to die.

“Is that so?” Kurogiri said, not at all intent on thinking that. “Regardless, let me know if there is anything I can do to help.”

“Yes sir!”

He walked out, a little spring in his step and a nervous smile on his face, and Kurogiri once wondered how long it would take to snuff it out. These days, he hopes with all his heart that it never goes away.

-

“What did Kurogiri want?” Shigaraki asked quietly once they were alone.

Midoriya stared at Shigaraki for another moment, a warm smile gracing his lips.

“Money for the dishes,” he said.

The older man scowled, “Scummy bastard. He shouldn’t have brought them out if he was so scared that they were going to break.”

“Hm, maybe he saw it as an opportunity.”

Shigaraki turned his head to him, a frown stretching on his face.

“You know, getting ready for change so you get rid of some of the old things so you have room for the new?”

“You give him way too much credit. Not everyone is as sentimental about everything as you,” he said.

### Lying

Shigaraki scowled at Kurogiri, “Don’t look at me like that. It’s not like I lied to him.”

“...I didn’t realize you cared if you lied to him,” Kurogiri replied back, returning to wiping the glass.

The younger man’s head snapped to him, his eyes wide, and Kurogiri couldn’t help but think that Midoriya was a dangerous, dangerous man.

Shigaraki didn’t even realize that he didn’t want to lie to him anymore.

## Aizawa

### Smokebreak

Midoriya barely has the cigarette lit and in between his lips when something slaps it out of his hand. It falls pitifully into the puddle on the ground, immediately extinguished. It provides an accurate depiction of his life and he wants to cry.

“It’s illegal for minors to be smoking.”

He looked up and met eyes with a man in all black. He sighed back.

“Surely,” Midoriya started, hoping to express exactly how sick and tired he was about his every day life and how much of a shit storm it can be within two miuntes, “There are real crimes, where people are getting hurt possibly dying, surely, surely those are more important than if a minor smokes, right Eraserhead?”

“Then, you shouldn’t have smoked in a place where you can be easily caught.”

Midoriya scrubbed his face with his hand.

“Isn’t it a little late for you to be out anyways?”

“Maybe you should stop beating around the bush and say what you really want to,” Midoriya snipped back. It probably wasn’t a good idea, since this was Pro Hero Eraserhead they were talking about, and he’s certain that he’ll be taken out before he could even call out for help.

But it was his last cigarette, okay?

He wouldn’t be able to get another case for another day, okay? It was a big fuckign deal to him, alright? No one bought for him and he already pays ridiculously high for these fucking packs but it does take the edge off sometimes, especially when he has to deal with guys like Aizawa.

Sneaky, smart, and strong. The worst fucking combinsation that a person could be. He hated this.

“...I heard you have some information about Present Mic.”

Oh, this must be about the incident at the Red Light District. He didn’t actually have any concrete information, but he has a few cameras that he access to, and second-hand information based on what the other men at homebase were talking about.

“I might,” Midoriya said, “He’s blond, works at UA, ah… your classmate, right?”

He would have to pull his book out back at base for more information. It was rare for anyone to ask about them, but old habits die hard. Extremely hard, because instead of trying to turn tail as soon as a hero came around, he stayed.

What does the hero want? Why do they want it from him? If they want something, isn’t it because they want to better the world? The part of Midoriya that he couldn’t get rid of, the one who diligently collected all of the All Might figurines and decorated his room with the fantasies of becoming a hero and saving people, couldn’t look at Eraserhead and pretend that this didn’t involve him.

But how was he supposed to play this?

“But, I’m honored to think that my information has made it up to you, Eraserhead-san. Might I inquire on where you got your information?”

Smile, Midoriya. Don’t let him see how much this is bothering you. Twice should have realized that something is amiss by now. He’s probably coming, or have sent someone to get you, and now he needs to just wait until he gets here.

“The information you got about the incident last week,” Eraserhead replied back, as though Midoriya didn’t talk at all. He sorta wished that they had better manners, but concerning where they are, he didn’t think that was something he could rely on. “Give me everything you got. People involved, the incident itself, the events leading up to it, the fallout, everything.”

“...There’s going to be a price,” Midoriya replied back. “And my information isn’t cheap.”

Eraserhead sighed back, and rubbed the back of his head, “How annoying. I didn’t want it to come down to this.” He faced back forward and then asked, “How much are we talking?”

The young man blinked back, “And… you’re just going to take me for face-value? Not going to try and beat it out of me instead?”

“...No deal? I want this done as fast as possible.”

“No, no, very deal,” Midoriya stuttered back, getting up to his feet and nearly tripping on the sidewalk. He stumbled forward and although he couldn’t see it, could tell that the older man was judging him hard. Ugh, leave it to Midoriya to have a great opening and ruin it himself.

They exchanged the amount. Eraserhead’s hands stilled when he was told the amount, but it was the same amount that Midoriya would charge anyone for the information that he was going to give. And then, once he confirmed the amount and tucked it away into his jacket smiled back.

He gave the rundown of the situation that happened. He gave time-stamps as needed. Midoriya does not deal incomplete information when his customer has paid in full without any questions. He gave the information that he thinks matches the price. And the silence between them was suffocating when he finished his report.

“Do you need anything repeated?” he asked quietly.

“I’m more impressed at the amount of information that you gave for this amount,” Eraserhead replied back.

“...The amount of information I give is equivalent to the money that I paid. Any extra,” he gave a little smile, “is service.”

“I’m not interested in kids.”

“You were the one who approached me. Take responsibility for that, Hero-san.”

Eraserhead turned forward, his hand shooting out to grab Midoriya by the back of the neck and yanked him closer. Midoriya’s eyes widened comically and his hands flew up to grab Eraserhead’s shirt in an attempt to steady himself.

“...I suppose I did. That doesn't mean you should be tripping over yourself for me, brat,” he said. He took a step back, “thanks for the info. I’ll be around.”

“...Wait,” Midoriya called out, because this was just the easiest way to do it. “I… I have the video feed of it. Lemme know if you would like it. I'm not sure why you need it, but I think I have a good idea. I think I can put it at an affordable rate for you.”

The thing about Eraserhead’s goggles was that Midoriya couldn’t keep pace with him without seeing his eyes. Eyes are the window to the heart and the Pro Hero wasn’t about to let anyone in.

Yet, Midoriya was gaining confidence. This guy wasn't here for information, he was friends with Present Mic and interacted with him on a daily basis. He wasn't looking for information when he could get it from the police.

He was testing Midoriya. So be it. He needed to pass this test. It would give him an in on Pro Heroes. It could bring Eraserhead onto his side. It brought protection and it brought possibility.

It made him helpful to a hero. And if you can't become a hero yourself, this was the next best step right?

“...I’ll let you know if I need it.”

And just like that, he left like Midoriya was never there to begin with.

### Interlude: Aizawa Shota

The price that was given on that day, was the price he paid not for the information he got (and it was very nice report, he wished that his class and Midnight could take heed from it), but the information to learn about Midoriya Izuku.

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“Wow, he must be really interesting,” Yamada stated once Aizawa gave his report. “You’re sitting up straight.”

Aizawa felt his heart stop for just a second.

## Dabi - The Stray Cat

>> After cremation, a human’s ashes will be anything from 3 to 10 pounds. Normally, however, it’s four pounds.

Even though Dabi knows that, he doesn’t think that Midoriya’s heart, burnt down to ashes, could only be four pounds.

### 3rdish meeting

“I don’t care if I live or die,” Dabi said.

“...Really? Oh, that could have fooled me.”

Dabi’s eyes were sharp, but he didn’t grace it with a reply.

“I mean, if you really wanted to die, you would be dead by now. There’s plenty of people gunning for your head, right? Then, the fact that you’re not dead… doesn’t that mean that you want to live?”

Dabi stared at Midoriya for a long second before the fire came out.

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Midoriya blinked slowly, groaning. The sudden blue light was blinding, and nothing hurt initially, but now that he was awake and the adrenaline had left his body, he felt exhausted and hurt. His notes were kept safe, even if his sleeve and fingers weren’t.

From this, however, he learns that Dabi’s kindness is the smell of burnt flesh. His arm is burnt and he’s missing his pinky nails, there’s this tingling sensation that runs up and down his entire being, but he’s alive.

From the look of absolute shock on Dabi’s face, they are both surprised by the turn of events.

And for the first time since Dabi became a stray, he turned around and ran from a fight he had no way of losing.

Midoriya, on the other hand, got on the train for the longest ride of his life.

### 4th

Dabi didn’t think of himself as a shallow or an easy kind of guy. He didn’t trust anyone and no one trusted him. That’s how it’s been for years since he left that forsaken house, and in a place between life and death, Dabi resigned himself to a life of solitude in limbo.

> he didn’t want to die.

>> but he didn’t want to live.

It was a contradiction, and somewhere subconsciously, he was probably always aware of it.

### Hired

“...Is there anything you like in this world?” Midoriya asked quietly.

Dabi thought, really, really hard about that question. He knew that he should have an answer to this, but faced with this question, nothing came to mind. He stared blankly ahead, and in his silence, Midoriya stepped in front of him.

For a guy that once faced his flame, he’s either very brave or very stupid. Dabi was leaning towards the second option.

“...Then,” Midoriya’s voice coaxed him out of his trance. Blue eyes slid to the meet the pair of green across from him. This was the second person that made Dabi ever feel like he <lost> and watched as Midoriya’s lips turned up at the corners. However, rather than calling it a smile, he looked more like he was grimacing. “What do you hate the most in the world?”

Ah, Dabi had thousands of answers for that one. His lips pulled back, baring his teeth because there was only one answer that stood out from the rest.

“Boredom.”

Green eyes shined, and Dabi thinks that something was going to change. No, something had changed from the moment he let this guy go back then, all those weeks ago.

“...I am currently looking for someone to be my bodyguard, The man who usually keeps me safe is currently on-leave, but I have some deals coming up that can’t be rescheduled,” Midoriya said, “I’ll pay you commission, and my job is unpredictable enough that it might just be what you’re looking for. What do you say?”

Dabi has nothing. Some days, he’s convinced he is nothing. Some days, he truly believes that his entire existence is a lie and if he doesn’t wake up one day, he might not even notice.

“...Alright,” he said, because there was nothing else to do, “I’m in.”

“Great, I have a dealing in two hours. So first, let’s get something to eat.”

Midoriya Izuku, he would learn very quickly, is a man on a mission.

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“Hiji-ji!”

“Don’t call me that, you fucking brat!”

Midoriya led him to a ramen stand first. It’s a small restaurant that Dabi has never heard of, but has probably walked by on one occasion or another. He’s certain of this when the old man running the bar that they sit at physically starts at the sight of his face.

His stitches had that effect on civilians. It’s why he was certain that Midoriya, whatever he was, was definitely not a civilian.

“This is my new employee,” Midoriya explained quietly, redirecting the attention to himself, “It’s getting a little chilly and we have to go into a meeting soon, so I figured that we could get something warm to eat before. Thinking like that, the first thing that came into mind was this place!”

The man’s eyes widened, and his chest puffed out with poorly concealed pride.

“Well, I see that your lip service has gotten much better!” he said, booming with laughter, “Don’t think that you’ll get any freebies from me, brat!”

As he said this, they got their food. Midoriya laughed as he sat down, patting the seat next to him as he eyed Dabi before turning back forward.

“Goodness, I just can’t believe…”

“...And I guess that’s just the new fad, kids these days…”

“...Wait, you mean that Matsumoto…”

Dabi sat there quietly, soaking in the sound of someone else’s conversation happening next to him. He hasn’t been this close to an active conversation in a long while, and it struck something familiar inside of him. However, the actual contents in the conversation had him zoning out in seconds. He really didn’t care about needless gossip between storeowners and office workers.

When the ramen comes out, he doesn't think it’s anything special, but perhaps because he hasn’t had ramen in a long time, he thought that it tasted good.

He hasn’t eaten anything that tasted like <something> in a long time.

Midoriya bought the ramen, and if the look on the man’s face is any indication, also threw in a generous tip, and with the promise to see each other again soon, they left.

“...So, where are we going?”

Midoriya pulled one of his phones out, “...Right now? The train station. We don’t have to meet the client until nine, so I should be able to pull at some of the traps before we head out.”

“...Traps?”

The young man next to him gains confidence with every step. It’s not like the street-rat swagger, but the type of confidence that comes with experience. At once, Dabi knew that this man will perform his job with minimal to no mistakes.

He talked a lot, and occasionally loses himself to long-drawn mumbles. Dabi thought it was annoying, but he let the young man go. He’s getting paid for this, after all. Within a couple of steps, he would stop, pull out a planner and jot something down, flip through and checks his notes, and Dabi doesn’t know how someone so smart could be so stupid.

“...If you stand like that, it’s asking to be mugged,” he said.

The kid was smaller than him, thin like the wind could blow him over, and that was saying something since Dabi only ate enough to survive, and he looked up. He tilted his head, like Dabi was the strange one for saying something like that.

“You’re my guard. I’m hiring you to keep me safe.”

Dabi suddenly thinks that this isn’t at all what he signed up for.

“...Don’t make my job any harder than it needs to be,” he said instead. “I might just abandon you.”

“Some guard you turned out to be,” Midoriya scoffed back, as though he was offended by the entire ordeal, but he looked down at his notes and tucked it back into his pocket, “But you’re right. I should be more focused. I just can’t help it. Shine we got here, we’ve been seen by four people but I only recognized one of them. I don’t get lost, so that means that there’s something new here, yknow? I don’t think that our client is someone who can hire someone, but now that I think about it, the percentage change of honey traps in this area has been steadily increasing…”

Ah, he lost him again. At least this time, he kept walking forward, even if he was slowing down, and Dabi wondered if they would ever get to the meeting place.

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Their client was an older man who is too heavy for his clothes, and he sweated like a pig as he prostrated himself in front of Midoriya.

“...I-I’ll give you anything, please.”

“...Anything is such a broad term,” Midoriya replied back, in the same tone he used to gossip about new additions to the menu with the Ramen-Stand owner, “Perhaps you can give me a price instead. What are you willing to do in order to keep this a secret?”

“I… I’ll pay you. I have some money in my savings…”

“How much?”

The man trembled, and Dabi eyed Midoriya from the corner of his gaze. Guys like Midoriya are scary. Most crazy bastards are in it for something, and it’s easy to see. They had this glaze in their eyes when someone broke down in front of them, and they get this bright grin on their face when faced with a large sum of money. These kinds of people are dime-a-dozen and Dabi’s seen plenty of them to know that Midoriya wasn’t one of them.

Midoriya was someone who derived no pleasure in money or pain. He was someone with a quota to meet. No amount of pleading or begging can get his mood, or price, to change.

As it turns out, the man who reached out to him was a cold, cold man.

### Dealing with Twice

“So, why keep him around?” Dabi asked, eyeing Twice.

“Because he’s useful? Because his quirk is convenient? Because I want to?” Midoriya listed. He tilted his head to the side, and looked at Dabi with a smile, “Because it annoys you?”

Dabi rolled his eyes, “Fucking figures. You know, you get more done without him.”

Midoriya actually laughed outright at that, and when realizing who he was talking to, slapped a hand over his mouth. He coughed into his hand and calmed himself down while Dabi reminded himself that he hadn’t been paid yet.

Green eyes shined up at Dabi, “If you really think that, then you’re not nearly as smart as I thought you were.”

Dabi scowled back, and waited for him to take a drink of his water before smacking him upside the head. The young man’s teeth clattered painfully to the rip of the cup, and he spilled a bit of his drink over himself.

He gave Dabi a scalding glare, and Dabi returned it evenly.

“What?” he said, “I won’t know what you’re thinking if you don’t say anything.”

He scowled and the two went back to their meals.

“So, why does it bother you?”

Dabi blew on his rice before shoveling it in his mouth. The only time he ever saw him eat so much food was when he didn’t want to say something. Figuring he wouldn’t get a response, Midoriya sighed as he went back to eating.

Shortly afterwards, he would stop asking Dabi these kinds of questions. He never got an answer.

### Rumormill

There’s a new rumor that followed Dabi around now.

He doesn’t know when, but it must be because of the new crowd that he’s always seen with. People that never talked to him, never interacted with him, feared and ran from him, tentatively meet his eyes now.

But the worst of them all was the whisper that he had been tamed.

Tame? Who, him?

The guy who said that was incinerated into ash. Dabi stared down at his remains impassively.

How stupid. He wasn’t tamable. His fire wasn’t tamable. He wasn’t tamed.

This was just a job. It was more long-term than he was used to, yes, but it was still just a job. This will disappear.

None of these idiots even knew Midoriya. If they did, they would know that guys with eyes as bright as his never lasted. Every moment he spent breathing the same air as them was poisoning his lungs, and unless he turned into a scumbag like them, he would just choke and die.

People in this life had two choices. Turn criminal or turn into a victim. Sometimes, there was no difference.

He entered the bar, maybe he should be more outlandish this time. Maybe he’ll let the job go south on purpose. Maybe he won’t perform as well as he has been, he’ll show them tame.

“Ah, there he is! Dabi-san, are you in the mood for burger or ramen? I want ramen but the burger joint is doing a promo and it’ll be easier to eat on the go.”

“Whatever,” he said, because he doesn’t care. Whatever he ate with Midoriya would probably taste the same, and it’s not like he’s the one that’s going to be paying anyway. “Does it matter?”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment, and he wanted to burn those eyes out because he swore that it was staring right at his mud-tracked soul. But then Midoriya looked down at the papers in his hands and shook his head.

“No, I guess it doesn’t,” he says, and it’s so quiet that Dabi almost missed it.

“...Let’s get ramen,” he said at last, if only so that those eyes turned back to him.

“I knew you would see my side!” he cheered back, beaming with a light different from the fire he created. “Okay, let’s go right now!”

He’s not tame. Dabi has not been tamed.

He’s just… enjoying the stay. He’ll accumulate some funds. He’ll live free as free can be after this. Whenever this ends. He doesn’t think it’ll be anytime soon, since he’s a good employee and Midoriya is actually smart, but he wouldn’t be surprised if all of this ended today. He wouldn’t be.

It didn’t though, of course not. Dabi was thorough when it came to jobs.

### Not the Same

Ever since Dabi made that godforsaken deal, he can’t help but think that nothing has really changed.

He still got up when he wanted to and he still roamed the streets like always. He scared the living shit out of people just by appearing, took great sadistic glee in making them cry and writhe and beg for forgiveness, and cremated everything that stands in his way. It’s nothing new. Nothing had changed.

He eats what he wanted to eat, when he wanted to, but he rarely felt hungry, so he usually doesn’t bother. He had a couple of hiding places for naps, but he wouldn’t ever refer to it as comfortable or home. It wasn’t even a base. He didn’t really have belongings aside from the things that he wore.

He was Dabi, free and uncontrollable like his flames.

It’s just that now, he has a bar that he frequented a little more than the others. There are people there that, as always, eye him warily. Most bars try to get out of giving him alcohol, and Dabi found more joy in making them squirm than any drink in the world.

Kurogiri slid him a shot of scotch as he was walking to the bar. This was a man who was prepared to fight him, and Dabi had a feeling it wouldn’t be worth it.

He arched an eyebrow and the bartender moved to keep wiping dishes.

“He’s not here today,” he said. “He wanted me to let you know that he won’t be here till Thursday.” He motioned at the drink, “He paid for that one, so if you want anything else, you’ll have to pay.”

Dabi nodded back and took the shot. It was rare for someone to pay for his drink, after all. He downed it at one and looked around, there was… nothing else to do. Now that he thought about it, all of his days and emotions were beginning to run right back to the same person, his new employer, and the inevitable dumb shit he was going to be dragged around to do.

Well, it was better than being bored.

“...What day is it?” he asked.

While he hasn’t forgotten how time works, he has long since stopped keeping track of it.

“...Tuesday.”

He tipped his head back. Usually, he sees Midoriya once or twice a week, but he missed him last week and it looked like this week was no good either. He stood up, irritated for the first time in weeks, and Kurogiri spoke up.

“If you burn my bar down, you’ll never see him again.”

The fire at his fingertips died and he scowled. He buried his hands into his jacket pocket.

“I don’t care about that,” he said, and left.

The bar was still standing and he doesn’t know why he didn’t torch it. Who cares?

Midoriya’s face immediately appeared in his mind’s eye. Well, whatever. He’d do his employer a favor and squeeze something out of him later.

### Need You

-

“There’s not a price in the world, any information-just-there’s nothing, Dabi-san!” Midoriya snapped back, his thin hands clutching his jacket with more strength than Dabi ever expected him to have, “Dabi-san, listen to me! There is nothing in the world that’s worth more than your life to me, okay?!”

The older man stared back, his chest heaving as the world slowed down. Their eyes met, and Dabi wondered why it was becoming easier to breath.

“Okay?” Midoriya said. His hands loosened their hold on his jacket, but he remained in his lap, “This trade, information, money… all of that, it’s something that I can get again. It’s something that I can always get more of.”

He made a fist with his hand and gently pressed it against Dabi’s chest, right above his pulsing heart. He’s certain that, against the skin of his knuckles, he can feel it jumping.

“But you? I can’t lose you,” he said. “I need you.”

“...You can just hire someone else.”

“I could get a new bodyguard,” Midoriya agreed, never one to lie, “but I can’t get a new ‘Dabi’. I … If I lost you…” He took a deep shuddering breath, dropping his hands into his lap and he gave a small, hopeless smile, “...god, I thought I lost you for a moment and I just… I felt so sad.”

He placed his head into his hands. The word < sad > didn’t even begin to describe what he would be if he lost Dabi, yet it was the only thing he could come up with against the swell of adrenaline and relief crashing against each other inside of him at the moment. In sharp contrast to him, however, Dabi remained numb and unfeeling, sitting there after narrowly missing death again.

“Please, Dabi-san, I’m begging you,” Midoriya said, eyes welling with tears, “Not as your employer or… or a business partner but please, please don’t die. I don’t think I’ll be able to handle that.”

Dabi could hear, in the back of his mind where he tried to pretend his life never happened and that he was no one and nothing, heard his father’s certain voice. He can hear the man explaining the world, the expectation, the ideal.

<< “Only weaklings cry.” >>

It repeated in his head, over and over, he looked forward to where tears streamed down Midoriya’s face, and hoped that his employer would remain weak forever.

Because then, when Dabi dies, he will be able to say with certainty that someone will cry over him. Someone will mourn his loss. To someone, his death will be a loss.

These are all certainties that he never had before. These are all realities that he had to face now. It, at once, makes him giddy and dumbfounded. If he was capable of it, he might have even pitied Midoriya for wasting those kinds of emotions onto him.

“...I get it-”

“No,” Midoriya said, “You don’t.”

And he said it like it’s something that hurts him.

“You don’t get it because it’s something that you don’t want to get. It’s something that no one here wants to get, and I don’t blame them. I know. It’s useless to… to feel like this, or to feel anything at all, but I don’t want to not feel. I want to feel things and I want people to know that they are important to me,” he said. He sniffled loudly, angry eyes filled with tears coming back up to meet Dabi’s again. “You’re important to me. You are more important than any information I can gather and any money I can amass. I’ll always choose you.”

“...If you keep thinking like that,” Dabi said, the words ringing hollow because he didn’t believe it anymore. It wasn’t what he wanted to believe anymore, but someone had to say it, “you’ll never get anywhere in the world.”

“If I can manage to keep you,” Midoriya croaked out, “I’m fine with that.”

“...Midoriya,” he said quietly, relishing the way the name rolled off his tongue and he swore that he felt something tighten in his chest, “You’re smart, but really, really stupid.”

His father’s voice in his head faded a little more, replaced by Midoriya’s soft chuckles. It’s the quietest it’s ever been, and he thought that he could forget everything and just be Midoriya’s Dabi.

He dared to even think that it’ll be a future worth seeing.

### Under the Rain

Dabi fucking hated the rain. The fact that it made his scars all itch, the fact that his staples could rust, the fact that his fire was especially exhausting, and a thousand more reasons that he couldn’t be bothered to list at the moment.

But, since meeting Midoriya, he felt like this list had increased exponentially.

He narrowed his eyes at the downpour.

“Wow, it’s really coming down,” Midoriya commented as he came up to stand next to him.

Standing in the abandoned and run-down factory, the two tried to stay dry under the patchy ceiling that did a poor job keeping the cold autumn showers outside.

“Sorry about this, Dabi,” he said.

“Yeah, you should be,” Dabi grouched back, glaring at the sky above. Well, it wasn’t like his shityhole of an apartment would be any better than this, but at least he didn’t have to worry about getting wet.

“Haha,” Midoriya gave a nervous laugh, looking up at the skyline with him, “I’ll make it up to you.”

Before Dabi could stop himself, his eyes fell to Midoriya’s lips.

“...Yeah? What were you thinking?”

Green eyes batted up at him, he had to be doing this on purpose. From the way his cheeks darkened to the way he gnawed on his bottom lip, the image was stoking the fire inside of Dabi.

He hated the rain, because it did things to him. This was something that they, under normal circumstances, would have never thought to do.

“It looks like… it’ll be storming for a while. I think… there’s a few things we could do to pass the time.”

Who said that Midoriya was naive? The stare that he trained on Dabi was anything but innocent. His hand came up to grip at Dabi’s sleeve. And Dabi, even though he knew that there was no pretty end for dumbasses that fell for tricks like this, couldn’t pull his eyes from the light dancing across Deku’s eyes.

Dabi hated the rain. It was cold and miserable. It made his scars itch and made it even harder to control his fire than usual. It was a reminder that he still had nothing and no one. It made him lethargic, and he hated the following humidity the following day.

It fuddled with his mind and memory, fogging his ability to think clearly better than any alcohol.

He’s certain that was the reason why, when he leaned down to kiss Midoriya, he went back for seconds.

Midoriya’s hands carded through his hair, being the most gentle gesture that Dabi’s received in years. When he rolled their hips together, Midoriya arched into the touch, like he wanted it. The rain poured down, and the droplets that hit Dabi’s back evaporated with a sizzle when he pushed Deku onto his back.

The rain was driving him insane. It had to. Why else would Dabi ever think that Deku had such a sweet voice?

-

“So, that just happened.”

“Yep.”

Dabi side-eyed him before he looked back forward.

“You regret it?”

He wouldn’t be shocked. He wasn’t the kind of person that people found attractive.

“Hm, I don’t know,” he said.

“You? Don’t know something?”

Midoriya’s smile was damning, and Dabi made the mistake of looking at it.

“Well, I have some ideas, but I think I need some more data to make a conclusion.”

He licked his lips and these days, the older man was beginning to understand that he didn’t pledge his fire to someone. He pledged his fire to the fucking devil.

And like a fool, Dabi thought he had the upper hand.

“Well, I guess I can work that out for you,” he said, leaning in to take what was offered.

Could you blame him? He’s never had something given to him before. Even if someone knew how bad drugs were, some addicts will choose that path.

A willing victim, if you would.

Swallowing down the giggle Midoriya let out when their nose bumped together, he wondered if this was how it felt to turn to ash.

\_

Do you sleep with all your employees or am I special

Just the… ones he cludnt look awy from. He almost said. He wasnt an idiot thojgh.

Just the easy ones.

### Shira v Dabi - out of shape

“We’re not covering enough ground.” Dabi said. “We’re covering even less ground than before.”

He shot Shigaraki a glance.

“At this rate, we’ll be out here until morning light.”

Midoriya stopped and pulled his phone out, “Wow’s it’s already two?” He sighed, and rubbed his neck. He put his phone back and pulled out his small notebook, “...And I gotta hit back before the subway before they stop for the night,” he said. He looked at Dabi, then Shigaraki, and then back to Dabi. “Let’s stop here for tonight.”

“...You say we’re going to stop, but you’re going to keep going, aren’t you?”

“Well, I only pay you enough for three,” Midoriya replied back, “And I want to save any extra hours for when I need it.”

“If you go out and die, I won’t have any money ever again,” Dabi replied back. “It’s fine.”

“If I die…? You’ve tried to kill me eight times, Dabi. I think it’s a little late to be the one that cares if I live or die.”

The older man snorted back, “Consider this service, then.”

Shigaraki and Midoriya snorted at that. Dabi scowled back.

“Whatever, let’s just go.”

“Alright, alright,” and Midoriya peered at Shigaraki and gave a smile back. “Let’s get you back to the bar.”

-

“...You get it now, right?” Dabi said, “You’re just holding us back. Unlike you, the rest of us have ends to meet.”

Shigaraki remained silent, keeping his eyes on the ground as the words sank in.

“Pretty much a fucking mute,” the other man sighed, tipping his head back. “What a waste of space. I don’t know what Midoriya sees in you.”

-

Kurogiri was in for the shock of a lifetime when he woke up at noon and found Shigaraki sitting at the kitchen table with his head on the table.

“...Shigaraki?” he asked quietly, approaching warily. The last thing he needed was for his table or chairs to decay away because he surprised the younger man.

“...Kurogiri-san,” Shigaraki said quietly, “...The training ground that sensei left us… Can I go to it?”

“...Why?”

“...I’m out of shape,” he said. “And I don’t want to lose to him.”

And on those lost days when Kurogiri once wondered what All-For-One saw, he now sees Shigaraki.

### Fireworks at tanabata (or something)

If he could see the whole world as a reflection from Midoriya's eyes, he thinks that he'll see something worthy of being called <beautiful>.

### Fire Feet

In a desperate attempt to escape, Dabi swung his leg and shot fire from it. The effect was immediate. Three dead since the fire consumed them, two more on fire, but it buys Twice just enough time to break in and do some damage control.

His eyes find Midoriya, the new bruise on his face, his broken arm, and the worry in his eyes.

Dabi rolled his eyes, wasn’t he supposed to be smarter than him? He should be able to see that, of the two of them, Midoriya was the one that was worse off, right? Still, he couldn’t stop himself from smiling a little.

Another person’s worry didn’t feel suffocating, when it was the right person, he supposed.

-

Midoriya kneeled in front of him, gently pulling off his shoes and socks and staring at the mess of burns coating Dabi’s leg, took a shaky breath. What should have smelled like dirty laundry and sweat only smelled like charred meat. It was a scent that Dabi was familiar with, but Midoriya’s eyes watered.

“...You don’t have…”

He trailed off, when stormy green eyes, welling with tears, glared up at him. And after a moment, as though realizing that his anger was misplaced, he gave another breath. He leaned to rest his forehead against Dabi’s knee.

“I’m sorry,” he said quietly.

Dabi’s hand came up to Midoriya’s curls. His employer sniffled loudly, but didn’t stop. Figures that he would notice. Figures that he would come and check.

Fainly, he wondered if Midoriya ever gets tired of caring. By the time Dabi was Midoriya’s age, he had long since lost anything resembling emotions like that. No, that was a lie. He had one feeling, a shimmering feeling that thirsted for vengeance, that sat in his gut and festered. But he couldn’t feel anything else. Not like Midoriya did.

So he’s not sure what he was feeling, when he ran his hand underneath his chin and tilted it up.

And Dabi wondered if he’ll ever be enough to protect him.

### Christmas

“Dabi! There you are! I’ve missed you.”

Even though they’ve spent quite some time together and Midoriya almost always does this, Dabi still feels something wrap around his heart and squeeze. It’s been getting worse and worse, he swears, but Dabi is nothing but adaptive. He keeps his face neutral, and his eyes flicker to the man before he turns his head.

Today, one week from the last time he saw him, he sees that his blackeye has been replaced with a split lip, but the man looks otherwise fine.

“Oh, hey boss,” he greets casually, “New mission?”

Because it’s easier to pretend that Midoriya only talks to him because of missions and he needs a new guad. It’s better and doesn’t feel anything when he thinks of the world in terms of how much people want to use him than whatever it was that Midoriya operated on.

“Not quite. Though we’re going to get busy in the next few days until February, but right now, I have something more important,” Midoriya said, as he rummaged through his backpack. He made a triumphant sound, like he found something particularly interesting, and passed a small, carefully wrapped box to him. “Merry Christmas!”

The whole world slowed down. He didn’t realize that the young man could still shock him bad enough that his brain could stop functioning for a second.

He stared at the box. It was a thin box, but a little bigger than his hand, and it had bright-green and red striped wrapping paper with small reindeer prints and adorned with a big blue ribbon. The package wasn’t stiff, and there were little wrinkles forming just from Midoriya holding the thing in his hand. He stared at it dumbly, and Midoriya gave him a warm smile that didn’t fit in with the temperature around them.

“Dabi, it’s yours now.”

“...How much?” he asked on impulse.

“It's a gift,” Midoriya spluttered back, truly shocked that Dabi would ask such a thing, “You know? Christmas? The whole gift-giving thing that capitalism loves? Can you… Can you just take it?”

“I…” his mind couldn’t keep up with the series of events, Dabi could walk off a gunshot but apparently, he stuttered when given a gift. “I didn’t get you anything.”

“That’s fine,” Midoriya said, “But this is for you.”

Dabi took the gift. If his hand was trembling, Midoriya definitely noticed but didn’t say anything.

-

It was a scarf.

Dabi didn’t know shit about fabric and cotton, but it was soft and it didn’t irritate his scars or catch on his staples. There was a fucking note inside of it, telling him how to wash it and that it was fire-proof. And then, Midoriya’s handwritten notes were written on the back, and Dabi doesn’t know when he became intimate with this man’s handwriting, but the trembles between the lines and the spacing between them lets him know that this was written on his desk.

Briefly, he thought that it was funny that his meeting notes that he scrawled down were never this neat, and the thought of Midoriya painstakingly writing this, as slowly as he could, on those rare days he suffered no injury to his hands came to him easier than remembering what he had for breakfast that day.

>> Dabi, while it says that it’s fire-proof, I have no doubt that you would find a way to cremate it. Please don’t take it as a challenge.

He snorted.

Just for that.

He ignited his hand, and brought it towards the scarf.

-

Dabi ultimately decided not to burn it, and instead, wore it to their next meeting. As it turns out, there were going to do an outdoor stakeout at the top of one of the buildings. Shivering and trembling against the blistering cold, Dabi was thankful for the scarf.

It felt a thousand times warmer that his fire, even if it couldn’t catch fire.

More importantly, the look in Midoriya’s eyes when he came to the meeting sight, the way that it felt like he couldn’t take his eyes off of Dabi…

Priceless.

“...You look good,” Midoriya whispered, a little quiet as though he has been able to take his eyes off of him for longer than a minute the entire time.

“...I must, if I’m distracting you, I must be the most handsome man around.”

The young man’s hands flew to his face, his face bright red like the lights around them. Dabi snorted, a small sound to smoother the dumb grin his face was twitching to drop.

“...Maybe you are,” Midoriya said, a thousand times more bolder than Dabi remembered as his green eyes met his and his breath caught. “But… since you’re so tall and handsome, I doubt that you could look bad in anything you wear.”

Dabi didn’t know what he needed to do, but he would do just about everything, if it means that those eyes will stay on him forever. The thought scared him. And he didn’t know if a hypothetical future without Midoriya scared him more than losing himself.

### Protection

“Don’t be stupid,” Midoriya said, stepping out and dusting hismelf off. “Dabi won’t hurt me.”

He smiled down at the men writhing at the ground.

“You don’t… you don’t know that.”

“...Between you and me, I’m pretty sure I’m right,” he said, gesturing to the fact that Dabi was next to him and he didn’t even have a spec of dirt on him. “But I suppose illusions are your specialty.”

The head scowled back, his entire eyes still completely black. Really, with a weakness like that, he can’t believe that he only came here with a pair of sunglasses. But he supposes that it was a good thing that he was underestimated. It only made their job that much easier.

“You fuckin bitch! That’s the Cremator! He’s only using you anyways! You think he’s loyal?!”

Midoriya’s smile was gentle, like he was looking at a particularly cute dog, and shook his head.

“I don’t owe you anything. But you, on the other hand, owe me quite a bit, don’t you think?”

He scowled back, and Dabi burned off his hand without any form of hesitation. Steeling his heart, Midoriya crouched down in front of him.

“C’mon now,” he said, “You only have four limbs.”

-

“He’s right you know,” Spinner said quietly. “Dabi can just betray you.”

Midoriya nodded, “He could, but I don’t think he will.”

The lizardman turned to stare at him, and the young man smiled back.

“Dabi isn’t a liar,” he said. “And he said that he’ll protect me until our contract runs out. So far, he hasn’t lied yet, so I don’t see why I should think that he will.”

“Most people don’t want to die, and they take measures to prevent their life from ending prematurely,” Spinner explained, deadpanned, and Midoriya laughed outright.

“Yeah, I guess so,” he said. “But I don’t want to live like that. Besides, Dabi… I don’t know, I feel like if Dabi, or any of you, betrayed me, I would have really deserved it.”

Someone who just tortured a man and his entire group, leaving them crippled and babbling incoherently, should not be capable of such an innocent thought. It was disjarring, but looking at the smile Midoriya gave his ice cream as he took a bite, knew he wasn’t lying.

Not for the first time, he would think that Midoriya didn’t belong on this side of the world.

### New Years

“Ah,” Midoriya said suddenly, as he and everyone else stared in surprise as the skies lit up with fireworks and cheers filled the distant land. And then, their employer who didn’t flinch when a gun is fired at him and narrowly misses his eyes, screamed out, “Oh come on, we missed the countdown?!”

He sighed, running his hand through his hair.

“Damn bastard, if only he just didn’t sutter.”

“What’s up?” Shigaraki asked, strolling up next to him.

The young man looked at him and then turned around, “Well, better late than never I guess… Everyone,” he said, a small smile on his face as they turned to him as one. “Please take good care of me this year too,” he said, giving them a big formal bow.

“Oh! Me too, me too!” Toga cheered back, hearts in her eyes as she waved her sleeve in the air, “I’ll take great care of you, Izuzu!”

Twice fired his finger guns, “I love all of you damn bastards! This year is going to be great! // Now, let’s go kill someone!”

Magne wiped at her eyes, a laugh bubbling out of her and Spinner gave a satisfied sigh.

“Oi, Kurogiri has the party set up,” Shigaraki said, getting off the phone with the man as a portal opened in front of them, “Let’s go. I’m cold and hungry.”

As everyone walked into the portal, buzzing with excitement, Dabi dropped his hand onto Midoriya’s curls. The young man has grown a little, but Dabi still towered over him, in a little bit, he might lose his favorite armrest, but maybe his neck won’t hurt as much for looking down at him when he talks all the time.

“Next year,” he said slowly. He was about to say something he never thought he would say, and the message and words felt foreign and unreal to him, but as he said it, he felt the weight of a promise ground him to reality, “We’ll do the countdown together.”

Midoriya’s eyes shined back, and Dabi thinks that he’ll burn the whole world down if it means that the light never strays from those eyes.

“I’ll hold you to that, Dabi.”

This was their reality.

### Suspicions - me beeches

“I think they’re onto me. They really want me to get a girl or four.”

Dabi, laying on the left of him, yawned back, also fully naked underneath the covers, “Ask Twice to make some fake women then. I’m sure plenty of women at Magne’s place will throw themselves at you, too.”

Midoriya ran his hands through his hair, “I don’t have time to care about shit like this. Why can’t they go back to caring about the stupid Hero thing?”

“Shut up and go to sleep,” Shigaraki, on the right of him, replied back.

When Midoriya looked like he was going to protest, both men reached on hand up to grab him by a shoulder each and pushed him back down.

“I don’t wanna see his ugly mug when I wake up,” Dabi stated flatly.

Shigaraki grunted. “I don’t want to see that disgusting ikeman.”

Midoriya sighed back.

## Stain

### Important Lesson

Before Akakuro was Stain, he was Stendal.

-

The man crouched down next to him, lifting the little notebook Midoriya had in front of him.

“...Where did you get this information?” he asked.

Midoriya, bleeding out with a concussion in the dirty alleyway, groaned back.

“...Well, I suppose I’ll find out if it’s true or not soon enough.”

Midoriya Izuku learned a valuable lesson that night. Unless he was going to actually deal information and evidence that night, he really needed to keep the information in his head where no one else could get to it and there was a little more value in his life.

-

It must have been true, because come Saturday evening, Midoriya had a blade going through his shoulder as he was pinned to the wall.

“Where did you even come from?!”

But Midoriya thought that he was really getting stronger after all. Things that would have sent him into shock or make him cry don’t hurt as much as they used to.

“Information on Kariya Hijimura,” Stendal said slowly, “The scumbag that works in between scenes at the cosmetic store. Give it.”

“My information comes at a price,” Midoriya gritted through his teeth.

Stendal responded by driving the knife in deeper. The younger man hissed, and his hand flew to cover up his mouth.

“...Well, I suppose that I don’t really need information.”

“And moreso than him, Mariko’s new florist has some connections to the Phillipino ports,” he said slowly, “When it comes to scumbags, I always thought the ones that smelled so nice were the worst ones.”

Stendal paused and stared at the young man, “If you keep giving information like that out, you’ll never get paid.”

“If it means that my information will lead to scum getting taken out, I would rather you make them pay.”

### Ingenium

“If you want my money and my information, you do what I ask,” Midoriya said.

“I’m not sparing him.”

“Just cripple him. Don’t kill him.”

The older man paused, looking from the picture on Ingenium on the desk to his face.

“Don’t you have money riding on this?” he asked.

“Yeah, and I thought that you would have messed up by now,” the young man replied, running his hand through his hair like this whole thing was just a giant pain in the ass. “The last thing I need is for them to start suspecting that I’m cheating.”

The hired-hand looked unimpressed, but if he’s ever learned anything, it was that Midoriya was paranoid on a good day.

Well, it’s what’s kept both of them relatively safe.

“It’ll depend on him,” Stain said, taking the money and the information into his hand.

Both of them knew that he was lying though. Stain didn’t do sloppy jobs.

### Nighteye

“So, I guess the real question is,” Midoriya said, pushing the two folders in front of him.

He gave a bitter smile, and Stain glared down at the seemingly innocent-looking folders.

“...Do you want to kill all the non-heroic heroes, or the people poisoning heroes?”

Because seriously? Child trafficking?

Well, Midoriya supposed he couldn’t complain too much, when he was going to be profiting off of this.

Either Stain leaves to… silence Nighteye and his agency, or he’ll take care of the less savory people among the hero’s association. And if he doesn’t if he left the table right now, Midoriya knew plenty of people that would love to have this kind of information.

Whatever, at the end of the day, he didn’t care as long as these people stopped investigating The Family. The last thing he wanted to deal with was a raid when he finally managed to scrape something on every local government official in the surrounding four cities.

### Come with Me (1)

“I’m saying that I’m weak, uninfluential, and poor. But there’s something that I want to do in this world, and I want you to be with me, ” Midoriya said, “So… What I’m trying to say is … is that you should come with me?”

Stain stared, for a long time, at the hand that was extended out to him.

“...I can’t,” he said. “I’m just tired.”

“That’s fine,” Midoriya said, “Just... don’t forget my words, okay?”

The young man’s hand remained where it was, trying to bridge the gap between them.

This fragment of a memory accompanied him right before he fell asleep, right before the alcohol hit, right when he walked outside. It echoed in his head, playing over and over again. If it didn’t, he’s certain that he would have died.

He didn’t even realize that he was waiting for him until the second time Midoriya came around.

## Chisaki

### Moving on - Disowned

Midoriya is debt-free for about a week, all of his mom's bills taken care of, he had plans for a nice dinner at Kurogiri's and a cozy movie night while they all just take a break. He had plans to take his motley crew to see Tokyo Tower sometime next week. He was the second highest score only on the history midterm by a single point, and the top scorer in everything else.

He wasn't desperate for money, and he wasn't injured. Of course, he still lived with his ear on the ground since he figured that he would still need to.

But on his way to the hospital, his mother's favorite array of colors scattered across petals in his hands and his recent exam scores in his bag, he runs into his father.

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No longer Midoriya, Midoriya knowingly sells his soul to the yakuza.

### Moves in With Chisaki - Taking Eri

“...I’ll take her in,” Midoriya said, “There’s no need to do anything like this anymore.”

Kurono turned to arch an eyebrow, because Midoriya was here on Kurobane’s name. He was here because Kurobane, the right hand to the boss, said that he was worthwhile. Yet, here he was, standing on a landmine that no one has ever escaped from.

“...Is that why the boss sent you? To keep an eye on me?”

Midoriya doesn’t even blink, “Of course not. Kurobane-san wants me to learn from you. Since most of my funds go straight to you anyways, it’s probably for the best that I just remain by your side. No more third-party and all.”

“Ah, that’s right, you’re the reason why the group’s been making so much money recently, right? How have you been making it anyways?”

“...It’s flattering to think that you have heard of me,” the young man said, dipping his head forward, “But I make the most amount of money through stocks.”

Chisaki hummed, but anyone could see from his cold eyes that he didn’t care.

“But I’m afraid that even if Kurobane gave you to us, it’s not like we can give a child another child to care for.”

“On the contrary, I think that it’s better that I am the one in charge of Eri so that you may be able to totally and completely focus on your research. We are also closer in age, so she might feel some kindred heartening between us. Of course, I would never come in between you and her valuable family-time, but it will be one less thing for you to be aware of while you work.”

Kurono had to hand it to him, he was good at speaking. He was young, however, and it was painfully clear from the way his pale-face and how tightly his hands were clenched into fists at his side. In a few years, he might be something of note, but as it was, he was just pitiful.

And that was assuming he survived a few years. If he was already stepping on Chisaki’s toes, Kurono didn’t think that he had much of a future at all.

“...Well, there’s no need to hold back. I run a tight ship, but I have no need for idle pratter. Why don’t you tell me the real reason why you want to take Eri? No need to mince your words,” Chisaki said, opening his arms up as though to show how casual he was about all of this, “I appreciate honesty.”

Kurono has seen this many times. Kurono has also needed to clean the mess many times as well. He’s had nightmares from when those eyes have chased others into insanity.

“...If I may be frank then,” Midoriya said quietly, and when Chisaki gave his nod, his shoulders pulled back.

If the kid didn’t have his full attention before, he definitely did now. Kurono watched as he took a deep breath, and completely relaxed his body. He leaned back into his seat and lifted his chin, and on anyone else it would have been a bravada.

But in sharp contrast to the nervous kid just a few moments ago, it feels like this was the reality.

“I… understand the kind of drug you are making. To be honest, I was hoping to stop it now.”

Chisaki’s eyes narrowed, and Kurono knew that this kid was going to be smeared against the wall for coming in between Chisaki and his research. At this point, it was a matter of how long it would take. In fact, it was impressive that he was still alive.

“And why is that?”

His lips curled up, but there was no joy in his smile, and it looked more like an uncertain grimace.

“If you make this drug and it takes off, which I’m sure it will, I will lose my one edge I have in this world.”

“...Oh really?” Chisaki replied and Kurono has never heard him speak like that before. He risked a glance, and saw the way Chisaki leaned forward, and the interest in his eyes gleamed under their fluorescent lights. “...And what would that edge be? Don’t worry, we’re all family here. No need to have secrets.”

“...My greatest edge in life is that I was born quirkless.”

The silence in the room was deafening and Kurono stared at the boy in shock. Here, in the yakuza, right in front of him, the kid that Kurobane personally recommended, was quirkless? While it wasn’t impossible, Kurono hasn’t ever heard of the yakuza taking in someone quirkless. Usually, they take in the kids that have troubling or incredibly powerful quirks that no one else wanted to deal with.

It was how they found both him and Chisaki.

“...What did you say?”

“...If you take quirks away from this world,” Midoriya replied back. “It’ll ruin my one advantage I have in life.”

Chisaki stared at him in a way that Kurono has never seen him stare at anyone before. He began to wonder, in tripediated fear, if something different would happen, and Midoriya would be the first person to experience something much, much worse than being overhauled and purified like all the others before him.

“...Interesting,” Chisaki said, “but unfortunately, that’s not enough. So what about this. I’ll give you six months. If you can bring me 20 million yen in six months, I’ll stop.”

Kurono felt his heart stop. What?

Even if there was no feasible way for Midoriya to net that much money in six months, the fact that Chisaki put this offer on the table was beyond him. Anyone else would be dead by now. He stared at Chisaki, who had been in such a bad mood before he came here so why was he giving this to him? Why was Chisaki giving him this possibility?

“...So be it,” Midoriya nodded. “20 milion in six months, right? I… I don’t think you’re the type to lie, but if you bend your words later, I’ll be quite upset.”

“No, no, I know better than to lie to someone like you,” the branch leader replied.

Chisaki Kai has always been able to see something that he couldn’t. He has always been able to see more, so he thought that perhaps, Chisaki had seen something much more than he did when he saw Midoriya. And with the way Midoriya’s eyes took him in, he couldn’t shake the idea that it was reciprocated.

Then, he couldn’t help but wonder why he felt so unsettled by this information.

“20 milion yen,’ Midoriya whispered out, and Chisaki chuckled back.

“Of course, that’s not counting the payments to the group.”

“But the payments are monthly,” Midoriya said, “Or did you want the 20 milion in payments as well?”

Kurono vaguely wondered if Midoriya understood the figures of money he was throwing around.

Chisaki thought about it for a moment and then shook his head. “20 million. All at once or none at all.”

The young man nodded. He straightened up before he gave a proper bow, “Thank you for this opportunity, boss. I will not let you down.”

“Yes, yes,” the man replied back with a nod, “Ah, but Midoriya?”

“Yes, sir?”

“This deal is off if it negatively impacts your grades or your work here.”

“...Yes sir.”

“Dismissed.”

Kurono, for a brief second, thinks that he doesn’t recognize Chisaki at all.

### Interlude: Midoriya’s finance

Looking at Chisaki, Midoriya understands that he cannot be <Midoriya Izuku> and save Eri. If he wanted to save this girl, if he wanted to spare her this agony, then he needed to save her for a selfish reason. He needed to push forward as someone who was only looking after himself and his own personal growth.

He…

He was suddenly reminded of the blond hero in his neighborhood. Not the pro-hero, but the one that lived down the street from him and grew up with him. A guy who exploded everything and was everything Midoriya wanted to be. Confident, cool, and strong.

He leaned back, relaxing his body as he gave a smile.

What would Kacchan do, to save this girl? He’d blow his way through the problem, and threaten the bad guys and the child he was trying to protect.

-

20 million yen, in exchange for a life is pretty cheap. Even luckier that he gets six months.

Now that he has an end goal and his time constraint, he has a little more leniency.

Donating blood will net him about 30 thousand. If push comes to shove, he’ll give up a kidney.

### Midoriya walks the talk

"Okay, then make sure that the reports are done."

"They're on your desk, sir. Please review them before signing them,” Midoriya replied without looking up from the computer screen. He pulled out a folder from one of the drawers under his desk, and Chisaki wondered if this is what an office should feel like.

After the initial greetings, it’s clear that Midoriya has no intentions of talking or even looking at him in an effort to get work done. It may look disrespectful, but Chisaki actually preferred this than over all the formalities his position required.

In the privacy of their workplace, he will let it slide.

Chisaki walked over to his office, pushing the door open and was pleasantly surprised at the small amount of paperwork on his desk. He swears that he hasn’t even seen the surface of his desk in at least a month, so this was a very nice surprise. He walked over to very small stack of papers, three in total, and noticed that they were an assortment of blue and yellow stickies on them.

“...What are these?” he asked, motioning to the stickies.

Midoriya, who had followed him into his room with a binder in his arms, fumbled with it as he answered.

“Blue means they need to be signed, yellow means that it was something that I had to edit. Those are the only things that require your attentive attention, but the rest of it are reports that Kurono pulled up for me and I used as a basis. I didn’t know how much time you had to look them over, so I tried to expedite it as best I could. In terms of which need to be done first, the things that should be done before tomorrow are to your left and it goes till next month to your right.”

He nodded, his eyes trailing over the page and the tension in his shoulders loosened.

“...You write well,” he said after a moment. “Very concisely and factually.”

“Thank you, sir. Modern Japanese is one of my highest grades,” Midoriya said, dipping his head forward.

The older man hummed a little, and flipped through the reports. Indeed, they were ordered meticulously well with an incredible amount of detail. The reports became wordy after a while, but compared to the stacks of data that he had just this morning, it was much preferred.

“...You get a little verbose once you enter the methodology. You don’t need to add that much information about it. Compiling the data and the lists of news concerning the numbers is enough.”

“...Yes, sir. I’ll keep that in mind for the future.”

“But for a first time, good job,” he said. He leaned over to sign off where he needed to and then handed it back. “Take this to Kurono and go ahead and get started on the business records.”

“Right here,” Midoriya said, pulling a manilla folder out of his binder and then taking the reports from Chisaki’s hands. “Actually, I had a couple of questions about them, but I stickied in on…”

The boss took the papers into his hands, looking through the first two and then flipping to the middle and end of the stacks to realize that the entire stack had the same amount of attentive detail through its entirety.

“..You got all of these done?”

Midoriya nodded back, and at Chisaki’s suspicious glance, shrugged back.

“Time is money.”

“...Indeed.”

The report was of similar quality. Thinking of how much work he had dumped on the young man just to see if he could handle it, Chisaki could say that he was very pleasantly surprised.

So be it, he’ll see how far he can take this.

“You’re dismissed. Same time tomorrow.”

“Yes sir.”

Then, Midoriya left and Chisaki was informed by Irinaka that he had left the vicinity and their property to go elsewhere. He assumes that now, he would be trying (futily) to pull the magnificent sum of 20 million.

He doesn't think that Midoriya could do it. 20 million is something that most people can’t make in five years, to think that a high schooler could make it in six months smelled of all sorts of shady things. Even then, he doesn’t think any bottom-feeding yakuza would be able to pull together that much money either.

Right now, when school was in the lull and the holidays have ended, the economy was on a decline as people returned from the holidays and the economy was trying to stabilize. There was no feasible way for him to have a part-time job that could get him this amount of money, and frankly, he was far too awkward with himself to be able to sell it.

He has no connections and no power of any sort.

Chisaki, despite all that he says or means, is a little interested in seeing how this turns out.

He’s not disappointed. In fact, the polar opposite. He’s almost impressed.

### Quirk

Chisaki walked in on a strange discussion a few weeks after Midoriya moved in. He knew that there was a strange tension between Midoriya and the other members of the group, but he expected that to an extent.

After all, everyone else who ever tried to join the Shie Hassakai as a minor had to ask to join and were brutally turned down. Even Chisaki, who was taken in as an ungrateful child, was never asked to join the family. He had to put his head to the ground, groveling and begging to join for a chance to pay back to the kumicho all the kindness that was given to a shitstain like him.

And even then, he only got in because the other generals made a case pleading for him. The Kumicho only relented after four years of his constant hard work, and being pleaded to by literally everyone else in the family.

He, like many others, chalked it up to the Boss’s kindness. He didn’t want to tie down the unfortunate kids to live a life like theirs. It made his feelings of gratitude swell even more.

And then, Midoriya Izuku entered the scene.

“Memory? Are you fucking serious right now?”

“Yes,” Midoriya nodded back. “It’s alright, I’m used to this reaction.”

“...What’s going on here?” Chiaski asked, making his presence known.

Instantly, everyone in the room jumped up to their feet and gave him a greeting in unison. He raised his hand.

“Well? Is anyone going to answer me?”

Rappa, oh Rappa, pointed at Midoriya with the grace of a five year old and yelled out, “Little Midoriya here is trying to convince us that he has a quirk when he doesn’t.” He was red in the face, and from the state of the open sake bottles, Sakaki and he had been drinking on shift again.

“I-I do!”

Golden eyes narrowed, silencing both of them. He really didn’t need to deal with this right now.

“It’s unbecoming of an informat to lie,” Chisaki said evenly, eyes narrowing.

Why would he hide something like this? What was the point of it? If being Quirkless was an asset, why was Midoriya trying to hide it?

The young man’s face blushed hotly, reminding everyone how much he doesn’t belong here. Having the boss’s favor means nothing when the boss isn’t here, and they all know that the boss lets things slide all the time.

“I-I’m not, sir,” Midoriya said, dipping his head forward. His face was pale and he was sweating. It was disgustingly clear how obvious it was that he was lying.

But Chisaki, who had to pour sake for Kurobane when Kurobane went over Midoriya’s file with him, would never forget that small, almost prideful smile on the normally impassive man.

“...Then, what is your quirk?”

Midoriya looked up at him, and Chisaki thinks he’s gotten arrogant, if he can look at him straight in the eye and reply back, “My quirk is memorization.”

“Bullshit,” Rappa, who also knew that Midoriya was quirkless because Chisaki told all his Precepts so, muttered under his breath.

“I can prove it too,” Midoriya said, “...If you would let me.”

“...Alright,” Chisaki said, “Let’s get this over with. Make it quick.”

“Luckily,” the young man said, motioning to the table, “We were just about to get ready for a game, right Setsuno-aniki?”

“Huh?” Setsuno looked at the deck of cards in his hands, and then back up, “Uh yeah.”

Midoriya probably wanted to smile, but instead, he ended up flashing his teeth at them, “If you would please take a seat. Why don’t we play a game of blackjack? We were playing earlier, so as long as Setsuno hasn’t shuffled it yet.”

Midoriya Izuku is the only person that Kumicho brought in as a minor with the intention to make him one of them. He was 13 when they placed him into a pitfall that he’ll never be able to escape from. They used his mother’s sickness against him, dangled the medical bills over his head, and forced him to undertake payments equal to a small group.

They found his father and lorded it over his head that his little boy had run to the yakuza for help. It was a blatant lie, but there was no one to say or believe that. As a result, the man abandoned the boy, leaving him disowned and alone. And now that he was alone, the Kumicho paid for his first tattoo and showed up for his inauguration ceremony.

A cruel set-up, but it worked.

Unheard of , but it happened.

They all knew, and Chisaki had no doubts that Kumicho and Kurobane had just turned a blind eye to it all, and they made Midoriya’s life a living hell in a cheap effort to see why he was different.

“How many cards?” Midoriya asked.

“Pardon?” Setsuno asked, “uh… 52?”

“No, I mean,” his eyes turned to Chisaki, looking more nervous than anything, “How many cards would you like me to take before I get to blackjack?”

“...Four,” Chisaki said.

“Alright,” Midoriya nodded, and turned back to Setsuno. “Whenever you’re ready, hit me.”

Within three minutes, they had crowded the table in awe as Midoriya calmly asked for the amount of cards, and delivered blackjack as promised several times. The young man, the more he did it, the more confident he seemed and Chisaki said.

“Make blackjack with eights of hearts, seven of spades, and six of clubs.”

“Yes sir.”

And it was delivered.

Midoriya looked up at Chisaki, his chin up and said, “Next?”

The silence was deafening. If Chisaki didn’t already know that he was Quirkless, he would have definitely believed him then and there that he did have a quirk. That his quirk was memorization, and Chisaki thought that it could be incredibly useful, if he didn’t have a notepad or a phone. As it was, it would be a good last resort.

But that wasn’t the case. Midoriya did not have a quirk. Kurobane’s information cannot be wrong.

“...No, we wasted enough time here already,” he said, turning away.

However, Chisaki never questioned why he cared.

### Curfew -

“...My curfew is what?”

“Two AM on the weekends,” Kurono said, “and noon on school days. Don’t make me repeat it again.”

The man’s face fell.

“...

-

The first time he breaks curfew, it’s his second week and it costs him a dislocated shoulder.

Where anyone else would have been groveling and crying in pain, Irinaka felt a shiver run down his spine when he caught Midoriya’s unrepenting, clear and focused eyes after his beating. They were the same expression that he had when he was looking at the report and calculating and recalculating the numbers in front of him. It was the expression of someone who was trying to figure something out.

Irinaka knows that look. It’s the look of someone who has a goal and a method. More importantly, he has a drive to do it.

Setsuno helped him put his shoulder back in, and the young man hissed in pain. His fellow precept laughed at his misery and placed a first-aid kit next to him.

“Don’t be late again, they went easy on you tonight.”

It was said to scare him, and the young man grimaced at the thought. And light in his eyes didn’t fade in the slightest.

It bothered Irinaka more than he thought. No matter how hard he tried to remind himself that Midoriya is quirkless and weak, with minimal to no connections to anyone in the immediate vicinity, with a contract with Chisaki to buy a young girl that he has no chance of doing. He is nothing. He is no one.

And no matter how hard he repeats this in his head, he can’t shake his gut feeling.

### Quirk Debunked

“Fuck, you gotta be cheating.”

Midoriya’s smile is sly and smooth as he takes his winnings for the evening. He tapped his forehead.

“The longer the game, the more in my favor it is.”

“...Then, let’s play a round. It’s been a while since I got to play mahjong. Kurono, we need a South.”

Kurono looked as uncomfortable as he felt. It was strange enough that Chisaki was engaging with them, but nearly unheard of for him to sit down and play with them. This was beyond strange, but since Midoriya came here, a lot of things were strange.

“Of course.”

Midoriya’s smile turned strained as Chisaki took a seat at the west seat. Kurono took a seat at the south side, and the poor fool that just lost all his money from paled in an instant.

“I don’t have any money, so I will bow out,” he said, “Please excuse me.” Chisaki waved him off, and Midoriya saw his chance.

“...I uh… Guess I’ll go to my room and do my homewor-”

“You’ll be playing too, of course, Izuku. It’ll be a pain to try and find two more players, after all. Stay here and entertain me for a game, would you?” Chisaki said, voice sweet like poison as he gave him a smile through the facemask. It wasn’t like Midoriya had any ability to refuse him anyways, so his lips twitched but he remained seated. “Hm, we need a North as well. Hojo.”

“Yes, boss.”

“You know how to play mahjong, right? Come, join us.”

Hojo looked perplexed, shot a look to Kurono, who only gave him a dead-eyed stare in return, and took the seat at the North side. His face progressively played and Midoriya had no doubts that he was mourning the loss of his money already. In his head, he tried to think of a way to minimize losses across the board.

“Its… been a while,” he said.

“Not a problem,” Chisaki replied. His eyes slid to Midoriya, “Now then, Midoriya, impress us.”

The man hesitated, and the game began.

-

Kurono won the first round. It’s clear on his face that he regretted being alive. Hojo looked pale, like he was going to be sick, with the second highest score. Chisaki waves it off, despite being dead last, and gives a side-eye to Midoriya, who sits with the score of zero. The look in their boss’s eye is predatory, and it’s hard to breathe in the same vicinity as him, moreless play and win in mahjong.

The money gets shuffled around, but it’s clearly not the focus as the next game sets up.

Their boss is merciless. Since most people skit around him, it’s easy to forget that his position wasn’t earned because of his path of carnage he overhauled, but his predatory ambition to stand at the top. And his current target was Midoriya.

Kurono, unusually nervous, fibbed a little and lost badly in the second round. Hojo is pale-faced at first. Midoriya remained at zero points, and Chisaki is still in the negatives, just not as bad as Kurono.

The others noticed something, and Chisaki started the next round.

“Oh that’s right,” the man said, snapping his fingers and Irinaka stepped forward with a bag. He titled his head to prevent himself from meeting Midoriya’s gaze at all cost. “Before I forget, I thought I should mention this very interesting book we found.” the branch head said, lifting a worn notebook in his hands.

Midoriya’s eyes widened while Hojo and Kurono continued their turns without looking at him. He opened his mouth, ready to say something, but no sound came out.

His tone was playful, voice mocking, “Hm… What’s this? Aren’t all these ways to count cards and keep track of most games that we play? What a handy book of tricks, don’t you think?”

It was strange to see the normally cold Chisaki, who only does things for his goal, sitting in the game room as it was. It was strange to watch him target and corner their newest addition like this, when he has never shown any semblance of interest in a person before.

“You… went through my things?” Midoriya asked quietly, just as shocked as the rest of them to think that Chisaki would voluntarily hold something that belonged to another person, even with his gloves on. The whole idea that Chisaki was giving him the time of day, just to personally debunk and ruin the notion that he had a quirk was strange enough as it was.

This whole thing was like something out of the Twilight Zone.

“Everything here,” Chisaki said, motioning to the pieces, “belongs to me, Midoriya.”

The hidden message didn’t go ignored.

Smugger than a cat with a canary, he chuckled, “But I suppose with your memorization quirk, you wouldn't ever need notes, right?”

Midoriya’s jaw clenched hard. “...What… do you want from me?”

“I was fine with Kumicho’s decision to let you stay here because you were quirkless. I wouldn’t allow any disgusting rat to take refuge in my home, after all,” Chisaki said, “And I do not want anyone to think that I tolerate liars. It’s as simple as that. I think this facade has been going on long enough, don’t you? Finish your turn.”

Midoriya gritted his teeth. His eyes flickered across the tiles and the round ended with his score remaining at zero. Chisaki leaned back, finally in the positives but Hojo won again. Kurono looked almost at peace with his negative score.

“Final round,” Chisaki said, golden eyes glued to Midoriya’s pale complexion. “And I have yet to be impressed.”

A shudder ran down Hojo’s spine, but he shuffled the tiles and started the final round.

All things considered, it ended anti-climatically. Chisaki reigned in first, Kurono two points behind him. The man looked oddly pleased about it, even if the boss looked disappointed. Hojo continued his terrible performance and Midoriya remained at zero.

With how the game was set up, Hojo would be the only one who lost money, while Chisaki and Kurono would be the only ones who gained. Midoriya stared at the tiles, carefully keeping as much emotion off his face as he could, but in the raptorial eyes of the boss, he might as well have been naked.

“How disappointing,” the boss said. He stood up and walked out without a further word.

Sitting there, however, Kurono eyed the game scoreboard with no small amount of trepidation.

Even though Chisaki said that, and everyone here bore witness to the undeniable fact that Midoriya lied about having a quirk, Kurono didn’t think that this debunked the young man of his abilities. In fact, this game served to prove how terrifying this young man could be.

He scored a perfect score of zero this entire time. In mahjong, it was nearly unheard of. Quirk or not, this wasn’t something that someone could pull off without resorting to cheating.

His eyes flickered to the notebook. He barely had a chance to look through it, but it was clear that they were notes on some card games like blackjack and poker. He’s seen the man’s reports, he has no reason to doubt that these were Midoriya’s personal notes that Midoriya made.

No matter how well someone memorized the rules on the fastest way to win, or could memorize an entire deck of 52 cards even with the small shifts in the numbers and cards, the fact that Midoriya could do it in practice wasn’t anything to scoff at. Kurono had no doubt that Chisaki had to notice and recognize that, since even he noticed.

And looking around the room, the same amount of sinking realization could be seen in most of their members' faces.

Yes, Midoriya lied about having a quirk. Yes, Chisaki decided to step in himself, even though it didn’t seem to be bothering anyone there. Kid was a good sport, and it wasn’t like he was robbing all of them of their money.

And yes, Midoriya didn’t have a quirk. Instead, he just proved that he has something just as irreplaceable. In all honesty, Kurono thinks that this is much more terrifying.

### Rappa’s Attitude

It was a normal day, or as normal as it could get.

“Ah, the squirt’s still at school?”

Chisaki’s hand stopped moving from where he was signing off on reports. His eyes flew to Kurono for answers, and his right-hand looked just as surprised and shocked as he felt. In fact, Kurono’s eyes flew to him, like he had any clue what the fuck was going through Rappa’s mind right now if he was looking at Kurono for answers. The two shared that look and then turned back to Rappa.

When did Rappa ever go around looking for someone?

“...School gets off at three,” Kurono said, finding his voice.

“...Haaah? But his curfew is at four,” Rappa said, narrowing, “Why does he need an hour to get back home?”

Chisaki hasn’t been this surprised since the day Kumicho announced Midoriya’s quirkless appearance to them. What was going on? Rappa knew Midoriya’s curfew? Rappa is waiting for someone? Rappa… refers to this place as home?

He knew too much now.

“Ah, whatever. I guess I’ll work out ‘till he gets here,” he said, rubbing the back of his neck. “See ya,” he said with a wave.

Rappa… just walked away without demanding a fight? He didn’t make a mess of his office? He…

Chisaki’s phone buzzed, alerting him that his attention was needed, and he stared at the time.

It was two.

He stared at Kurono, too shocked to formulate words, and just motioned at the man who left the room.

-

Later, he and everyone else in the manor would know exactly when Midoriya came home, because the unmistakable sound of something breaking would sound.

“Can’t you wait until I get my shoes off?!”

“I’ve waited long enough, pipsqueak!”

“No, not the bonsai plants!”

“You should have acted sooner, brat!”

“Rappaaaaa!”

Midoriya’s screams could be heard ringing through the manor, but no one seemed to be worried. They look on with fond exasperation and resumed their day like this was a normal and endearing situation that happened.

And while Chisaki never had been in a ‘welcoming’ home, he’s never felt so foreign before either.

### Changes at Home

Chisaki tiredly rubbed the back of his neck. He will have to admit, since Midoriya came here, his life has gotten a lot easier. Reports were in on time and properly queried, and they had money rolling in a steady stream. The budget was clean and they had real savings now. Data was properly collected and catalogued. Mistakes were at an all-time low, and morale was at an all-time high.

It was… strange.

Chisaki would have never thought that he would be able to hear a happy buzz in his manor. If he were a lesser man, he knew that he would be laughing and partying right with them. Of course, it would be disgusting to spend any time or even breath the same air as someone with a quirk. He would never choose to do that on his own.

Yes, he was only going because he knew that they were slacking and needed to get to work. And if they really had nothing to do, then they needed to go to a bar or somewhere else so that he didn’t have to deal with their loud noises. He didn’t want to hear their sudden bursts of laughter, and he didn’t want to either.

He repeated this to himself. He walked down the hallway, drawn in by the sounds of laughter. He opened the door and as always, everything fell silent immediately as all eyes fell on him.

This, however, hasn’t changed.

They were all on their feet in an instant, bowing their heads forward to properly greet them and he waved them off. So they weren’t drunk? Why were they like this?

“Resume,” he said, even though he never asked them about this before. He should have sent them away or reminded them about the importance of what he was doing.

Why was he like this?

Just a few weeks ago, he would have Overhauled everyone in the room for being so relaxed that they didn’t hear him coming down the hall. Then, he would have another punishment for the fools that made him use his dirty quirk.

He never thought that he would ever feel like a stranger in his home. Boss, definitely. Alone and respected. But not a stranger. He had come here to see what the commotion was about, and now that he was here, he realized that they were just talking and enjoying themselves. He didn’t get it. And he was even more confused because usually the only time someone could enjoy themselves was when there was much more alcohol. There were barely any beers open.

Awkwardly and a little nervously, they resumed. Their conversation was much more silted, clearly too aware of their boss’s presence to do anything or say anything out of fear.

He… he doesn't know why that bothered him.

“Oh man, you guys are so quiet! I was so scared for a moment that everyone had already left without me-”

Midoriya, the catalyst to all changes in his life, poked his head into the room, a big, wide grin on his face. He took one look at Chisaki and stepped into the room to give a proper bow and greeting, “Chisaki-san,” he said. He looked around the group and then back at the boss, and with a bright smile that did not fit on a man saddled with an insane amount of debt and asked, “How are you today?”

“...Fine,” Chisaki replied back.

“That’s good, you look better. I just finished the last of the reports and took it to your desk. Would you like to review them here instead?”

“...Not at all,” Chisaki said, and he exited the room. The man was holding a plastic bag from the nearby convenience store, and walking by, he realized that they were all snacks. ...Did he run out to get some snacks for them?

As he walked back to his office, the lively chatter returned and he felt annoyed.

Something was changing. Something was making it change. And he… he didn’t know what to do about it. He looked to Midoriya at his side, and wondered why it took him so long to realize that the kid had given him a safe and easy way out of the stifled atmosphere without anyone losing face?

Ridiculous.

-

“Aren’t you too lax for someone who has to hunt down 20 million?” he asked, stopping on his trek to his office when he saw Midoriya at the office lounge area, covering the entire coffee table with small action figures of various heroes.

The young man looked up and shot out of his seat. He gave a bow right as the older man raised his hand to stop the greeting before it came. He paused, looking at him for a second before he gave a nervous laugh as he looked back to his collection. “Yeah, I guess it does look like that, huh?”

“...What’s it for?”

Midoriya’s eyebrows climbed up to his hairline and he stared at Chisaki in surprise. Under those clear eyes, Chisaki felt a bit of embarrassment crept up inside of him. He frowned at him, and narrowed his eyes. If he backed out now, it would be worse so.

“Well?”

“Ah, uh,” Midoriya jolted out of his stupor and rubbed the back of his neck. “It’s like a collector’s thing. I saw a new vending machine with things that I didn’t have on my way back from lunch so I…”

“...I see,” Chisaki replied back, feeling a little disappointed. He didn’t know what he was expecting. Did he think that there was going to be a greater meaning behind it?

The thought scared him. When did he start expecting these kinds of things from Midoriya when he still double-checks Kurono’s reports?

“I have a few of the Super Rare All Might,” Midoriya continued, “They’re what I really wanted, you know? I didn’t expect any of the vending machines here to carry this line. These are more popular in Tokyo and places around schools, since the kids empty them out faster so they have to refill it often.”

Oh no, he was going on a tangent. His eyes shone, reminding him how young he really was as he excitedly explained way more about a toy line than he wanted to know.

“...I couldn’t believe it until I saw it for myself-”

“Izuku.”

His jaw clicked shut as he turned to Chisaki. Seeing the annoyed expression on his boss’ face, he dipped his head forward, “I’m sorry for talking you ear off,” he said immediately.

“...Whatever, get these out of my office. I don’t want to see these disgusting hero merchandise in the manor again.”

They weren’t important after all. Midoriya gave a nervous laugh and nodded again. He wanted to Overhaul that expression off his face. He didn’t need a face to write up his reports, right?

“Yes sir. It won’t happen again.”

“...Where are the reports for the Ishiyama meeting?” he asked.

“Right here,” Midoriya said, pulling it out from underneath the pile of Present Mic figures he had. Chisaki felt dirty, even though he had his gloves on.

He looked through it, critical yellow eyes skimming past the handwriting. Midoriya really would have been perfect if only he had better handwriting. He was really considering passing a rule so that the boys would stop breaking his fingers, if only in an effort to try and get better handwriting.

As it was, he felt himself feeling better, like having a report was all he needed to cleanse his mind.

“...Comb through all the data about the Miyamuras,” he said, “Ask Kurono if you need access to something. I want a report about it by tomorrow morning. They’re getting ready to change their successors and we need to make a decision on which one to support.”

“Yes sir.”

Chisaki eyed the figures in disdain, but figured that he could show mercy. He had more important things to do, after all. With that thought in mind, he started to walk towards the door, and ignored the slight tilt of Irinaka’s head when he eyed him and then Midoriya. Why was everyone looking at him like that?

This was Midoriya’s first offense, and he was in a good mood again. Contrary to popular belief, he had small mercies for the kid that brought in the most amount of money in their group. This wasn’t favoritism. This was rewarding good behavior.

His eyes caught the way Midoriya gently and carefully placed each and every single hero figure into a big gift bag and snorted.

He was yakuza, right?

### Large-Scale Meeting (1)

“...Stop looking around so much,” Chisaki called out. “It’s unbecoming of someone that I came with.”

“R-Right, sorry, sir,” Midoriya said, paled faced. The older man’s eyes slid down his arms where he saw how tightly his hands had formed into fists and trembled.

Chisaki gave him a withering stare, and he did his best not to meet his eyes.

-

“...Is there something wrong?”

Chisaki’s voice was cold as he stepped forward. He looked between Midoriya and the other man.

“...No, sir,” they both said hastily. He scampered off and Midoriya grimaced at the thought of bearing the brunt of this scolding.

“...Lift your head. While you are with me, you are under my power and rule,” he said. “Currently, only four other people outrank my position right now. The Kumicho, his two closest aids, and the other Silver General.”

Midoriya lifted his gaze, and when green eyes met gold ones, didn’t shy away. For a guy with seemingly no spine, he was adept at keeping eye contact. Chisaki could understand why people hated him so much. For a kid dragged into the dirtiest part of the world, his eyes were still far too clear.

“That means that right now, out of everyone else here, they are the only people that can challenge me and the people that I bring. Do you understand? There’s no need for you to bow your head to anyone. I brought you here because you were the least likely to start a fight, but I will not tolerate you getting stepped on like that.”

Hesitantly, Midoriya nodded.

Chisaki stared back and sighed. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a fat wad of bills. “I know that you are an asset. I know that you have an ability that most people can never reach. I know that. You know that. Kumicho knows that. So go prove it to the rest of them.”

With trembling hands, Midoriya stared at the bills in his hands.

“I heard that they’re sitting down to play Mahjong,” he said. “Go make a mess out of them.”

His eyes narrowed in his determination. And he nodded.

“I won’t let you down, sir.”

They leave with triple the amount of money that they started with. The target on Midoriya’s back has widened considerably, but it was for a different reason than usual. Chisaki walked out, his head held high, and Midoriya in a considerably better mood.

### Chisaki’s Slip

“And the report?”

Nemoto flinched, “I-I’m terribly sorry. It must have slipped my mind. I will work on it right-

“It’s fine,” he said, he flipped his phone over to check the time, and his annoyance dissipated in an instant. He gave a satisfied nod, “Midoriya should be back soon enough. He can figure it out. In the meantime, we will focus on whatever’s going on in the north districts. Do well not to catch the eyes of the heroes there.” As it was, he has long since learned that Midoriya had much better reports than anyone else’s, if only because Chisaki preferred having too much information rather than too little and then being caught off-guard.

He pocketed his device and was about to leave when he felt like he was being scrutinized. He looked up sharply, annoyed at how no one was moving, but then realized that everyone present in the room was staring at him like they had never seen him before.

“...What is it?” he asked, voice curt. He was in an alright mood, but depending on their next move, it was going to come crashing down in an instant.

“N-Nothing, sir,” Nemoto said, ducking his head back down.

The boss frowned back, feeling the agitation and irritation return in full force, but he managed to keep his temper cool. In the back of his mind, he heard Midoriya’s incredibly naive words to encourage people to speak freely because occasionally, they will have caught something he wouldn’t have. “Speak your mind, Nemoto. I will decide if it’s nothing.”

The man flinched a little, tensing hard and then quietly spoke. “I… I was just caught off-guard for a moment, but it’s alright.”

“...Nemoto. I will not ask again.”

Even though his face was covered by the bird’s mask, anyone could tell that he was nervous. His fingers nervously tapped against his pants leg and he shifted from leg to leg. “...I just thought that it was interesting that you brought up Midoriya for this. Usually, you would have taken it all on yourself. I guess… I’m just glad that you don’t look as alone anymore.”

Nemoto slowly lifted his head back up, and bore witness to the rare sight of Chisaki Kai being absolutely speechless.

-

Numbly, Chisaki managed to make it back to his desk. He dropped into his chair, feeling as though the ground underneath him was suddenly uncertain. He needed to get a grip on his feelings and footing right now, but his mind swam.

He leaned forward to rest his elbows on his desk and placed his head in his hands.

When? When did he look for Midoriya? When did he start to wait for Midoriya?

The sinking realization that he and his entire group had, slowly but surely, been infected by whatever it was that Midoriya did to people made his entire core tremble.

The worst, the absolutely worst part of all of this, was the fact that he fucking welcomed the future where Midoriya stayed by his side. He could imagine it with alarming clarity, the Kumicho’s proud smile when he passed on the Shie Hassaki to him. He would turn around to see Kurono’s calm presence, Irinaka’s big grin, and Midoriya’s nervous smile. He already knew which sake it would be, a bottle bought from the heart of Osaka, where the boss’s boss had given him his first taste of sake. Oyaji was a nostalgic sort of soul, and a romantic at heart. He just knew that they would plan the private ceremony under the full moon after the Sakura petals bloomed in the main garden.

When did he start seeing someone’s smile in his future? No, when did he start to see other people in his dreams?

He feels, despite seeing a clear route to his ultimate goal, like he had lost his footing and has gotten lost instead.

### Interlude: 4 Month Mark

Sometime or another, Midoriya suddenly remembered that he had two months left to amass 10 million yen. By this point, he’s exhausted. He’s been trying to grab some minutes of sleep while he was on transportation, but the thought of missing potential information just by looking around and opening his senses to what was around him proved to be too much.

And as boring and lonely as school could be, Midoriya loved learning.

He didn’t realize how bad he must be, when he ran into the doorframe and he didn’t react in time so he just took a tumble for the ground. Had Spinner not grabbed him in that exact moment, he is certain that he would have a new bruise on top of the old bruise he got from missing curfew just a few days ago.

As it was, he was going to get his ass beat for missing curfew again tonight, but he was in no place to complain when 500 thousand rested on this nights’ deals.

“Midoriya,” Spinner said quietly, “...Have you been sleeping?”

He waved it off. He rubbed his temples and took a deep, slow breath. “I’m fine,” he said. And shaking his head, managed a small smile at his employee. “Thank you for catching me. That could have been really embarrassing.”

Spinner’s hands, however, remained around him, even though he was righted. How tired was he that he didn’t immediately straighten? He felt like a fool.

“...Midoriya, I… I think you should at least take a break. We have a general idea on how things go, and it’s just the USB, right? We can… handle it.”

Midoriya shakes his head, “No way, Jyabura-san has a big mouth. If I’m lucky, he’ll give us a lead on what to expect from that deal Kalifa’s trying to control. And if we’re not, we’ll still get some intel on that whole Hong Kong thing that’s going on.” His eyes lift to Spinner as he realizes something, “Oh, is everyone tired? I guess we can start working in shifts-”

“It’s you,” Spinner said, “I’m worried about you. These last couple of months… you’ve been acting strangely. I know it’s because of the money and stuff but… But I think you could really use a break, Midoriya.”

The young man stared at him, and so desperately wanted to say yes. He wanted to give up. He wanted to curl up on Twice’s couch and sleep for a year. He wanted everything to stop hurting. He wanted to stop hearing everything and block everything out for some time. He’s sick of seeing his friends get hurt because the dealings are slightly wronged, and he doesn’t want this anymore.

“Thank you, Spinner. But unfortunately, that’s not an option-”

“Why not?!” Spinner snapped, his eyes turning to slits in his frustrations as his fingers tightened around Midoriya shoulders. “Tell me, why aren’t you-”

“Spinner,” Midoriya cut in, voice cold and eyes better focused. “Focus. We have a dealing to get to.”

The man’s eyes widened, and in his shock loosened his hold on Midoriya. Midoriya pulled out of the touch and straightened his shirt. He was a little grateful for this, for Spinner, so that he could orientate himself a little better and focus in.

There’s a small girl that doesn’t come up to his knees who has never had cotton candy before.

“...Midoriya,” Spinner said quietly, “...Is it family business?”

Midoriya is an informat, and he’s fucking good at his job. It doesn’t matter how close they are or how incapitated he is, if he has information of value, he will not share it with anyone until the right price has been met.

Spinner doesn't know what the price of this information is, but he is certain that Midoriya would never tell him for any price.

Funny, he won’t hesitate to take a bullet for him, and he has no doubts that Midoriya would definitely do the same, but this was something that he will not budge on.

-

Dabi’s methods were much more forceful than his. He literally threw Midoriya onto his back, against the wall, and the young man groaned as the wall cracked under the force of the hit. He trembled with fatigue and pain, and barely able to sit up before Dabi was burying his foot into his collarbone, right where the giant bruise from a time before sat.

There are people bigger and heavier than Midoriya who would have cried at that kind of treatment. As it was, Midoriya hissed quietly as Dabi grinded his foot into an old injury Spinner didn’t think he forgot about.

“Don’t fucking underestimate me,” he said, fire dancing between his fingertips. “There’s no fucking way I can’t keep up with you.”

It was brutish, yes, but the message was clear.

If Midoriya wanted to run himself into the dirt, break himself apart for this unknown sum and unknown reason, then they would follow him all the way through. He would break only after there was nothing left of them. When Midoriya’s eyes, surprised at the words, met Dabi’s blue ones, he finally relented. He reached out his hand, no more fire, and after a second, Midoriya took it.

He hauled his employer up to his feet, wrapping his arm around the younger man and tucking him against his left side like he belonged there. His employer had a little smile begin to stretch onto his face, the first he had seen in a while, and Spinner wondered what happened for the two of them to know everything they needed to know with just a glance. The older man turned to the rest of them, as impassive and bored as always.

“We’re getting oden. Midoriya’s paying so stuff yourself.”

Toga and Twice cheered loudly. Midoriya, however, gave a breathless laugh at that like he didn’t know what else he could do, and Spinner wonders what it would sound like right next to his side. But, he gets to see the light return to Midoriya’s eyes, as he stops seeing the unknown goal ahead and meets his instead.

“Yes, I… I think a break would be good, after all.”

-

Two weeks later, Midoriya would accidentally get himself involved with the

### Pay-off-

"Midoriya if you can turn this around and win, you have no curfew for the rest of the week."

"...Seriously?" Midoriya asked.

His immediate boss waved his hand a little, "I'm a man of my word."

"...Then, if I win all the games for the rest of the night, could I choose which week?"

Chisaki pretended to think about and ultimately nodded, "Go ahead.”

“...And if I gave all that money to you,” Midoriya said slowly, raising his eyes to meet his, “Can that count as next month’s payment?”

“Better be an impressive game."

The young man stared at him, blank faced before he stubbed his cigarette out, took his jacket off to hang on his seat and leaned forward in his seat. His eyes hardened, focusing and the entire air around him shifted.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing the people at his table, with a small smile on his face, "please don't take this personally."

-

From the look on Chisaki's face, he looked ready to start cackling like mad. But the layman’s equivalent to laughing like a maniac was a smugass grin on the man’s face.

-

Midoriya would take his winnings in three weeks. The money of the game was supposed to go into his pocket, but instead, he spent it to pay off his next few months of payments at once. He straight up didn't bother coming home until about twenty minutes he had to go to school. Otherwise, he only stopping by to drop off reports and pick up new assignments before he would head out. Once, Setsuno had to text him to come back and pick things up, and Midoriya was in within the hour, leaving just as quickly.

The most impressive part of it was that he still got all of his work done.

The manor was much quieter for a weekend. Chisaki didn't know when he began to think that it was a strange thing.

### Paid

Four days before the deadline, Midoriya walked into Chisaki’s office looking as though he was put through the wringer. He had a double-bloody nose, a black eye, three of his fingers on his left hand was broken, but he had a duffel bag over his shoulder and another one in his not-broken hand.

Before Setsuno could even ask him what had happened, Midoriya walked straight up to Chisaki and dumped the duffel onto the coffee table he was sitting at. Chisaki didn’t even bat an eye at the disgusting amount of germs that the man must have brought into his office, and was more than ready to make him clean it all up by himself again.

“20 milion,” Midoriya said. “In six months.”

There was a long, long silence as everything in the office seemed to stop moving.

Chisaki stared at the bag, a rare expression of shock on his face as he stared from the young man to the bag. Izuk wasn’t a sloppy person, the time they spent together proved this to him time and time again. So, he’s certain that this was on purpose too.

“...Nemoto, come here.”

The man came running, and stood right next to Chisaki. “You called?”

“...Midoriya, I’m sure you know this, but Nemoto here has a quirk called ‘Confession’.”

It was something that was meaningless to say, since Midoriya wasn’t the type to lie, but Chisaki wasn’t going fuck around with this. He wanted to know the truth and the full truth.

“...How did you amass this much money?”

Midoriya opened his mouth, ready to respond before his fist came flying to punch himself in the face. It was such a strong and sudden hit that no one could stop him (not that they were expecting it from the beginning) but the damage was done. One of his teeth flew out and blood spewed on the desk.

Where the sight of blood splattering normally had Chisaki breaking out in hives, the man just looked shocked at Midoriya who coughed and shivered. The tells were all there.

He thought it was strange that Midoriya was in such an obviously bad state.

This kid came here, in pain, to avoid being asked questions. It was a smart move, but so painfully naive that Chisaki wanted to crush it. He pulled off his glove and reached over. Where a lesser person would have said that he was showing mercy, anyone who has ever experienced <Overhaul> consciously wouldn’t call it that.

Midoriya gave a sharp cry and learned a valuable lesson. However, he passed out, either from the pain or shock, and managed to buy himself a few hours.

Interesting.

-

If Chisaki didn’t believed in some form of higher being, his opinion would begin to waver. With all the knowledge, thoughts, reasoning and possibilities open to him, he would find that the easiest conclusion on why Midoriya was such a lucky bastard.

After all, shortly after knocking his own lights out, they didn’t get a chance to force him awake because they were called to assist in a drug scandal in another territory. He shot Midoriya, who was moved to lay down on the couch, a glance and snorted.

He’d find out soon enough. He always did.

-

That night, when Chisaki corners Midoriya on the couch he left him on. He asks again.

“I don’t know,” Midoriya replies, even though Nemoto stood behind him.

“...What?”

Midoriya gave a smile as he put his hand into his pocket.

“I knew that you would do something like this. That you would try and squeeze the information out of me,” he spoke freely, probably due to the fact that Nemoto’s quirk was influencing him to speak at all, and placed a pill-case in front of them. “Do you know what this is, Chisaki-san?” he asked.

Chisaki stared at the pill, but didn’t make a move to touch it. His eyes narrowed.

“Apparently, it’s an old, old drug from a long time ago. I got incredibly lucky when I managed to get it, because I had this awful inkling feeling that I would need it. You see, this is a trial drug to treat people’s cholesterol levels, expect, it never really got the green-light to go since the long term effects outweighed its efficiency.”

The look in Midoriya’s eyes were wild.

“As you know, I started smoking,” he reached into his pocket, the same way he always did, to pull the box of cigarettes out and onto the table, “I’m sure you know how the carbon monoxide inhaled from smokes affect cholesterol levels, right? I was so worried that this would backfire so badly, but whatever other side effects it has, I decided that it was going to be worth it.”

“Spit it out, what are you trying to say?”

“I can’t tell you what I don’t know. That’s how the whole ‘confession’ works, right? It makes you say the full truth, so here it is. The full truth, as I remember it. No one can make me tell you something that I don’t know. These pills made me lose my memories for the last six months,” Midoriya said. He tapped the pill case, “And I don’t know what I’ve been up to for the last six months, but now, you won’t either.”

Chisaki stared at him in shock.

“For me,” Midoriya said, “We made a deal yesterday concerning Eri. I have the 20 million, so give me Eri.”

“...Why did you go this far?” Chisaki asked quietly.

The young man pulled his lips back in a sad attempt to smile, but it looked too uncertain, “No idea, but I’m certain that I’ll find out soon.”

“...You chose to forget it all?” he asked quietly.

“Yes.”

Golden eyes stared at Midoriya for another moment and he closed his eyes. He took a long, deep breath.

Overhaul cannot affect the mind. He can fix someone’s brain, reconnect nerves, take them away, replace them or combine them with something completely different, but he can’t bring someone’s memories back. Nothing could.

He can’t make someone feel something with his quirk. If he could, Eri would be a willing participant, and a lot of people wouldn’t have needed to die due to frivolous and otherwise avoidable ways.

By this point, Chisaki was intimately familiar with how smart and thorough Midoriya was. This was someone who knew how to make the world work in his favor, and knew how to push certain pieces in order to make the best possible outcome for himself. It was something that happened over and over again, and still, Chisaki had underestimated him.

And with this incident, he understood that Midoriya made a choice and threw it back into his face.

He conceded. This was beyond defeat for him.

“...Tell Kurono to stop the experiment,” Chisaki said to Nemoto.

“...What? Chisaki…”

Golden eyes fell back to determined, if exhausted, green eyes.

“...You win.”

Midoriya gave an exhausted smile.

And then, the side-effects hit. In the haze of pain, Chisaki opened his hand.

“...If you give her back, I can end this now.”

Midoriya laughed back.

“For the me that lived those six months,” he said, even as blood came dripping out of his mouth and he couldn’t see one Chisaki but a blur of four Chisakis, “I can’t do that.”

### Recovery

It takes Midoriya a full two weeks to recover and flush all the drugs out of his system. As soon as he’s lucid, however, he sends a text out to his motley crew that he’s alive but very, very sick, and that they have the rest of the month off.

He turns his phone off after that, and would remain ignorant to all attempts to contact him. When he turns it back on, it’ll come in, all at once, and his eyes would bug out at the thought that they all cared, in varying amounts.

He spends a grand majority of his time unconscious. Later, he’ll learn that his body had finally crashed after the strenuous effort he packed into it for the last six months. And whatever the unknown, suspicious drug he put into his body.

Midoriya… scares himself.

Of course, after everything that he said to Chisaki’s face (only half-heartedly influenced by Nemoto’s quirk), he still has a detailed journal about what he has been doing for the past six months. It contained all the information of the data he had collected and the amount of money they would be worth per person.

It detailed how who he was with when, who they met with, how and where. Some things had time-stamps on it as well. And at the end of every <day> was a long, long, long string of numbers. Some days had more numbers than information written.

He… he has a good idea what those numbers mean, and it scares him.

-

Six months is about 3% of his life.

“...I’m sorry,” he said come Friday evening when they are gathered in the Employee’s Only Room behind the bar. He gives a full bow as soon as everyone is there, and there is a long moment of silence.

“Is this about the sudden vacation? I’m just glad that you look like you’re finally human again,” Spinner said.

“...Don’t do it again,” Shigaraki throws in his two cents.

“Yeah, if you’re going to get that close to dying, at least let me come over,” Toga called out, pouting. And a bright blush came onto her face as the fantasies began to play in her mind, “Kya, a defenseless Midoriya, just laying there waiting for death…”

They all took a moment to stare at her before they ignored her and returned to Midoriya, who straightened back.

“What brought this on?” Compress asked. “Although, if I may say, you do look… different.”

“...I…” Midoriya’s eyes dropped to the ground and then he gave another bow, “I’m really sorry for how I have been acting these last few months, if I have been acting strangely at all.”

“..The way you’re speaking…”

“...The truth is, I have no memories of the past six months.”

There was a long pause.

“What?”

“Whoa, there the fuck-”

“What did you do-”

“This is like a shitty plot point-”

“I’m really, really sorry-”

There was a loud clattering sound, as Twice got to his feet.

“...Everything? In the last six months?”

“...Yes.”

“...Midoriya, what the fuck.”

“So, all your questions that you have,” Midoriya said, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly, “I probably can’t answer.”

“No, just…” Shigaraki pinched the bridge of his nose, “Sit down and explain everything.”

So he told them. He told them that he needed to make 20 million yen to buy something. The sum of the money had their eyes popping, but they must have remembered something he couldn’t, because they went quiet quickly.

When they were quiet, he told them of a drug that he took. It was a drug that made it so that he wouldn’t remember anything. He thought that he could manipulate it based on how much he smoked, and the helpless sound that Twice gave out made him pause for a brief moment. He stared at the blond, looking down at his feet before he looked back up and finished his explanation that he had been in recovery mode since.

And then, when they asked what he bought, felt that this wasn’t his secret. He gave a helpless shrug.

-

As it turns out, the only person that knew what he did was Gentle. He doesn’t know how that makes him feel.

### Smiling

With all that’s said and done, they managed to return to their time before the six months. Indeed, it almost felt like the six month period didn’t happen at all.

Midoriya laughed so hard that he almost fell over, almost, if Jin wasn’t there to prop him up, laughing just as hard. Toga stared at him, a bright smile on her face and Iguchi abandoned his attempt to hide his chuckles.

Dabi, who had been bringing in more popcorn after losing in rock, paper, scissors again, took a moment to stare at Midoriya’s face.

He couldn’t even remember the last time he saw that kind of open laughter on his face. It was without weight, without worry. Thinking about how Midoriya was just a month ago, he repeats to himself that he didn’t want it. This was the Midoriya he wanted.

Once upon a time, Dabi didn’t think he’d ever see the same face more than twice a week. Now, he feels like he suddenly has too many things to protect.

### Muscular

“Ah, excuse me,” he said. “No hard feelings, it’s just,” his eye focused in on Midoriya, “I need your head for a job.”

>> Midoriya made a lot of enemies and got careless enough that they all know who he is now. So here comes all the bitches who wanna kill him for what he knows.

>>and he buries him in cement via construction sites after he wrecks all his friends. And gets the authorities involved. And word gets around that his quirk must be strengthening or whatever

>>now he’s a terror.

>>and izuku realizes what it means for his hired hands who aren’t seen as hired hands but as his <friends> and doesn’t want to clip their wings and take them away from what they have and take him to his world. Thus starts to put some distance. Also doesn’t NEED money like he did for eri.

>> and the others who are super attached

## Short break

### Informat-kun

Shockingly, Midoriya lived an almost quiet life afterwards. When he found out about huge deals, he passed them to Chisaki. If there were children involved or other non-yakuza parties, he’d get a hero or the police involved. If they were small time, petty little things, like government officials who came looking for a bdsm club or to cheat on their wife, Midoriya would take care of it for a price.

More importantly, he wasn’t referred to as a villain or a hero or a vigilante.

He was someone who stood on the outside of the system. He was almost completely removed except when someone came to him for the right price.

Of course, there were the occasional hiccups. People that thought that they could control him, people who thought that they could steal from him, and Midoriya will return the price in full. He doesn’t like living in debt, after all.

Truly, the only hard part was making sure that no one else knew or cared about him and what he did. Midoriya and Midoriya weren’t the same pitiful person after all, the more people thought that the better it was for him.

### The Things He Doesn’t Remember

“Wow, that’s a nice jacket,” Midoriya said. His eyes trailed over the fabric, “Oh, and I guess it doesn’t rub against your scales wrong, right? This is really good material. I should get a lighter one for you to wear in the Spring...”

He stopped, at the sight of Spinner’s expression, and then dropped his gaze back to the ground.

“I… bought that for you, huh?”

The man nodded.

“...Sorry.”

Spinner hesitated for a second.

“...You said that same thing,” he said. His lips curled up into a smile, but Midoriya couldn’t help but think that he looked ready to cry. “When you got me this jacket, you said that you’d get me a lighter version for the Spring.”

“...Sorry,” Midoriya said. Honestly, he felt awful about this. He wished that he didn’t have to forget all these small and significant moments.

Spinner shook his head, “Nah, don’t be. I was caught off guard,” he said. His lips curled back to show his teeth in a wide grin, “I look pretty good in it, right? I wear it everywhere now.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, since my good friend got me it.”

At Midoriya’s surprised look, Spinner laughed even harder, like this was some special joke that Midodiya didn’t know. Somehow, it felt a little lonely, since he wanted to know what made Spinner smile, so that he could make sure to recreate it to an extent on another day.

The things that make Spinner smile like that was important to Midoriya.

### DabiMidoriya - eyes

“It’s been a while,” Dabi said, leaning against the wall, “Since you’ve met my eyes.”

Midoriya looked up at him and then back to the bag in his hand, and then back to him.

“You don’t like Gari-gari bars anymore?”

The man stared at him, those soft blue eyes staring at Midoriya’s before he tipped his head back and gave a long, suffering sigh.

“So smart and so stupid,” he said. He dropped his hand onto Midoriya’s curls and aggressively ruffled his hair, uncaring about the weak attempts Midorya gave to escape.

Just as suddenly, he pulled back, and when Midoriya opened his mouth to yell, he stopped when he caught the large, almost relieved grin on Dabi’s face.

“Just stay the way you are,” he said. “That’ll be perfect.”

No like seriously, he thought, what the hell did he do in the last six months?

### W

## Yokohama

### A Gift

“Excuse me, Oyaji, I… I must be a lot more tired than I thought, uh I uhm… can you just please repeat that one more time for me?”

“...I said I’m going to give you territory and get you some experience. I think you can handle it.”

Shock doesn’t even begin to describe the icy cold feeling that was encroaching up from his stomach.

“Yokohama ports,” he repeated back. It was right in the hotbed between theirs and another splintering yakuza group. It was three strain stops from Endeavor’s Hero agency. There was rumors of a rapidly growing meth problem and the fucking Taiwanese mafia keeps being spotted there.

“Yes,” and Oyaji stared at him with pride and beamed at him. “I expect good news.”

Fuck this. Fuck him. Fuck everything.

This old man was sending him to the heart of the battlefield, away from the safe net that he had collected and worked for himself. He was sending him to die.

However, the look in his eyes said otherwise. And Midoriya, who believed what his boss believed and wanted what his boss wanted, nodded back. He gave a polite bow and a reassuring smile in return.

“I won’t fail you.”

Someone believed in him. He had to respond to that.

-

“...You’re breaking up with me?”

Midoriya downed another shot of sake and sighed back. This was going to be hard enough, he really wished that the man would let this go, but perhaps they had gotten a lot more comfortable with each other than he first assumed.

“Twice, we’re not breaking up because we were never together,” he said.

“Didn’t you graduate yesterday?” Kurogiri asked, topping his shot glass.

Midoriya nodded his thanks, “Yeah, and so I got my new assignment.”

“...Assignment, huh?”

“I’m getting relocated to Yokohama.”

“Y-Yokohama?” Kurogiri gaped back. “That’s quite a ways from here.”

“Yeah,” Midoriya said, “I’m supposed to take care of the ports. ”

“...We’ll miss you.”

The green-haired man snapped his head up and smiled back. His eyes watered a little, and Kurogiri wondered how this soft boy managed to last so long in their world.

“...Thanks for everything, Kurogiri-san. It wasn’t much but-”

“Why are you guys talking like he’s going to die?” Himiko asked, a rare frown on her face. “Don’t worry, as long as we’re together, we don’t let anything like that happen, right?”

“...Yokohama has a lot of … activities as of recent,” Midoriya said slowly. “I can’t exactly take you guys either, since it’s on family business. I’ll be starting over there, as a proper member of the family and representative of Oyaji-sama.”

“I don’t need to be protected,” Twice blurted out, his words swaying between tones, “I’ll get stronger, and I’ll protect you too! I can do that, just, just don’t leave me here. You can’t abandon me! I’ll kill you first.”

“If it’s just that, I don’t mind either,” Himiko quickly added, almost nervous as she continued. “And we don’t take up much space either!”

“Himiko-chan… Twice-san…”

“We’re all going to die in this shithole anyways!” Twice said, unexpectedly getting very riled up about this entire ordeal, as he slapped the bar top with a hand, “So what does it matter where or when it is? What’s important is that I go with you! Then, at the very least, someone will remember that I ever existed, right? I’m here, I’m real!”

Midoriya’s eyes widened as the older man came closer and closer. His hands grabbed his shoulder and all but hauled him off the barstool. He had pushed him until the bar was digging into his back, but more than the pain and discomfort, all Midoriya could focus on was that Twice was trembling.

“Please!” he said, “Take me!”

“I can’t!” Midoriya snapped back. “You’re not Yakuza!”

“I can change that! I can change! I can do that for you! I’ll do whatever! Just don’t throw me away! Do you not want me anymore? What, is it because I’m blond? I don’t have to be blond, I can be not blond! I can do that for you!”

There was a long silence after that.

“Twice…”

“What the hell is going on?”

All eyes fell on Shigaraki, who yawned as he entered the bar from the “Employee’s Only” door.

“Midoriya is leaving!” Himiko blurted out, eyes wet with tears as she furiously rubbed them, “He’s leaving and he won’t come back because he’s going to die!”

“...What?”

He looked at Midoriya, who didn’t lift his eyes from the ground.

“...We… But… why?”

“I’m getting relocated.”

“Tell them to fuck off.”

“No,” Midoriya said, shaking his head.

“...Why not? He’s taking you from us.”

“...I… I owe the family everything,” Midoriya replied back. “This has is my first priority.”

“...You mean…?”

Kurogiri felt the glass in his hands loosen a little, and he swears that, in that moment, he could see that young, teenage Shigaraki again, wondering where All For One was.

“I’m going to take it all. It’s not much, but I’ll start here, and I’ll work towards that goal. I don’t want to let go of that-”

“For the name of peace?” Shigaraki tried to clarify, “For the name of peace you’re going to go further in as a yakuza?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s the dumbest shit I’ve ever heard.”

Midoriya didn’t break eye-contact. “It is.”

“If you know then, throw it away! Why are you trying so hard to get up there? Is that Oyaji of yours that great?”

“I’m doing it for me,” Midoriya said.

“...And your ambition… your goal… that’s better than being here?”

Midoriya stared and then nodded.

Shigaraki kicked the chair and rushed for the door, but when he swung it open, Midoriya spoke again

“Thanks for everything, Shigaraki-san. It was… fun while it lasted.”

“Shut up. Don’t ever speak to me again.”

-

“...Sorry about this, I know you wanted it to be a party,” Midoriya said. “Once I’m done helping clean up, I’ll leave.”

“When are you leaving?” Himiko asked quietly.

“...Tomorrow,” Midoriya replied.

### Sakazuki - Twice

“...Twice?”

“I’m not doing this for you,” the man said, walking until he stood only a foot a part from the younger man, “I’m doing this for me. Because I chose to.”

“...You’re going to regret this.”

Twice shrugged back, “That’s good, right? That means, we live through this, right? We can regret it together then.”

Midoriya, despite himself, felt his eyes water.

“...Twice, thank you. It means a lot to me that you are willing to do this, but I… I can’t-”

Twice’s hands shoot out to collect his into his hands.

“We... I… I can come to this conclusion. I came to this conclusion. Me, all of me.”

His eyes looked into teary emerald eyes and Jin gave a smile that could rival the sun’s.

“I wanna be your Twice. From now until the end of time or when ever you decide to put me down,” he said, “and even then, I wanna be with you to the next world, too. I want to see the world you do. I want you. For the first time in a long, long time, Midoriya, I finally feel whole when I’m with you.”

Midoriya sobbed grossly, and Twice doesn’t think he’ll ever find anyone in the entire world who could cry for him.

“So, Midoriya, do you … do you want me?”

And when Midoriya nods, he’s certain that he never will.

The sake cups that they exchange that night is cheap. Midoriya promises that they’ll get a better one next time, but right now, it wasn’t about the taste but the promise.

### Interlude: Dabi’s Night Out

“Oh! There you are!”

Dabi blinked, more shocked that someone would ever call out to him ever, and in his shock, remained still long enough for the oden stand owner who seemed to always be so skittish around him to put some broth in a large styrofoam cup.

“Here!” he said, like Dabi was Midoriya and was asking for their meal to-go because they needed to get to the stake-out location sooner rather than later.

He couldn’t tell you the measurements and dimensions of the cup, but he knew that Midoriya needed both hands to hold it firmly. He could tell you how many bites (two, unless they were eggs because those were always a struggle for him) it took before Midoriya got that giddy look on his face and he could see it with such crystalized clarity that he feels sick.

Habits, however, had his hands coming up to take the soup.

The smell was familiar, and the hot broth left its steam all over his face. Standing by himself here, however, he’s never felt colder.

“Midoriya said that you really like these, so I gave you two eggs,” the man said.

“...I don’t have any money,” Dabi said. Which was a lie, and they both knew it, Dabi had plenty of money, he just didn’t like spending it.

“Bah!” the man replied back, “It’s for you, so just take it, you ungrateful brat! Jeez, I’m only doing this because Midoriya-bozo asked me too, you know! Told me that you weren’t the type to eat if someone didn’t tell him too, and I guess that I have enough leftovers to give you!” he snapped back, not looking at him as he kept the fire under his broth on.

Dabi nodded, numbly.

“And next time, bring Midoriya-bozo around here, alright?”

He wanted to, Dabi thought. He would rather the young man than all the oden in the world.

He took a bite, and even though it tasted the same as before, felt like it really, really didn’t.

### Choosing Sides-

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“Well, the first thing I should do is make my rounds to all the other heads. Pay my respects. Once I’m aware of how little they expect of me, I will have a better understanding on how to take them down.”

“...You don’t pull punches, do you?”

He gave a humorless smile, “Don’t worry, that’s only the start. Once we get the ins and out, we can commence the next phase.”

“Wow, our plans have phases now?”

The group stopped at that word <our> and Midoriya nodded.

“Yes. We will first eradicate the extras at the port. The Taiwanese mafia will be the easier one of the two. Luckily, there’s a lot of strong heroes and good cops here. We’ll put them to good use. With enough ruined drug schemes and busts, they’ll crumple. From there, we can let the authorities break down on the drugs strands. We will take care of what they can’t find.”

“Afterwards, the Dougmas will fall. We’ll let senpai-dearest take them head-on.”

“And we’ll ruin them from the side?”

“Of course not. A full-blown turf war is going to ruin civilian life,” Midoriya shook his head. “We’ll need to collect enough evidence from both sides to denounce them. This fight can’t reach anyone but other underdwellers. Then, when we come for them, everything that they are will become mine. After that, we can do a clean left-to-right sweep and chase the remaining troublesome smalltimers out of the way.”

“...That sounds like a plot to a really shitty yakuza-game.”

The man laughed back, “I guess you’re right. But, alas, this is our life. Once we swallow everything here, we’ll be able to move upwards.”

“...And take over all of Tokyo?” Dabi asked dryly.

“Hm, a modest goal, but I guess we all have to start somewhere,” the young man said, a smile on his face.

“So, the world?” Toga asked, eyes shining.

“Don’t you know?” Midoriya said, “I’m an overachiever.”

It would take six months and four mistakes, but Midoriya was called into the Kumicho’s office to discuss the Yokohama Port Battle and came out as Kumicho’s Lieutenant and Yokohama’s new owner.

### Provisional Licenses-

Midoriya's eyes caught the news. Not the fact that Best Jeanist was answering the interview but one of the sidekicks behind h8m. Unmistakable blond hair, and Midoriya thinks that the whole world could blow up and he wouldn't even notice.

He looks well. Has he gotten his provisional license?

Goodness, he was taking leaps and strides towards the goal that they dreamed of. Absentmindedly, he put the cigarette into his mouth and lit it. He took a deep breath.

Had they changed at all?

## Yokohama's New head

### First Night as Boss

For Midoriya, reality didn't sink in until he was walking out of the celebratory dinner for his sudden promotion. He got into the car, and when he was pulled to the streets, requested to go to the office.

He could already see everyone's eyes of contempt as they smiled and wished him well. He was going to look like he was going back to work, after a party no less. In addition to that, he was the youngest person to be sitting with the other heads. A position that most of them killed, slaughtered, and bided their time for was snatched by a kid who couldn’t even legally drink.

Made even worse because the boss was oozing with smug pride.

Unable to take it anymore, Midoriya ran. He didn’t want to drink anymore, not when he was still too weak to hold his own liquor very well, and he was too emotionally unstable to justify it. So, he ran to his new base of operations.

This was now his office.

He was the only one here. Everyone else was instructed to take it easy and go play with the extra money he padded their wallets with since the dealings had gone so well. He walked into the office, his now, and sat down at the seat. He placed his head on the desk.

This was his now.

The exact moment it sank it, he made a rush for the bathroom. The door slammed open and swung back but he managed to dodge it. He dropped to his knees in his expensive slacks and promptly emptied his stomach into it.

The burn of expensive sushi and sake, his tears, his regrets, and his agony. Clutching the porcelain bowl, he was sobbing.

One day this would be worthwhile and it wouldn't bother him as much. Standing over the mountain of corpses, this was the only way to claw up and make the path he wanted. In order to make a brighter future, he needed to decide who needed to go away so it doesn’t get darker. In order to do that, he needed to prioritize the people by his side. In order for the world to have peace, he had to absolutely destroy himself first.

For his goal, this was the appropriate sacrifice. He was quirkless, useless, weak and worthless Midoriya. This was his only choice.

Midoriya spent his first night as boss the same way he celebrates any milestone in his life, accompanied by a toilet bowl, crying his heart out.

### Team

“A… team?”

“No one knows how you did it,” Chisaki told him over the line, “or how you managed to get the police to align with you, but you got a lot of attention on you on this side. Yokohama is where some of the worst scumbags are, and even though the former leader there was a bag of shit, he knew how to keep his boys in line.”

Midoriya, who felt the stares of contempt at all and every moment, nodded along even though he knew that Chisaki couldn’t see him.

“Right now, there’s no one there you can trust.”

It was made even funnier as Midoriya’s eyes stared at the place where his carpet was too lumpy. Did they really think that he, the master of eavesdropping, wouldn’t notice something as sloppy as that shitty wire-tapping job? Cute.

“...Kurono has business by the ports. He will be there in a week. Do you mind showing him around the area? I think he could use the break.”

Really? Seriously?

He took over the entire ports here in six months, and this was the best that they could come up with? He’s a little insulting, but the rest of him was overwhelming grateful that they underestimated him. Not for the first time, he was so grateful for his mom and dad for blessing him with genetics that made him look weak and feeble. If these men came at him right now with all that they had, there wouldn’t even be bones left of him. But as it is, it was like they were handing him victory on a silver platter.

“...Chisaki-san,” he said, “Thank you for your concerns and well-wishes. I will do my best to live up to your expectations. I would love to show Kurono-san around next week.”

One week then, he thinks to himself. He has one week to reaffirm his current status as Number One. Regardless of what anyone else said or thought, he had to do this.

Midoriya held no delusions about himself. He is very well aware of his powerlessness. He was weak in every sense of the word, naive to a frustrating degree, with nothing and on one backing him up. He had done too many questionable things, committed too many crimes, blackmailed too many people, and pissed off many others, for him to ever get a proper, righteous job.

But for the woman that birthed him, who has only ever wanted his happiness and good fortune, he swears that he’ll live a little bit longer.

### One Week

The first day is spent revamping his old ideas. His blackmail network is abysmally small in comparison, but the right calls and connections has more information falling into his lap than he was expecting for a 16 hour period. Well, it wasn’t like these last six months were for naught, the rapport he built with the small communities around the area were even stronger now that they all knew he was the new head.

Interesting. But at the same time, he felt a little sad that these people were abandoned by a hero who waits for the media, a police that can be bought, and a yakuza who allows foreigners to play in their backyard. If he was a hero, he could have saved them all, but he was just a powerless, lowly yakuza pawn with the title of boss. Really, this was the best he could do for them.

So, he would first amass money. With money, he will buy temporary trust. With the allure of money, he will have a temporary security while he looks for something a little more permanent.

In times like this, he misses the people that he used to have on contract. He took a deep breath, thumbing his phone for millionth time that day. He knows that he should just call, because he won’t know their answer until he asks, but his fingers freeze up every time he thinks he will dial. He’ll wait till nightfall, when he usually contacts them. Yeah… that’s what he’ll do.

He says this, but fate plays another rude joke on him.

“Hey, Bossman!!” Twice cheered as Midoriya walked into their shared apartment unit. “Figured now was a good time to get us all together! Congratz on owning Yokohama! // Now, we can get everyone back together again!”

And his search for trustworthy people ends as quickly as he sees the people that he missed the most. Right when it looked like they were going to say something else, he felt his eyes burn.

“...Aw, don’t cry-”

He had allies.

-

“You need to what?”

“I’m looking for people to take my side again. When it comes to people that I can trust my everything to, I immediately thought of you guys,” Midoriya said. “Of course, you don’t have to, if you don’t want to, and we will go over the contract in more detail but … but I don’t want anyone else right now.”

“Yeah sure,” Toga said, “But do we have to stay at the office?”

Midoriya shook his head, “If you decide to stay here with me, then you don’t have to worry about room and board as long as you live in my apartment. I can’t make any promises if you want to live somewhere else. If you want to take the train back and forth, that’s fine too. I think having that rotational weekly schedule worked out fine for us.”

“Nice! I’m in!” Twice cheered back, like there was ever another option for him.

“...What’s going to be different between before and now?” Iguchi asked, “It can’t be good to be seen with us as yakuza, right?”

Midoriya shrugged back, “I’ll deal with that as it comes. As long as you guys don’t go out of your way to badger the police and taunt the heroes, I should be able to protect you now.”

“Hah,” Dabi sighed, “Getting paid to be protected,” he muttered back. He nodded, “Alright, do we have to do that signing shit now that you’re almost legal?”

“Whatever,” Shigaraki shrugged back, “I’m not doing anything important right now, and when it comes to easy working hours, no one has you beat. Count me in.”

Toga squealed loudly into her hands, “I’m so excited to be able to work with you again Dekkun!”

Compress gave a bright laugh, giving a flourish before executing a deep bow, “So be it! It’s been a while, but I think you will find that my services are not lacking! It’s good to work with you again, Midoriya!”

Spinner gave him a wide grin and a nod.

And Midoriya sniffled again, feeling his eyes prick with more tears.

“Aw, are you crying again?”

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“To be honest, depending on how you acted, I was going to make you beg for me to come back to your side,” Shigaraki admitted. “I wanted to humiliate you and torture you for the way you left me.”

Midoriya stared at him, and where anyone else would have looked disturbed and tried to escape, he remained where he was, so that their arms remained pressed against each other. All the space on the couch, but Midoriya made his home right by Shigaraki’s side, like there was never any time lost between them.

“...Why did you agree then?”

The man stared back and said, “The sight of you crying was so pathetic that I didn’t want to.”

“I-I didn’t cry-”

“No, you were definitely crying,” Spinner called out from the other side of the room.

“Twice, no less!” Jin laughed back, waving his can of beer.

“Take my side!” Midoriya yelled out and they all shared a hearty laugh.

### All Night - DabiMidoriya

It’s closer to two in the morning when Midoriya finally makes his way back to his place. He’s not heartless, so he grabbed Dabi by the sleeve and the other man must be exhausted, because he doesn’t protest and just like that, the two of them tumble into the apartment Midoriya got when he got to Yokohama. He said that, but he does stay at the office more nights than not.

Dabi fell asleep as soon as he hits the couch. Midoriya didn’t know how he had the energy to be jealous.

When he woke up, it’s 2pm and there’s a bowl of fried rice on the kitchen table. There’s also bandages, an assortment of pain medication, a bottle of water, and a few bills. There’s a note, and the familiar brush of hastily written words was familiar. All that haste, he thought wryly, but, it was still a page long.

Typical Midoriya.

He skimmed it once, read it in detail a second time, thought really hard about throwing it away, skimmed it again, and then tucked it in his pocket. It was the same type of note that Midoriya always left. It detailed to him what kind of food he had, what he had made, that he left for work, that Dabi could stay or leave whenever because the door auto-locked, concern for his well-being, gratitude for his assistance, blah, blah, blah. It was something so disgusting that he couldn’t do anything but keep it where he kept all the other notes he had gotten from Midoriya all this time.

The other physical copies were in a fire-proof safe even though he already etched the words in his heart.

He ate everything that was left for him. He didn’t need the pain medication so he skipped that, but went ahead and downed the water that was left for him. He took a shower, as hot as he could get it. He went to the kitchen to eat something else, but saw that Midoriay really needed to go shopping for anything that wasn’t expired and rotting.

Begrudgingly, he took care of that. Eventually, he found something else to eat, and chowing down on the apples, he leaned back on the couch and tried not to think about how unused and perfect everything was. There was minimal to no furniture, but a few books with a thin layer of dust.

He checked the time. Six.

He went ahead and went back to sleep. The next time he woke up, it was when he heard the door open. His eyes flickered to the clock. Eight.

“Ah, Dabi? You’re still here?”

Midoriya.

Dabi gave a lazy wave back. “Morning,” he said with a yawn. Somehow, seeing Midoriya as soon as he woke up didn’t put him into a bad mood. He supposed that it’s because the other man is quiet and not annoying about everything.

“...Good evening,” Midoriya replied back. “Thanks for washing the dishes.”

“Least I could do,” Dabi replied, sitting up.

“Lemme change and then we can leave,” Midoriya said, walking past him and further into the apartment.

Dabi nodded back, “You eat dinner?”

“Are you hungry?”

The older man thought about it, “I could be.”

“Okay, we can get something up on the way out. Or do you like my cooking?”

“...It’s fine. You should go shopping though,” Dabi called back. If he was a little more awake, he would have teased back, but as it was, he was still rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, “Are you in a rush?”

Midoriya came back out in record time, clad in his jeans and a dark green hoodie. He gave a small smile at the older man. “A little.”

Dabi nodded.

“Alright, I gotta take a piss and then we can go.”

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Again, they came back a little past two in the morning. When Dabi woke up, it was five and the sun was starting to sink in the sky. Being an adult with no responsibilities really was the best. There was food on the table, a note, everything.

When Midoriya came back, a little before eight this time, and he looked tired. He gave Dabi a smile though, as though just seeing Dabi was a reason to smile, and then changed out to get ready to go.

“...Aren’t you tired?” Dabi asked, his eyes tracing his sunken eyes.

“...A little,” Midoriya replied, as honest as always. He didn’t disclose any other information, but Dabi knew that it must have been a stressful day, if he had puffed his way through an entire case of cigarettes.

Dabi watched him open a new cigarette case yesterday, and here they were buying some more. Midoriya tore open the box deftly, placing the cigarette in between his lips as he kept his eyes on the phone and gave a hum when he saw something of particular interest.

“...Looks like we’ll find out something interesting about Umeboshi-san, afterall,” he said, taking a deep drag and pocketing his lighter. He gave Dabi a smile, “We’re going to head for the back of the construction site near the ports.” He started to walk towards their next destination, Dabi barely a step behind him, matching his pace instantly out of habit.

Dabi’s eyes focused on his employer’s curls, they bounced a little with each of his steps, and wordlessly followed. He could hardly believe that this guy was still in operation, when they’ve been working in shifts to follow him around.

“Do you ever sleep?” he asked.

Midoriya looked at him, his eyebrows lifting, and gave a crooked smile, “What’s with all these questions?”

The older man reached over, cupping his face and letting his thumb run along the bags under Midoriya’s eyes. It’s amazing how he could touch another human being, one that he burned no less, and they wouldn’t even flinch. Instead, like he was a giant house cat, the younger man leaned into the touch.

He couldn’t believe it. Did someone miss him as much as he missed them?

He doesn’t believe it. Even if Midoriya did miss him, there was no way he could have missed him more or even close to the same amount that Dabi did. Not that he missed him, of course.

“I see,” he said, as though he knew more about Dabi than Dabi did. The smile that he gave him bothered him, since he couldn’t get a read on what he was thinking. “Yeah, I’ll be okay. Once everything settles down and I order this up, I’ll take a couple of nights off.”

The older man nodded. And then, he thought about it.

Midoriya lived alone. Whereas before, he had a curfew and it resulted in his face getting beaten and therefore more noticeable, but now, there were no curfew, no beatings, no reason to avoid staying out late. Midoriya now lived in freedom, and better than anyone else, Dabi was beginning to understand the consequences of such things. He sees it in the shadows that cut across his face and the way his cheeks are starting to sink in.

He couldn’t believe it. The curfews that they used to hate so much were something that actually had some use.

“...Can I stay?” he asked. “...Long-term.”

Midoriya blinked, totally caught-off guard and tripped over his own foot. On instinct, Dabi grabbed him by the arm and forced him back onto his feet, stabilizing by yanking him against himself. This close, he realized that Midoriya is still much too thin, too small, and he thought back to how large that apartment felt.

Midoriya’s face threatens to split against his grin though and it leaves him feeling dizzy. The heat rising inside of him must have been because the young man stood so close.

“Yeah!” he said, and then, flushing red when he realized how loud he was, he repeated much quieter, “Yeah, I think that’d be great.”

And thus, Dabi moved in with his employer, some yakuza scum who can smile like he’s never known hurt.

### Kurono & Midoriya - 1 Week Mark

Kurono is nothing if not punctual, all this time away from each other, this hasn’t changed. He thinks that, because Kurono looks exhausted. His bird mask was nowhere to be seen, and he had a bag slung over his head.

Formalities dictated that Kurono bowed first. In theory, Midoriya outranked him now. However, it’s been almost two years since Midoriya started working under Chisaki, and some habits were harder to break than others. As soon as he laid eyes on the man, he gave a formal bow.

“...You don’t need to be bowing to me anymore, Midoriya-san,” Kurono said as soon as he straightened. He looked tired, but the smile on his face lifted up the exhaustion from his eyes, “You are more than your own person.”

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### HongKong - Portland Greetings

“I’m sorry, who?”

Chisaki leaned back in his seat, arching his eyebrow at him.

“Did I stutter?” he asked.

“N-No, but I was hoping that I misheard because you said that there was a group from HongKong and Oyaji wants me to go in? He wants to leave it to me?”

His former boss looked unimpressed, and Midoriya placed his head in his hands. He could feel his life getting shorter.

“Then, you’re here because…”

“Oyaji said you can’t fuck up.”

“Do we have any information?”

“Nothing you don’t already know.”

“...So nothing,” Midoriya clarified because he had no fucking clue that there was even a HongKong group poking around his territory. Shit, they just cleared out the whole thing with the Singapore kids too. He can’t believe this.

Still, he had a good handle on the kids here. Perhaps, he’ll need to call that favor in from that guy…

“And I lost you,” Chisaki sighed. “Well, we’ll be around as extra muscle,” he said, standing up and signalling that he was cutting the meeting over. “The meeting will be in two weeks. Get ready.”

“Can I bring anyone?”

Chisaki thought about it. “I’ll be bringing in Kurono, and he’ll have Mimic. You can have someone outside, but as far as people coming in, just one.”

“That’s fine,” Midoriya nodded, “I only need one.”

Golden eyes stared at him for a moment longer, as though assessing the man.

“...The place we are going to meet is by the ports,” he said. “And you of all people should know what the place is lined with.”

Midoriya knows, since they’ve blown up several warehouses. Some on accident and once he figured out what was going on, the rest on purpose. He’s not shocked that Chisaki knew that, but he was a little offended that he would throw this back on his face.

Did he really think that he would let personal feelings get in the way? Now? Preposterous.

If Midoriya has learned anything from the time he was 13, it was how to turn off his emotions.

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“Dabi,” he said, “will be coming with me.”

Chisaki sighed, annoyed and irritated.

“You have a lizard,” he said, “the most wanted-hitman in Japan, a guy who can compress anything, the duplicatir, a guy who disintegrates anything he touches, and that girl who can transform into anything she gets the blood of, and you want to being the Creamator.”

Midoriya’s pokerface was that infuriatingly gentle smile.

“Yes,” he said, “Did I stutter?”

Kurono, who had the unfortunate luck of being in the room, really had to hand it to Midoriya. It didn’t take long for his shiny spine to appear against the people that were once his superiors. Though, all those who have seen how hard he worked could attest that this wasn’t arrogance. It was confidence.

It seems, while beating up the kid they thought was a common orphan, they had unintentionally helped create something truly terrifying.

Still, Chisaki’s mask wrinkled, and Kurono almost swallowed his tongue when he realized that he was smiling. That Chisaki was actually smiling about this.

“Why?”

“We don’t need muscle or quirks for a mission like this,” Midoriya said, “We need someone to trust.”

Dabi slowly turned his head to Midoriya, clearly not knowing about the reason either, and looked more vulnerable than Chisaki ever wanted to see him.

“So, Dabi.”

Midoriya leaned back in his seat. All of his other friends were loose-cannons, and if everything goes wrong, he thinks that they’re stupid enough to try and prioritzie him. And then there was Shuichi, who was the type to trip up at the most randomest moment. Pulling in Stain was a big no-no, when he was his ultimate trump card, and he didn'twant to do damage control betwen him and Chisaki.

And so, Dabi. There was no one else who could keep their cool and assess the situation as well as Dabi. On top of that, he had no doubts that if Dabi had to choose, he would abandon Midoriya in a heartbeat. It was, on occasion, the only thing he relied on.

Dabi was as free as free can be. For a long while, the wind blew in Midoriya’s favor. And so, when the wind blows, he’s certain that Dabi will follow it away again. That’s why, it had to be Dabi.

He couldn’t see it, since Dabi was behind him, but that wasn’t what Dabi was thinking at all.

### Nosebleeds (6mo)

“...Have you ever… worked so hard that you got a nosebleed?” he asked quietly.

Next to him, Shigaraki was silent.

“...I haven’t,” Iguchi said, his eyes trained on Midoriya’s figure on the couch, posing as best he could for Himiko’s pictures while Compress fretted over him on the other side. “Until I met Midoriya, I always thought that it was something that people just said.”

He looked down at his hands.

“...I don’t know much about the world.”

### Lunchtime - ShiraMidoriya

Midoriya stared at his food and thought really hard about eating it. Two days into his new position as the Head of Yokohama and he has already lost all of his appetite. Was… Was he going to be okay?

It wasn’t that he wasn’t hungry, but he just wasn’t in the mood to eat.

He stared at the bowl of stir-fry in front of him. He liked stir-fry, so it definitely wasn’t the stir-fry’s fault. It was fresh and from the nice little family restaurant that he likes to order from. He never forgets to tip generously and only orders pick-up. The staff is polite, if a little stiff and tense, but that's something that comes with the job and Midoriya didn’t mind anymore.

In all honesty, it just felt like a pain in the ass to eat right now. He would much rather return to the stacks of paperwork backlogged from the previous head. There was enough of it there to last him a week with no breaks, and judging by the new movement from that new group, the Firecrackers, he was going to be getting more soon.

Making a decision, he stood up and was suddenly stopped by a hand. He looked at the half-gloved hand, and then straight up to the owner, where Shigaraki stared at his food.

“Finish that.”

“But-”

“Finish it or I’ll make you.”

He had no doubt that Shigaraki would find a way. Disgruntled, he sat back down to pick at his food. His eyes skimmed over the report at his side. He ran the numbers through his head, as easy as breathing at this point.

### Cruelty

Four weeks after graduation, Midoriya was about to start choking with how much fucking work was heaped on his desk. All of it was shit he doesn’t want but need to worry about, but if Midoriya knew anything about this world he was brought into, it was that he was going to lose no matter what.

If he did a regular and relatively good job with this territory, more people will hate him.

If he fucked up, he and everyone who was seen associated with him will be dead.

There was no in between.

With that in mind, he really wanted to teeter on the line of half-assing the job to get the bare minimum requirements but alas, he couldn’t even do that.

There were so many things wrong with this city, for no reason other than the fact that anyone who had the power and means to do something about it didn’t bother. And everyone else was squabbling amongst each other to try and come up with a way to see tomorrow.

At times like this, when the public feared going outside and each other, someone else had to step in as the temporary security blanket. Living in fear would do nothing but exhaust people. And when people were tired and exhausted, they will hit a point where they don’t care anymore. At that point, there will be something a little worse than anarchy, and he doubted that hero society would be much help when it would be their own citizens at risk.

Either, a better villain or a reliable hero needed to step in. Deku tilted his head as he racked his head with opportunities.

It was time for them to step in then.

-

However, he wished that his workers would fucking work. And would work correctly.

There was a large calendar listed on the main wall that he has someone updating the value of the stocks that he had every morning at 8am, 12 noon, and, 3pm, and once more at 5pm. It was something that he got into the habit of and really, it’s not that hard.

And then, one day while checking those stocks, he realized that there was an error.

“...Who did this?” he asked.

Setsiuno, walking by at the time, turned on his heel to stare at what Midoriya was pointing out. “I think it’s was the guy from the old branch. Uh…. the one that’s balding? And the scar on his lip,” he made several motions at his face, probably to demonstrate what the scar looked like.

“I see. Please call him to my office. I would like to talk to him about this.”

-

His name is Usoi Unsui. He had only one purpose and it was to survive. Nothing else, no one else mattered. Working for the family was an ideal, but he was a man that lived in his own reality. It seemed his parents didn’t love him and were obvious about it from the moment he was born.

And now, due to their carelessness, he now has to properly discipline this man. First and foremost because he couldn’t afford being taken lightly. The mistakes that he made would be forgivable if he stopped making them, or didn’t make them so often. He had no need for people for people who were comfortable in their position when they have bigger things to move onto. And secondly because this man would have to serve as an example.

“...I saw that you have been updating the calendar everyday,” Midoriya started, “Thank you for your hard work.”

The man beamed back, and Midoriya hardened his heart without losing his smile.

“Of course, Boss! Anything for you!”

“...Anything you say?”

Midoriya’s smile hadn’t changed, but the atmosphere did. It was something that came much more naturally to him than he would like to admit, but he had it down pat by now. The older man in front of him stiffened suddenly, and even though his smile twitched, forged onwards. Ah, fools.

“O-Of course, haha. Is there something this lowly me can do for you?”

Men who swallow their pride for life… are the ones the easiest to control, and the easiest to lose.

“Then, do you mind making sure the numbers are correct?” Midoriya asked, “Making an error or two is understanadble, but these are tens of thousands of yen difference depending on how these stocks go… but you already knew that, didn’t you?”

“Oh, you’re right! Making a mistake like that would cost our entire family a fortune!” he said, rubbing his hands together with a sweaty smile.

“I’m glad you agree. Then, does that mean when you wrote 23.4 instead of 2.34, you understood what that would cost this family?”

He froze, his eyes widening, “A-a… a small mistake like that, is terrible! I’m sorry about that! I must have been very tired-”

“And what about this one, from two days ago, a stock increasing by 10 instead of .01? How strange. Made even stranger because there was nothing filled in for noon or the 3pm update for all my oil stocks on Tuesday, yet you were marked for working overtime that day…”

Midoriya’s eyes trailed from the stack of paper in his hands to the man. Obviously, the paper was just for show, to rely on notes to pull information out was something only amateurs did. Besides, it was easier to just memorize these things and have it ready for any given moment. It was much easier and better to have everything ready to go instead.

“...You understand where I’m going with this, right? If this was, truly, one mistake, I would have overseen it. In fact, I have. But, if my kindness will be repaid with ignorance, I have no need for you.”

“B-Boss,” the man said, his previous smile and bravado falling away. He gulped, “I… I got a little girl now. I need the money to put her into cram school and get her a good education.”

“My, a little girl? That’s right, you have little Ritsuko-chan, right?” he feigned innocence, a smile on his face.

He started to sweat harder. “Please. Boss. I’ll… I’ll do anything. Just please. I can’t… I can’t get kicked out of here.”

Midoriya knew that though. Usoi was 45 years old with a wife and four kids. He fell into the yakuza after an armed robbery went wrong and he was sentenced to some time in jail. When he came out, he was assimilated within their ranks, and they learned quickly that he didn’t amount to much. Same as any trash that came in after falling through the system, he was someone who couldn’t even keep a simple office job because he always got <comfortable> with his position and then got lazy. He was a poor shot, and frequently drank and expected others to cover his bill.

Two of his kids were runaways. One was in the Detention Center. The last one is eight and about to start the third grade.

This troublesome man is among many that the other branch heads have been sending him as help. He was someone without connections or friends, and they frequently used that as an excuse to send him scumbags they didn’t want.

Fine then, he’ll accept their generosity.

“...It’s a lot of money that we have lost these last couple of days. It’s nearing a million now.”

Which was, of course, a lie. Midoriya had a sharp eye for these kinds of things and didn’t mess with them. He missed the first two mistakes, but once he caught the third, he never missed it. After a week of constant errors, lazy mistakes, and ignoring the warnings, Midoriya finally had to push his hand.

Any other place, he would have lost a finger for the third offense.

Midoriya, however, is kinder. He wants to continue using this man. More importantly, he wants this man to be so thoroughly broken that he has no choice but to be used.

“...However, I am a fair man. So if you can bring me the amount lost just from this week, I will let you go.”

“How… How much would that be?”

“600,000.”

The man was so pale, he might as well have been a ghost. He doesn’t blame him, because Midoriya would have a little trouble getting this much money in a month. This time last year, however, it would have been chump change.

“T-There’s no way I could… how long? How long do I have?”

He was beginning to lose his control. Excellent.

“Well, it took you seven days to make this mess. So I suppose I will be kind. You have a month.”

“A-a month? For that much? Yo… there’s no way that I could-”

He must have remembered who he was speaking to in that moment, since Midoriya was known in the underground for making over half a million yen in a year. It was a lie, of course, but well, all rumors have a basis, don’t they? Besides, if push came to shove, he has no doubt that he could amass that much money.

“Haha… Boss, this is a joke, right? A joke? After… After everything what… what did I do to deserve this?”

Midoriya could write an essay about that. It starts with all of his inherent flaws that got him into this mess, and it ended with at least four different ideas on how to fix himself. However, Midoriya knew this type of men by now, and smiled back, just as sweetly as when he first came in.

“...Well, I suppose, you are right. This might be a little heavy to do in a month.”

The man brightened at that, so Midoriya crushed it.

“So either 600,000 in a month, or your wife for sixty men.”

He could see the exact moment when the gears in the man’s head stopped.

“Please come to a decision in the next three minutes. I have many things to do, and money to make.”

And just as he planned, the man fell for his trap. Had he chosen the money, Midoriya would have shown him some tricks, maybe even introduce him to that weapons-dealer that Giran mentioned to him earlier that week. He would have forced the man to work till the brink of death if it meant that he wanted to become a useful person. From there, if he had hauled ass, and missed the payment by a week or was short a few thousands, he would have shown mercy. He would have been forgiving.

However, the man who claimed to be doing this for his family, for his daughter, didn’t even take the full three minutes to sell his wife off.

-

Midoriya is a man of his word. And he is an opportunist. There’s a group of boys that Midoriya wants something from, so he allows them to partake in this in exchange for something. Then, he made sure that Usoi would be present, watching, and counting. It wouldn’t be fair otherwise after all.

And at the end of that party, he slumped on the couch in his office. He didn’t stay there till the end, just for the first couple of rounds. He had already emptied his stomach several times trying to get those sounds out of his head, but he still felt nauseous. He had a cigarette lit, but it just laid between his fingers, resting on his knee. He sat there, unable to cry, for a very long time. Or at least, it was long enough that Chisaki had opened the door and took one look at him.

“...Message delivered. Everyone is very well-behaved now.”

“Yay,” Midoriya said without any enthusiasm.

“Here’s some water,” Chisaki said, placing the bottle on the table. “I brought you some pocari sweat, too. Do you think you can get dinner?”

“No, I’m good,” Midoriya replied back. He rubbed his temples some more and when he reached for the bottle, saw how bad his hands were shaking. It must have been a lot worse though, if Chisaki leaned down to pick the bottle up and open it for him.

He waited until Midoriya’s fingers wrapped around it, and helped guide it to the young boss’ lip.

“...Thanks,” Midoriya said after downing half the bottle. He sat for a moment longer, and then planted his feet firmly to the ground. Ready to stand up and do more work, he was stopped when Chisaki’s hands came to his shoulders. “...Chisaki?”

“The next time you get up, we’re getting dinner. So decide if you want to stay or go.”

“...I wanna stay.”

The older man stared at him for another moment before nodding. He pulled his jacket off, grabbed a pillow from the other couch, and laid it all down. He looked at Midoriya expectedly, and the younger man gave a small huff of laughter. They’ve come a long way.

“Lay down. Doctor’s orders.”

“You’re not my doctor,” Midoriya chided back, but there was no heat to his words. He laid back though, and Chisaki laid his jacket over his torso.

“I’ll wake you up in a few hours,” Chisaki said, still kneeling next to him. His voice was low, and his eyes were focused. Midoriya knew he was lucky to have this man by his side. “We have meetings tomorrow.”

Midoriya hummed a little and nodded. He closed his eyes, and took a deep, slow breath. His lips curled into a smile before he knew what he was doing.

Seriously, who would have thought that Chisaki Kai would finally learn some bedside manners?

### Eri’s Declaration

“But I can be helpful!”

“Eri, you’re 11.”

“But I can be helpful!” she yelled back, almost pouting, “Midoriya-nii! I promise that I can be helpful! You said it too, right? That one day, I’ll find someone that I want to protect and that I want to keep safe too!”

The young man, even after all these years, felt his eyes water, because yes, he did say that, but he didn’t mean this. She should waste her life, her bright and shiny future, on a piece of shit like him.

“Eri, you have your whole life ahead of you, you don’t need to chain yourself down now-”

“I can control my quirk!” she yelled out over him, desperate to be heard, “And, and even if I don’t have any time stored, I can still be helpful in other ways! Gentle says that my tea is really good now!”

Midoriya frowned, his eyes narrowing as he darted left to right. No good, Twice and Toga were practically swooning at the sight of Eri, and all of his other regulars were refusing to meet his eyes. Traitors. All of them. He’s going to be cutting all of their pay.

“Eri, how did you even get here on your own-”

“I brought her, Midoriyan!” Toga cheered, “I can’t turn down a fellow maiden in love!”

Midoriya paled at the thought of Eri being in love. Poor bastard had his work cut for him, but when he realized how Eri’s focused, watery eyes were on him, he realized the truth.

Fuck him. Fuck this. Just fuck his whole life. On occasion, he recognized that his entire life was a mistake. If he could, he would go back in time to tell his past self to go take a swan-dive off the roof because it would just be better for the whole world.

“Eri, the problem isn’t that-”

“And I’m not as good as Brava but I’m almost there! I’ll be there for certain! I just want to help! I don’t want to see you hurt and I don’t want to see you upset anymore!”

When, he wondered, did he become such a focal point in Eri’s life? When did he curse her to do this? Why had it come to this? What did he need to do so that he could have saved her instead of bringing her here? Why did he have to become her shackles?

“Eri, there’s nothing for you here,” he decided on. It was cold, he knew that, but seeing the absolutely heartbroken expression on her face, he wished that someone would save her from him. “...Compress, can you drive her back to the main house?”

“...But Boss-”

“Is it because I’m young?” Eri asked quietly before her courage returned to her, “I won’t be little forever! I’m getting taller every day! And I can do five push-ups now!”

“Eri!” Midoriya snapped back, raising his voice for the first time, “This discussion is over! Go back to the main house!”

Her bottom lip trembled, but an entire childhood of suppressing her emotions led to her tears remaining at her eyes. She nodded slowly, and Compress came in to gently lead her out.

“Oh, that was cold,” Toga whispered quietly.

“Oooooh icy,” Twice muttered back.

He ignored them.

Dabi walked in as Compress walked out. He eyed the young girl, the gentle way Compress was whispering at her, and then back to Midoriya at the center of the office.

“Izu-”

“Let me grab my jacket and we can go,” he said, turning to walk back into his office to grab his jacket. Even if his life was fraying and falling apart, and the consequences of all his actions and inactions came to bite him in the ass, he still had to keep his head on straight. “This deal isn’t going to make itself.”

### Ashtray -

“Oh! Izumi! Glad to see you’re so well!”

Midoriya’s smile tensed as he regarded the large man at the door.

“...Fujimura-san,” he said politely. He came a long way though, if he could still smile in the presence of this man, although none of the humor touched his eyes, “What a delight. Unfortunately, I don’t have anything to accompany this wonderful visit.”

“Ah, none of that formal shicks,” he said waving away his concerns with a hand, “I’m just here to check on how that street rat Kurobane picked up is doing.”

“As you can see,” Midoriya said, a pleasant smile on his face, “It’s been busy, but I think I’m finally getting the hand of this. I’m truly lucky to have the support that I do.”

Something sharp crossed through the older man’s eyes, even though his smile didn’t even twitch.

“But, please, do come in,” Midoriya said, stepping back. “Twice, could you please get our guests something to drink?”

“Ah? Why, I would love to get you something to drink!” he declared loudly before spinning around, and just as loudly complained, “Why do I gotta?”

Midoriya’s smile turned even strainer as Fujimura’s eyes slid from the man back to Midoriya.

“No need,” he said, “I actually just wanted to see how you are doing. Could I sit here? I would love to observe how you have been running this place.”

His arm shot out to grab one of the men behind him.

“Actually, this here is one of my sons. We just exchanged drinks, you see. I really wanted him to meet you so that I could show him that anyone can do it!” he laughed boisterously, “You don’t mind, do you?”

“...Not at all,” he replied.

“Come now, Takami, what do you say?”

The man under his arm awkwardly pushed his glasses up and sketched Midoriya a small, if awkward bow because of his placement under the smaller man’s grasp. However, Fujimura released him, and he gave a proper bow.

“Takami Ichiro,” he said, “Pleased to meet you.”

“The pleasure is all mind,” Midoriya replied back, “Come this way.”

-

“Ashtray!” Fujimura snapped out.

Midoriya hesitated for a second, before he pulled his glove off and offered his hand up. A pleasant smile came onto his face even as the older man stubbed his cigarette out in his hand, grinding the cancer stick down hard. It was an action that spoke about how often this must have occurred, if a crybaby like Midoriya could smile so pleasantly during the event.

Dabi shot up from his seat, his flames curling around his fingers with a burning rage in his eyes, and two of Fujimura’s guards reached into their breast pocket to grab their weapons.

“Gentleman, please,” Midoriya said, “There’s nothing wrong. Please remain seated.”

He looked right at Dabi when he said that.

“Man, I can’t believe the assortment of rats you managed to scavenge,” Fujimura said, looking directly at Dabi smugly. He gave a booming laugh, “Too bad he couldn’t align himself with someone who could put him to good use!”

He stood up and patted Midoriya’s ass. Midoriya’s smile didn’t even twitch.

“Gahahaha! Well then, I guess I’ll be seeing you around, okay, Midoriya? Maybe you and Takami can get as well-acquainted as we were, hahah!”

The green-haired man kept his smile up, even as his hands balled tightly into fists by his side.

“Perhaps so, sir.”

And when Fujimura left, looking as every bit arrogant as his position demands, he took all his men and left the taste of something awful in their mouths.

“What the fuck,” Toga snarled out, “Who the fuck does he think-”

“That’s Fujimura Tennosuke. He outranks me by at least three,” Midoriya said, sitting down on the couch as he ran his hand through his hair, “Don’t cause such a ruckus-”

“Cause a ruckus-”

“Yes! A ruckus!” Midoriya snapped back, cutting off Dabi’s words as he opened his hands and dusted off the cigarette and ashes into the trash. “That’s a man we have to deal with for quite some time! He has amassed over 200 people west of the Main Branch’s head. West! Meaning, when Trigger first came out, it was in his territory! The only other information I have on Trigger is that there’s a dealer in China. He has relations in China that no one else knows about! That I don’t know about!”

“So, what? We’re supposed to just… just let that slimy bastard do what he wants-”

“Yes!” Midoriya snapped back, slamming his hand down on the surface of the table.

Dabi reeled back at that, since Midoriya has never snapped at him before, but the humiliation and frustration at the situation made the atmosphere in the office tense even more.

One of Midoriya’s phone suddenly went off and the young man fumbled with it. Once he saw the caller ID, he took a deep breath in and took the call.

“Yeah, sorry about that. I’m on my way. No, I won’t be late.”

His eyes flickered to Dabi and the others.

“Yeah, see you soon.” He clicked, and pocketed the phone. He stood up, and pulled out his gloves to wear on his hands. He gave his employees another look and then looked away. “Why don’t you guys just cool off for the rest of the day.”

“But you-”

“It wasn’t a suggestion.”

At that, Midoriya walked out.

### Respect -

“...Y’know, when I see how little they respect Izuzu,” Toga said slowly, “It’s super annoying. Like, they’re super terrified of him, right? But he makes the most amount of money, so how come they’re still like this?”

Kurono looked up from the reports he was shifting through for a brief second and then looked back down, “You’re joking right?” he asked. “You don’t get it?”

Toga frowned back. Dabi, with his face resting on his knuckles as he idly flipped through a different report, pretended (like everyone else in the office at the time) that he wasn’t eavesdropping.

Toga pouted back, “Oh boy, here it comes-”

“You still haven’t figured it out? They don’t respect him because of you lot,” Kurono replied back, voice sharp as he looked down on them. The effect was immediate and they turned silent at the words. “The work you pull in is minimal, and you’re all just a bunch of loose cannons with short fuses. I don’t know why you’re here, but it isn’t for the betterment of the group or Midoriya. You clearly have your own agenda and you don’t care what happens to him in the fallout.”

“What did you say?! You don’t know anything about us, or our relationship with Midoriya!” Twice snapped back, “You don’t know how much we’ve been through together-”

“The way you dress! The way you talk! You don’t make money for the group, you make trouble without reason, and don’t even apologize when it comes to bite the Boss in the ass!” Kurono slammed his hands down onto his desk with his report. He turned to them with all the frustrations he’s held onto for all this time.“Of course no one respects him! Not even his own does!”

“What’s with all this yelling?”

They all turned to where Midoriya walked in. Flanked on each side by Katsukame and Rappa, it exaggerated how small he looked. He looked tired, and slight bags could be seen against his eyes, but they were alert. He looked across the room, seeing all the key players in this dispute before he turned to Setsuno, who was standing behind Kurono, a little shaken.

“...Kurono? I heard your voice.”

“...I lost my patience,” Kurono said, a bit coldly, “I’m fine. Thank you for your concerns, boss.” He gave a polite bow.

“...Hm,” Midoriya’s eyes looked left to right again and then nodded. “You’ve been cooped here long enough. Why don’t you go ahead and check on the lab before you head home for the day?”

Kurono dipped his head.

“Thank you. I’ll be taking my leave then.”

And without another look, he grabbed his belongings and left. Midoriya took this chance to look at the other occupants and sighed. He ran his hand through his hair.

“If you got that much energy, please don’t pick on Kurono. I really don’t need him keeling over from stress when we have to deal with the Fire-Crackers tomorrow.”

It was a normal thing, it was a simple thing, yet this time, no one said what they normally would have.

“I’m out for the day,” Dabi said, getting to his feet.

“Then, I’ll go get some dinner. We said fried chicken for tonight, right? Toga, want some fried chicken?” Twice asked.

“Sounds great,” Toga replied back, distractedly even though she was just staring at her hands. And after a moment, stood up, “I’ll go with you.”

Midoriya frowned as one by one, they all left.

“Oh,” Magne sighed, “To be young.”

“Did… something happen?”

Magne stared at him for another moment before something impossibly warm crossed her eyes. She reached over with the business report for the evening, and Midoriya took it with grace. Even still, he eyed her warily.

“What’s going on?”

“Love,” she said proudly.

His smile tightened, and took the papers. He had bigger things to worry about at the moment.

### 

### Dabi’s Declaration

“...Hey there, Princess.”

Eri looked up where Dabi stood over her.

“Whatcha doing here?”

“...Is Uncle Chisaki here?” she asked quietly.

He leaned back and thought about it. “Nah, I think he just stepped out for dinner with Midoriya and the shitheads from Organto.” His face and tone darkened as though he was remembering something particularly foul.

“...Shitheads?”

“Uh… don’t tell them that I taught you that,” he said.

They were silent for another second, standing together in front of Midoriya’s office door.

“...Did you get left behind, too?”

The man stiffened and he narrowed his eyes at her. Well, after growing up with Chisaki as a father-figure, it must have been like a regular stare, because she didn’t even flinch.

“Me too,” she said quietly. “...Everyone says that Midoriya-nii only leaves people behind when he wants them to be safe and that it’s what makes him weak.”

Dabi felt his heart thunder in his chest at the words. He thought back to when the days were easier, when they just needed to check video feeds and shake some salarymen who couldn’t keep their hands off of high-school girls. He remembered the days where Midoriya would run to hide behind him when the dealings turned sour, and thought back to the moments where they spent the nights camped out on rooftops with hot tea and sweet mochi.

“But I want Izu-nii to be safe, too,” she said quietly. She sniffled a little, her eyes watering and Dabi hoped that no one came in and mistakenly thought that he made her cry.

He remembered once, back when he first met Eri through Midoriya, and how Midoriya explained what kind of person Eri was. He said this while he ran his fingers through her hair, as she slept in his lap in the corner of a dingy bar without a care in the world. Eri, he was told, wasn’t a girl who cried because she was scared or hurt. She was someone who cried when she was lonely. Midoriya explained that to him, and crouching down next to her, he wonders how a man as soft as

“Why were you looking for Chisaki?”

“...Uncle Chisaki had these experiments and he said he needed me to finish the research,” she said quietly. “Izu-nii stopped him, but I thought that maybe, if it was helpful, then I could help and finish the research. I’m a big girl now, and I don’t think it’ll hurt.”

Vividly, he remembered a time where Midoriya came into Kurogiri’s bar with nothing but deadly cases. He remembered half a year of nonstop action that netted them a fuckton of money and a target on Midoriya’s head. They all thought it was strange that Midoriya suddenly ramped up the danger level on everything, and thought back to the feelings in his gut when he learned that he wasn’t Midoriya’s only hired hands.

“...When… When was that?” he asked quietly.

“Eh? Uhm… four years ago?”

Dabi, while he didn’t have an ear to the ground like Midoriya does, felt something cold wrap around his heart as he remembered the whispers on the street that never went away.

“...What was the experiment?”

“...Quirk stopping drugs.”

Dabi stared at he for a long, long time. While he preferred someone else thinking for him, it didn’t mean that he couldn’t think for himself. He thought about their motley crew of idiots that are only used for manual labor and their handy quirks. He thought about that and the quirkless Midoriya.

He couldn’t do this. He couldn’t let this happen.

If a quirk-stopping drug were to come out, if somehow-someway, he was the one to lose his quirk, he would have absolutely nothing.

“...Eri,” he said quietly, “I… I want to protect Midoriya. And not just protect him, but I want to make his vision come true, and I want to stand by his side when it happens. But I’ve… I’ve never felt like this before. I don’t really know what I need to do so he’ll keep me..”

Eri’s eyes watered at his proclamation, and he extended his hand out to her.

“...But I think I have an idea on how. Do… Do you want to help me?”

-

“Good morning, everyone!” Eri called out as she pushed the door in.

“Morning,” Dabi called out behind her.

“Morning, Eri-chan," Setsuno's voice was bright and warm when addressing the young girl, and then it dropped to his regular drawl as he regarded the other man. "Oi, Dabi, you’re late aga…” Setsuno’s voice died in his throat as he stared at the sight in front of him.

“Oh my god, Dabi, what happened to your face?!” Twice blurted out, pointing and gasping loudly while simultaneously dropping everything he was holding. “Eek, hottie alert!”

“Eeeeh? You mean, this whole time you were an ikeman?” Toga gasped.

“A total make-over.”

Then, the office door opened and Midoriya came out.

“Hey if Dabi’s here, ask him to clear out Thursday so we can go do the raid in the morning instead,” Midoriya said as he pulled his suit jacket on. He pulled out his cigarette case and pulled one out. He held it in between his fingers and brought it up to his lips before returning the case to his pocket and pulled his lighter out, “I’ll be back for a late lunch, if he wants to talk then.”

“Boss, that’s real nice and you’re going to have to repeat that for me, but there’s more important things to worry about right now, like this-”

He gave an amused look as he allowed himself to be dragged forward by one of Twice’s clone. And everyone in the room watched in sick anticipation as the young man’s eyes slid from the ground up to Dabi’s face.

And then he stopped cold.

“...Dabi…?” he asked quietly.

Unable to meet those confused green eyes, everyone mistakenly believed that Dabi was embarrassed. The older man, very slowly, pulled his eyes up to meet his eyes. His hair was properly styled, giving the messy, spiky locks a more dignified look, and the hair on the left side of his head was slicked back properly. The stitches were gone. The purple skin was gone. He looked like a smooth-faced young man, an incredibly handsome young man, and clad in his perfectly-fitted suit, it was almost as though he walked right off the poster for an ad.

Looking at him, no one would think “Cremator.”

“I did it!” Eri cheered happily from her place holding Dabi’s hand. “Look! I can control my quirk this well now!” she said. “I can be really helpful!”

“...Eri,” Midoriya breathed out, eyeing the young girl, “...Why?”

“I… I wanted to be helpful,” she said. “So I thought that maybe if I asked Uncle Chisaki, I could help with those experiments again!”

The young boss’s eyes widened, his face paling, and the girl shook her head.

“But then Dabi came and he said that we were the same! So we tried to come up with a plan so that we could tell you that we’re going to be helpful now!”

“...Is that so?” Midoriya looked from her to Dabi.

Dabi, feeling suddenly a little embarrassed, ducked his head down. And then, as though remembering something, released Eri’s hand and straightened his posture. He fully faced Midoriya and then gave a full, proper bow.

“Good morning, Boss” he said, a far-cry from the street punk just last week, “I’m sorry for being late.” He stood up straight, his eyes shining, and gave a charming smile. “But I’m here now. What’s this about the raid?”

“...I...” Midoriya stared back, his brain running on overdrive for another moment before he took a slow breath. He pinched the bridge of his nose, closing his eyes, and took another breath. "...I have a report on my desk for you. We can talk details when I come back," he said. He looked mystified at the turnout and he looked to Eri. "Why?" he asked, sounding as lost as he felt.

"I wanted to show you that I can control my quirk now! So I can help now too! This time, I’ll protect you! And since I’m little right now, and I can’t come with you right now, I’ll send Dabi to do it for me.”

“Thanks, Princess,” Dabi said, sounding just like him even though he looked like a completely different person.

His eyebrows shot up to his hairline and looked to Dabi. "So, this is permanent?"

“...I have better control over my fire than I did when I was younger, so yes,” he said.

“Why?”

“...Because I want to be someone worthy of standing by your side. So first, I need to look the part, right?”

"...You're an idiot.”

“Yeah," Dabi said, a loose grin pulling on his lips, and no matter how his face was rearranged, the awkward placement of his slanted lips was unmistakably his. "I'm your idiot now, Boss."

His skin was smooth and clean now, free of scars and blemishes for the first time since he was 10. Dabi stood in front of his boss and gave a confident grin. Coupled with his black suit and tie attire, it was clear to anyone with eyes that Dabi was making an effort to be someone different.

“From now on, I’ll show you how serious I am.”

While everyone else was cheering and slapping his back, and the mood of the office electrified in it’s glee at the bold statement, Dabi’s eyes never strayed from the near distraught look on Midoriya’s face.

### Firecracker Meeting Gone Wrong

As soon as they were relatively safe, Midoriya turned around and socked Dabi in the face.

Never let it be said that Midoriya, who takes great care in his physical fitness, was weak. The punch from him knocked a tooth out of Dabi's mouth and sent the taller man hurling to the asphalt.

"You idiot! Why did you do that? When shit like that happens, you know that you should have prioritized yourself! Who the fuck do you think you are to try and detonate their bomb back?!"

Dabi laid on the ground, even when the man turned around to kick him twice in the stomach. The brutal force of each of those kicks lifted his chest off the ground, and the pain fizzled up and down his body. He didn’t cry out in pain, and gritted his teeth against the hit.

"You dumbass! You never did this before, why start now? Your quirk isn't made for defensive usage!"

He stopped abruptly, running one hand through his hair in an attempt to salvage the style. He scowled and pulled out his cigarette.

Without any prompting, Dabi slowly made his way up onto his knees in front of his boss. His hands were in fists, resting on the ground to either side of him as he bowed his head forward. He spat the blood in his mouth out onto the ground and wiped his mouth on the back of his hand. Meanwhile, Twice pulled out his lighter to light Midoriya's cigarette for him. Another Twice turned around, holding a phone.

"Boss, Spinner wants to let you know that the police have been dispatched. What do you want him to do?"

In an instant, Midoriya had returned to the impassive boss. He brushed the dust off his jacket and turned to him.

"... We are gonna abandon it. I'll explain it to Chisak-san and Kurono-san later. Twice, get Dabi out of here." He moved his cigarette to his left hand as he took the phone in his right. He turned around and Dabi, through his ragged breathing, blurted out his thoughts.

"The future you want isn't the future I want," he slurred out, while Twice's hands gingerly grabbed him. He ignored the fussing blond, he raised his eyes to the young boss, wondering when his gaze became so unfamiliar, "Because for me, there is no future without you."

Midoriya stared at him for another moment before he pulled his cigarette to his mouth and inhaled deeply.

"Spinner, kill all but one. I have an idea," he said into the phone. "You got eight minutes."

He turned on his heel and walked away, as though Dabi didn’t speak at all.

-

After the explosion that was the Fire-cracker meeting, Midoriya made it back to his desk to see a stack of reports, all detailing movements down by the ports. Because, of course, as soon as his back was turned, the port would have another problem. Honestly. He supposed he should be glad that it wasn’t one fire this time.

However, he hadn’t sat down in several hours, hasn’t eaten, hasn’t gone to the restroom, and really just wants to put his head down and sleep. Maybe, he’ll even get someone to look at how his shoulder was holding up, too.

No, he didn’t want to deal with anything at the moment. More than how tired he was, his emotions were on a frenzied craze and he needed to calm his heart if he wanted to get anything done.

He placed his head down onto the desk, closed his eyes, and replayed everything he ever knew about Dabi and Shigaraki and Toga and Twice and Spinner and and and…

Between one breath and the next, the thoughts of those closest to his heart gave him monetary peace and he didn’t realize that he had slept until he felt something drape over his shoulders. He flinched. The warmth was immediate, he must have taken it off just now to put it over his shoulders, did he look that tired?

He opened his eyes and saw Dabi. Immediately, as though to banish the sight of Dabi and his gentle gaze, he closed his eyes again.

More importantly, was Dabi always the kind of person that would do something like this? To naturally take off his jacket to give to someone else… was this really Dabi? He opened his eyes, and Dabi’s icy blue eyes didn’t seem so cold anymore. He wondered when this happened, and what he was doing so that he didn’t even notice?

"You're really serious about this, aren't you?” he said quietly.

Dabi looked down at his boss, and nodded. He took a step back, clearly intent on keeping watch and not at all embarrassed for getting caught doing something as kind as this. His cheek was still swollen, and Midoriya knew that his ribcage was all bruised up even if he pretended that he was fine.

Midoriya sighed back, turning his head to rub his forehead against his desk. He moved his hands up to the jacket across his shoulders, but didn’t have the strength to take it off. It was too heavy, despite just being a piece of cloth.

The warmth seeped through, from the jacket to his, and them from his clothes to his skin. It sank in further, reaching his blood and bones and Midoriya found his voice, "...Okay, I'll take this a lot more seriously. I guess I have to.”

He stood up, taking the suit jacket off and handing it back to Dabi with a smile on his face.

“So that I become someone that’s good enough to be followed by you.”

The look on Dabi’s face, the angle of his smile, the way his entire face (and Midoriya regretted hitting his face now, look at that bruise) lit up, the shine in his eyes, it was so dazzling that he couldn’t bear to stare at it any longer. The image he once held of his man, of Dabi’s laughter as his fire ensured his solitude, shattered and broke away to reveal the gentle gaze of sky blue in front of him.

“You idiot, you already are,” he said, taking the jacket back. He gave a charming grin, and maybe it’s because his face was whole again, Midoriya felt his breath catch in his chest again.

He didn’t really get it at all. Why did Dabi look so pleased even though he was pledging his life away to Midoriya and his uncertain and lost cause? Everything that Midoriya wanted to do for him, to keep him apart and away so he can run away and disappear at a second’s notice without anything clinging onto him, dissipated under his words.

“Where to?”

He looked back to his desk, grabbing the reports and putting them in his briefcase. “The usual, obviously. Let’s pick it up and eat it at home.”

“Yes sir,” Dabi said, taking the suitcase before Midoriya could even try to take it off the table.

When did Midoriya begin to fear kindness? He thought that, after all this time running around the underworld, he would be stronger now. He would be tougher, and he was. Things that people told him four years ago didn’t phase him at all anymore.

And yet, the things that made his heart waver was something that he used to receive in spades.

His phone vibrated and he flipped it over so he could read the text. He frowned and unlocked it with ease.

“...Hey, do you know where Shigaraki is?”

“...He should have stepped out with Kurogiri to check the finer details with Giran about the weapons plan with Korea’s Goomurong.”

“...Apparently, the Nomu’s don’t listen to anyone except us. You, me, and Shigaraki,” he said. “And he’s… just sitting there. And the neighborhood kids got to him.”

Dabi arched his eyebrow. Midoriya turned his phone screen to show Dabi the picture of Toga and four fifth graders, posing next to the Nomu sitting outside of Kurogiri’s bar.

“...I’ll go pick him up,” Dabi said, putting the suitcase back onto the table. “I trust that you’ll stay here and take a nap?”

Midoriya looked sorrowfully at the stack of papers sitting innocently on his desk.

“Yeah, probably.”

A hand dropped his his head and he looked where Dabi and his stupidly handsome face looked back at him. The grin on his face was not something he’s seen often.

“Go get some sleep. I’ll be right back. Call me if you want anything.”

The younger man swatted the hand away from his head, “Yes sir,” he muttered darkly, but right before he could turn away, Dabi grabbed his chair and spun him around. Reaching down to wrap one arm around his chest and one more under his arms, he hefted Midoriya off his office chair without any problems or stutter in his movement.

“W-What- Dabi! Dabi, what are you-”

He dropped him unceremoniously onto the couch. He took his hand and pressed it down against his head until it touched the cushion.

“Rest.”

Midoriya sighed deeply, and understanding that Dabi was suddenly much more stubborn than he initially thought, relaxed. He closed his eyes and forced his breath to even out. Dabi stayed for an extra minute, his hand moving to card through his hair, before he got up.

He waited for the moment for Dabi to leave before he crawled off his couch and went back to work, but it never came.

Instead, a warm jacket came to cover him up. In these moments, when Midoriya has Dabi’s jacket over him, he remembered just how much larger the older man is. Dabi, for as long as he could remember him, was tall and thin, and he always forgot that this man was still bigger, wider, in addition to being taller than him. The suit jacket fit Dabi perfectly, but it comfortably covered Midoriya from his chin to his thigh.

It was also incredibly warm.

Dabi ruffled his hair much more gently this time, “I’ll be back.”

When the door clicked shut behind him, Midoriya thought that he would rest for just another moment before getting back up. The sound of his quiet voice echoed in his head, and the weight of his words grounded him.

A short nap would be fine. If there is an emergency, his phone is on, volume set to max, on the coffee table in front of him.

-

They learn the hard way that Dabi had no interest in waking Midoriya up.

So when Midoriya woke up, his 15 minute nap had become three hours long and Dabi had just been sitting on the couch opposite of him, looking over the reports and making notes on them.

They also learn that Dabi is a shit note-taker with even shittier handwriting.

Dabi scowled, but he heats up the food that he bought on his way back, because Midoriya was glad that he could use the microwave much better than he used to.

In that moment, if he had asked him why Dabi wanted to stay, Dabi would have told him.

### Shigaraki’s Declaration - Nomu-kun

“Good morning,” Shigaraki said as he pushed the door to their office open.

“Shigaraki? You’re here alread… Oh my god, you got a makeover too?”

Shigaraki scowled back and turned away from Spinner and his gawking face. “Shut up, where’s Midoriya? I have a message for him.”

“He’s… in his office…”

The young man stalked right past Spinner and made his way to the office. He pretended that he didn’t hear Spinner take his phone out and snap a photo, or the way he was whispering frantically for Compress. He took a deep, slow breath, before rapping his knuckles on the door.

“Enter,” the muffled voice came through.

Maybe he should have brought coffee with him. The young man sounded tired. Come to think of it, while he was out, who was in charge of making sure Midoriya ate something? Dabi? Okay, so he was starving.

Needless to say, he can grab something later. He can’t put this off any longer, so Shigaraki ignored his sweaty hands and thudding heart, and entered the room.

Midoriya looked up from his papers, bags evident under his eyes, and his jaw promptly dropped at the sight of Shigaraki. To be honest, if Kurogiri had a mouth, he probably would have had the same response too, when Shigaraki called him up earlier that week to ask if there was a suit in his size at the bar.

But here he was, with the top half of his hair slicked back and pulled back into a small ponytail, the rest of his hair coming to his neck, standing in a formally fitted black suit, blazer, slack, tie combo and a crisp white shirt, doing his absolute best to pretend that this was a normal occurrence. He felt pin pricks all along his skin when he felt everyone’s eyes on him earlier.

Regardless of what he’s wearing, Midoriya always had a way of looking at him that made him feel vulnerable. This was no different, but coupled with the nervous buzzing at the pit of his stomach, a thousand times worse.

Why was it so hard to try and be a useful person?

“...Tomura, what the fuck?”

“...Good morning to you too, Boss,” he said, trying to keep his usual biting sarcasm out of his tone as he gave a polite bow.

It took an entire fucking week of dealing with Kurogiri, but he hoped he was doing this right. Midoriya hadn’t responded yet though, but that was fine. He didn’t disappear from their lives for all this time for nothing.

“Come outside, I have something to give you,” he said, jerking his head out.

Midoriya stared at him for a moment, looked at the paper in his hands and took a deep breath. He stood up, grabbing his jacket and Shigaraki held the door open for him, with his head bowed. Green eyes took one more look at him, staring right at his face and his red eyes that remained on the floor, and sighed deeply.

Shigaraki didn’t know what that sigh meant, but he’ll spend the rest of his life to make it up to Midoriya.

-

“I… uh, what?” Midoriya blinked slowly, his cigarette momentarily forgotten in between his fingers as he tried to decipher what the fuck it was that he was seeing.

“The doctor wanted me to give you a gift for your birthday and graduation. It’s been on my mind for a while, but with everything... I never got the right time. And, by the time I knew what I wanted to get you… anyways, it’s ready now,” Shigaraki explained.

“And so you got me…”

“A pet.”

Midoriya, still tired from his all-nighter, stared at Shigaraki, and then to the… beast? Human? It was referred to as a pet dog, but Midoriya didn’t think he was that tired to fall for that. Just a moment ago, he was complaining about the new dumb tax law and how there was a new biker group congregating by his favorite bookstore needed to be put down immediately, and now he wishes he could go back to it.

“No, no, no, this is not a pet. I’m uhm… this is a human, isn’t it?” Midoriya, remembering his cigarette, took a long, long drag. He exhaled slowly.

“Uh… It might have used to be,” Shigaraki replied back, tilting his head as though trying to remember.

“Oh my god, what part of ‘no more slavery and/or human experimentation without my approval’ did you not understand? I thought I was pretty clear about all of it too, you know. Where did you even get this? Did you do this to him? Does he take after his mom or his dad, and-”

“Midoriya,” Shigaraki’s voice cut him off and Midoriya cut himself off.

There was a long silence, and he finally dragged his eyes up to stare at how his long-time friend’s expression softened. And now that his hair was almost completely pulled out his face with the exception of a few strands, he can see exactly how gentle those red eyes were.

He wonders if those eyes have always been like that, if Shigaraki was always this soft and lost child under those bangs. Or if this, too, was an offering to him.

“The doctor and I thought you could use an extra shield. Something that’s obedient, trustworthy, and only smart enough to understand orders. My quirk isn’t made to protect you, and I’m… not that good at fighting. I’ll get better, but the extra muscle is never a bad thing.”

“Don’t think you can be soft to me and expect me to forgive you… that’s not happening,” Midoriya replied back, narrowing his eyes. “So spill.”

The man rolled his eyes. Even with all the scars on his face in the open air, the way he slouched in his fitted clothing in a uniquely Shigaraki-way, and styled his hair made him much more attractive than Midoriya was comfortable with him being. “Ah, Sensei wanted me to give you this, too.”

He passed a crumpled note to him. The young man stared at it for a moment and reluctantly took it. He put his cigarette in his lips, puffing a little. He opened it up slowly, as though he was scared that something would come out and attack him, and his eyes glided over the paper. He tipped his head back and he took a deep, long drag.

“Alright,” he said, taking his cigarette out of his mouth and back between his index and middle finger. Inwardly, he was certain that he would need to stub this one and grab another one soon, and was already mourning the loss. “Let’s say that he wants to work for me permanently. And as a gesture of alliance and loyalty figured out how to uh… cut and paste quirks into people. And that the procedure completely destroyed his brain and personality. And of course, the one that I have is the hyper-regeneration model. And he’s going to give me more. Great.”

He looked up at the extremely large creature. No, like, seriously, it was so big that he wondered if it would be able to fit through most doors. No, this was a weapon of destruction and clearly a declaration of war against God, or whatever Deity was in charge of Creation. It was a pale green, unsightly in every sense of the word, and seemed to be too long and thick to fit in this world, more or less through the door. All of its eyes were staring at two separate directions, like a frog. The top of its head seemed to completely expose its brain. He stared at the monster again, offering a quiet prayer to whoever it’s parents were, and the monster leaned its head in under his hand.

Oh no, it wanted physical affection.

“Uhm. Nomu-kun?”

All four of its bulging eyes zoomed in on him. If Midoriya had never seen Chisaki’s lab before or had to clean up after Stain’s messes, he would have been so grossed out that he had to back away, especially as the ridges of the brain touched the palm of his hands. As it was, he suddenly felt exhausted. He took another drag.

“I uh… are you hungry? Do you want to eat something?”

“You don’t need to worry about things like that,” Shigaraki said, “I’ll take care of all of them.”

Midoriya snorted back, “You? Take care of something?” he chuckled and then put it together, “I guess that’s why the good doctor put together something that had hyper-regeneration, huh?” he asked. And then, thinking about what was said, all the humor in the situation evaporated, “Wait, what do you mean by all…?”

Shigaraki turned and gave him a killer grin, predatory and sadistic in a way only Shigaraki could. In an instant, Midoriya felt 14 again, staring up at the guy he crash-landed into.

“The Doctor has a full stock. So whatever comes for us, we’ll be ready. I only brought this one so you could get used to them, but we can bring the rest when you’re ready. There’s 12 ready to go, and he’s working on the smarter ones now.”

“No, no, no, no, no,” Midoriya said, shaking his head violently. He took a long, deep breath as he tried to keep all the panic and screaming on the inside, “I think there’s a lot of things wrong with this. I need more answers,” Midoriya said, lifting his hand to gesture that they needed to stop. The Nomu took this to mean more head-pats and pressed his head against the palm of Midoriya’s hand.

The younger man stared at the action, defeated. And gave the Nomu’s brain ridges a little rub. The texture was something that he didn’t expect and never wanted to feel again.

He finished the cigarette, too focused on trying to get his thoughts in order and jolted out of his thoughts when Shigaraki leaned in to take it out of his hands. He stared as the man disintegrated it in his hand, and slipped his archer gloves back on. He couldn’t believe that he still had that pair. Or that it was in such good condition.

He hadn’t felt this lost since the day he realized that his dad wasn’t picking up the phone.

He took a deep breath, “Just… first Dabi, now you? What’s going on?”

Shigaraki was quiet for a moment before he took off one of his gloves. And then, he suddenly grabbed his hand instead. His entire hand engulfed Midoriya’s, it always did, and when the younger man didn’t pull away, even though he knew about his quirk, he managed a bitter smile.

“I’ll show you how serious I can get.”

“...Before we get serious,” Midoriya said, “Maybe you could answer some of my questions.”

The man frowned back and then nodded. “Just accept it.”

“I… Okay. Let me call Dabi, and we’ll get everyone together while I…” he stared at the Nomu, who tilted its head slightly to the side. The part of him that has always wanted a small pet to love and adore surged up and he, for a fraction of a second, thought that it was cute.

Fuck. Him. He already adopted it in his heart. There were 12 more?

“I’m going to finish my paperwork. Get him situated. Does he have a name?”

Shigaraki stared at him, “Uh… One? Since he’s the first one?”

Midoriya frowned back, “We can’t just… okay. You know what, fine? He’s the first, afterall.”

The young boss of the Yokohama Branch of the Shie Hassakai took a deep breath.

“You are Eldest now. I’ll figure a real name for you eventually, but from henceforth, you are the eldest of all the… others ones that are apparently coming so. Eldest.”

It opened its mouth He turned and somehow felt even more conflicted at the soft expression Shigaraki gave him.

Why was this his life?

### Changes -

“Okay,” Midoriya said, two days later. “Okay, now that I have some time,” he said, pretending that the reports on his desk weren’t his, “Let’s talk.”

He leaned against his office desk and looked at the two sitting on his couches facing each other. For once, they weren’t sprawled over his nice and plush couches with their feet on his coffee table, and for a moment, he missed their unruly, edgey, rebellious ways. At least he was familiar with them.

“I… I was okay with how we were,” Midoriya said, “and if you guys didn’t change, I was okay with that, too.”

“We know,” Dabi said, “That’s why we had to.”

“...Did someone say something? And you thought that this is what you had to do to stay by my side? That’s all bullshit. Don’t let that get to you. You’re not yakuza. There’s no need for you to follow what anyone else says.”

“That’s the thing,” Shigaraki said, “I don’t care what other people say about me. But I care about what they say about you. By doing this, I can be useful to you, and they stop saying that shit… It’s not a big deal. I’ll do whatever, be yakuza or kill or whatever.”

Midoriya gaped back., looking like a very confused fish. He made a confused noise, motioining at them and then at himself.

“Don’t look at me like that,” he scowled back.

“No, no, I’m just… I’m just really surprised. I…”

And he was evident in the fact that his hands went to grip his office desk tightly, as though it was the only thing that was grounding him to the world. He gave a slow breathless laugh, like he didn’t know if he was going to cry or laugh.

“I thought you guys wanted to be free,” he said. “And you… didn’t want to listen to anyone.”

“...I don’t want to be bored,” Dabi corrected, his eyes turning to his boss, “And now, I want you.”

The young boss felt his face heat up at the confession, and Shigaraki sighed back.

“You’re smarter than this,” he said, “So this is just redundant. But, I’ll say it as many times as you want, whenever you want.”

He stood up and walked over to Midoriya. He kneeled down in front of him so that the smaller man was taller than him, like he was a fucking knight swearing his loyalty to his king, and he looked up to meet his eyes.

“I… We’ve always been yours. We’re just going to make it official now.”

Midoriya, when handed their freedom and life, looks as though his heart was breaking and they don’t know how to fix that.

But they have the rest of their lives to figure it out.

### Chisaki & Nomu -

>> got a new dog

>> careful when you come in

Chisaki wanted to smash his face in. No, better yet, he’ll call one of his underlings to serve as his punching-bag. He swears to god that he had just been told to stay underground because there were police crawling around everywhere since the dealing had gone wrong, but to think that the next time he got a notification about the situation, it would be about getting a new dog?

Only Midoriya would be able to get a dog during the confusion.

“Doesn’t he know how much work a dog is going to be? They shed, everywhere. Not only that but they’re a pain to clean up after and clean. If you thought a human is disgusting, then dogs are no better. The stench they bring in is ridiculous. Running around in a bloody place like us, they’re a four-legged cesspool ready to be purged from the world.”

Setsuno looked at his boss through the rear-view mirror uncertainly, and then back to the road. Experience told him to keep his mouth shut when his boss got into one of these moods. More importantly, he hoped that the dog wasn’t cute so that he wouldn’t get immediately attached to it. Did ugly dogs even exist? Well, it was time for Setsuno to find out.

Regardless, if Chisaki wanted it gone, it would have to go.

“I can’t believe him. I bet it’s not even a pedigree. If he wanted a dog so badly, I could have made him one. One that would be clean and live with minimal to no pathogens and care needed. If I really tried, I could even make it live.”

More importantly, he hoped that Kurono would take his time buying the entire list of disinfectant and cleaning supplies that Chisaki wanted from him to deal with this whole problem. After all, it would be a shame if he bought all those puppy pads only to show up and learn that the only the dog’s collar and blood splatter remained.

-

They didn’t need dog supplies at all.

“Okay, promise me you won’t freak out, okay? If you freak out, he’s going to freak out and I really don’t want to deal with that again,” Spinner all but begged them as soon as they came to the door. He threw a look behind him and sighed.

“It can’t be that bad,” Setsuno said, even though he didn’t believe it.

“Ah, are they here? Oh, even Setsuno’s here,” Midoriya's came from further in, and then he poked his head around the corner. “Chisaki, Setsuno, this is my new dog. Tomura got it for me.”

Chisaki stared at it. It, because whatever it was, it was no dog. It was, first of all, clearly bigger than Katsukame, and boy, wasn’t that a doozy. Given how much it was hunched over, it was clear that it was probably much bigger than the ceiling and doorframe allowed.

If this was a cleaner job, he would have demanded a refund. He would have also taken Midoriya to court over this, for fraud and emotional trauma because...

“As you can see, he’s having a hard time getting adjusted. Do you mind Overhauling my entire building so that he can move a little more comfortably?” Midoriya asked Chisaki, a smile on his hand.

The older man closed his eyes, brought his hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose, took a deep and long breath, and then opened his eyes again.

“Who gave this to you? How did they even find a dog as ugly as this? Do I look like a fucking carpenter to you?”

“How rude, Pochi isn’t that ugly. Actually, in comparison to his siblings, I think he’s the cute one.”

“There’s more than one?” Chisaki’s stomach twisted and he grimaced hard, like he was about to throw up.

“Yeah,” Midoriya said, “Tomura got them for me when I mentioned that I was thinking of hiring some extra muscle. This one has super regeneration.”

“Wait, they have quirks?”

“Yep,” Midoriya nodded, “Apparently, Daruma has figured out how to take a quirk out of someone and give it to someone else.”

Chisaki froze and Midoriya’s smile turned mischievous.

“Now, will you help me remodel my place, Carpenter-san?”

-

“...To think… Of course, if there is a way to stop quirks, then there should be a way to give and take them…”

Chisaki sighed.

“And this… Daruma is going to be working with us, free of charge?”

Midoriya nodded back, taking another bite of the gyudon as he passed a small stack of papers to Chisaki.

“Once you earn his respect, he said he’s willing to meet you.”

“What’s the price?”

Midoriya looked at him and then looked down, “...I’m the boss now, Chisaki,” he said. “And I will do whatever I need to do so that we can protect our territory and the people within it.”

Golden eyes narrowed, “...What’s the price,” he demanded again.

The young man sighed and looked back down.

“...If you would believe it,” he said, “it’s a favor. Something about how I inherited AFO’s will.”

“What? Who?”

Midoriya shook his head, “Don’t worry about it. It’s not going to take any resources from you or your research. The group isn’t going into the negatives and we’re still operating along most laws.”

“That’s not why I’m asking,” the man said. He reached forward to grab Midoriya’s wrist tightly, “What are you going to give up for this?”

“...I told you, it’s something that I already lost. It’s a favor to me.”

The man scowled back, his polite demeanor abandoned as his grip turned bruising.

“If you keep sacrificing things, there won’t be anything left of you,” he said.

“...Are you worried for me?” Midoriya asked, eyes widening as his voice dropped to a whisper.

“Of course I am,” Chisaki replied back, looking shocked that Midoriya could ever say that, while his boss looked surprised that Chisaki could feel worry to begin with. Golden eyes took in his features and he gave a soft sigh. “Of course I am," he repeated for good measure.

“Why?” Midoriya replied back.

At that, the man released him.

“...When I’m better than him,” he said, taking the papers and shaking it at him, “I’ll tell you.”

“What? That’s not fair, why can’t you just tell me now?”

“You,” he said, pointing at him, “are more than smart enough to figure this out. Stop pretending to be stupid.”

“It’s not pretending if I just don’t know what’s going on!”

“...Stop being so ignorant then.”

“Chisaki-san-”

“Kai,” he corrected. “Call me Kai. That’s the only hint you’re going to get, my dear Izuku.”

### A Daily Change -

Midoriya yawned when he woke up and blinked twice before his head snapped over in alarm.

He smelled… coffee?

He shot up to his feet and ran out of the room. He ran into the first wall and then rammed his shin against their coffee table. Right when he was about to fall, an arm grabbed him and steadied him back to his feet.

“...Dabi?”

“Morning,” he said, slow and easy, even though he closed the distance between them in an instant. He occasionally hated how tall Dabi was. “Is there an emergency?”

“You can wake up before me?” he blurted back. The sun was just about to come up, it was time for him to go on his run, after all.

Dabi stared at him for a moment longer and then, once he made sure that Midoriya was properly up on his feet, turned back around and slowly made his way back to the kitchen with none of the urgency he just had.

“Yeah,” he said, “I guess.”

“...Why?” he asked.

“I felt like it,” he said. “Breakfast?”

Dabi’s breakfast was dry rice and burnt eggs. It wasn’t the tastiest thing Midoriya has ever eaten, but still in his state of shock, he ate it all. It was warm, filled his stomach, and lifted his spirit. Good enough for him.

“Thank you for the food,” Midoriya said, but when he stood up to put his plates away, Dabi grabbed his plates instead. “You made the food, shouldn’t I do the dishes?”

Distantly, he remembered a time when Magne fucking threw Dabi into a wall for making more dishes with no intention to clean any of them.

“...No,” Dabi said. “Give me a minute, and I’ll help you get dressed.”

“You what?”

Those days felt so far away. Was this what it meant to grow up?

-

“This is really unnecessary,” Midoriya said, as he allowed Dabi to button his shirt up and tuck it into his pants. He tightened his belt and grabbed a blue-gray striped tie for the day. “Like, really unnecessary. Who said this is what you should do-”

“Whatever you use your hands for,” Dabi said, cutting him off, “Lemme do it.”

“...Dabi?”

Dabi’s hands stilled and he heaved a big sigh. He reached down to grab Midoriya’s hands and kneeled down in front of him, before Midoriya could say anything, he pressed his forehead against the younger man’s knuckles.

“I’ll do anything, be anything.”

“...Dabi, what brought this on? I’ve never questioned your loyalty before this. And I never would want you to… to do this to prove it or anything. I-I-I would never-”

“I know,” Dabi replied back, cutting him off, “That’s why I have to tell you. And I’ll say it as many times as you want. I don’t care about this family, or the business. I don’t care about the world or heroes or anything,” he continued. “Just you.”

“...Are you proposing to me?”

Dabi paused for a moment, as though contemplating the words and then gave a barking laugh. He stood up, looking a little more relaxed. He pressed his hands on Midoriya’s shoulders, smoothing out the ironed shirt and turned around to grab a jacket for his boss, his friend, his future.

“If I said yes, would you keep me by your side?”

“I didn’t think I had a choice in the matter,” Midoriya replied back, but put his arms through the sleeves.

If he noticed that Dabi could use the heat of his fire to warm his suits before he wore them without charring them, he didn’t say anything. Instead, he took the smell of ash to mean that Dabi was with him, and it soothed him.

“...Thank you,” he said, “...I can’t say that you won’t regret it, but while you’re mine, I promise I’ll take care of you.”

“...Not a proposal then,” Dabi decided on, a grin on his face, “I didn’t say that to be protected. I said it so you would know. Use me for whatever you need. Of course, that means that you can’t like me. So get rid of that bleeding heart. No one thinks that their hands get tired, right?”

Midoriya frowned back, but Dabi didn’t budge.

“That hardly sounds fair, now does it?”

“It would be unfair if you did like me,” Dabi replied back smoothly. “Scum like me… We don’t get those kinds of feelings. And we don’t deserve them either.”

“Then, I’m the same.”

Their eyes met, and Midoriya wished that there was a way to show Dabi that his eyes were clear and bright. He was certain about it, more and more every day, that the Dabi he met a few years ago was just going through a bad patch in his life. He was fine now. He could even meet other people’s eyes, smile and laugh, and tip.

The older man snorted back, gently grabbing Midoriya by the hand and tugging him to the foyer to get his shoes on. He sat him down at the small chair there, and lifted his foot to slide the dress shoes on like he was a queen. Dabi even tied it, and although uncomfortable with this entire ordeal, Midoriya allowed himself to be pampered.

“No you’re not,” Dabi said as he finished, looking at Midoriya’s dress shoes like they were so much more than the knock-off brand that they were. “That’s why I can do this.”

Midoriya was starting to really get sick of hearing that.

-

When they got outside, his black lexus was already parked in front of their apartment complex and suddenly, Midoriya realized that the two of them were alone in the apartment since he woke up.

Did everyone wake up before him today?

Standing against the car door was Shigaraki, and Midoriya doesn’t think he’ll ever get used to the man with his hair tied up like that. In a well-fitted suit, and he thinks it’s impressive though a little worrying that it’s another new suit, he met their eyes and gave a shallow, but proper bow.

Midoriya felt his heart thundering in his chest. It’s clear that Shigaraki had been trying with his face and dry skin now, and with his hair pushed back like that, it really showed off all his handsome features. The scars on his lips looked attractive in that rugged kind of way.

Shigaraki leaned forward and pulled the back door open. God, he was wearing a vest and the black parkour gloves that covered that he got him all those years ago, and Midoriya was too shocked to do anything other than follow Dabi’s urging to get into the car.

“Morning, Boss,” Shigaraki said as he got in. He closed the door behind him and walked around to the front while Dabi got into the back seat from the other side and behind Shigaraki.

“...Is this going to be the normal thing now?” he asked quietly.

“Nah, we’ll switch off,” Dabi said, a wolfish grin on his face, “Glad to say that I can still put that expression on your face though.”

Midoriya felt numb.

-

Upon pulling in to the front of his office he learned that Spinner had already unlocked the doors and opened them for business. He reached for the car door to let himself out, when Dabi opened it for him.

Yo, what the fuck.

The man gave him a smile with his stupidly smooth face, as he stood opposite of the car. He stepped back and after a moment of trying to figure out where he was, he got a foot onto the floor.

"Good morning, Boss!"

His head snapped up to where the underlings of Yokohama, his underlings now, had all lined up to greet him. This part was more normal, even if he still wasn’t used to it. But the addition of Shigaraki and Dabi and the very nice Lexus was not something he expected at all and it made him incredibly off-kilter.

It was like he was a young teenanger again, slinking against the walls of a seedy bar for the glimpses of nice rumors. He got out of the car, and then realized that with the car door open on his left and Dabi at his right, it was a two part shield should they be attacked aerially. He didn't know how to feel about this observation.

With no way of expressing his discomfort without it looking like weakness, he just kept his composure, and did the next best thing to hide his discomfort.

He nodded at the people in front of him as his fingers dug into his inside pocket for a cigarette. He got the case out, pulled out his cancer stick, and placed it loosely in between his lips. He put the case back and while reaching in his pants pocket for a light, Dabi's hand extended out in front of his face.

Before he could say anything, a small fire appeared right at his index finger.

Who…. Who is this man?

"...Need a light, Boss?"

Just two years ago, Dabi incinerated his cigarette packs for asking for a light. Last year, he singed Twice’s eyebrows off when the blond asked for a light. But here he was, with just the right amount of fire ready to go. ...Did he practice this?

Vaguely, he remembers Twice buying at least four packs of cigarettes at once, and he thought it was strange at the time because he didn’t think the blond was smoking more than usual. Now that he was thinking back on it, he wondered how many of those casepacks they went through to get this perfect flame.

"Thank you,” he took the light. He took a drag, and on the exhale, realized that it didn’t really help at all.

Behind him, Dabi closed the car door and knocked on the glass. And then the car drove away. He… When did they become so intuned with each other?

-

He doesn't know when this happened, but seeing the Nomu of the day, the dark one that looked as thick as Endeavor, in a pink apron was now a normal part of his day.

He was holding a tray, with hot steaming coffee on it and a tray of cookies. If he wasn't trying to walk in and get ready for the imploding issue at the port, he would have been delighted to see it making progress and become more autonomous. As it was, coupled with how freaky his whole morning was, that was not the case at all.

"Ah, uh… thank you. Please take it to my office, Eldest."

The Nomu, the eldest Nomu and therefore referred to him as Eldest, gave a low purr and turned to make its way to his office. He doesn’t know when, but it was endearing now.

"Good morning, Boss. I hope you don't mind Columbian coffee," Compress said as he walked in as well. "Eldest cannot make coffee yet, but he did pick out the cookies this morning."

"That's…" he paused, not sure how to react, "Excellent. Good job."

Compress straightened and even with his mask over his face, Midoriya could feel his joy emitting from him. Goodness, this was his office, right? His yakuza office? Made up of street scum who toed the line of villainy every weekend with him since he was a first-year in high school?

When he got to his desk, leafed through the reports, checked on the stocks, and the day progressed more as it usually did, he felt himself calming down.

Some changes were good. Some changes took some time to adjust to.

He leaned back in his chair and got his third cigarette in an hour. These changes will be both. This was going to be his new normal. Despite himself, he smiled a little because this was his.

-

“...Yeah, can you get those together for me, then?”

A knock came at the door. “Boss, it’s Tomura.”

“Enter,” he called out.

“-Boss, the…” Shigaraki took in the sight of Midoriya answering his phone call, a small stack of files in his hands, and patiently waited for it to conclude. His boss gave him a grateful nod, and with a motion of his hand, sat down at the small coffee table in his office.

“...That sounds great. I can get those together on this side. Do you think you can get it done in the next three hours? No, not at all, I appreciate the hard work you’re putting in for me…” his voice trailed off as the garbled sound from the phone continued. “...Yeah, I owe you one.”

Shigaraki stiffened at the words. Midoriya wasn’t one to speak so frivolously, and all his words always carried a weight to them. If he owed someone one, it was huge.

“Thanks.”

He hung up and turned to Shigaraki. He gave a long sigh and sat down opposite of him. He reached to light a cigarette, but right when he looked for a lighter, Shigaraki pulled out his lighter.

He stared at it, and closed his eyes and leaned in to wordlessly accept it. He didn’t even know that Shigaraki carried a lighter.

“What’s going on?” he asked as he took a drag.

“...Chisaki was asking if you wanted to get lunch,” he said.

“Probably to talk about the northern groups,” Midoriya sighed back, rubbing his temples. “Okay, clear my schedule till three. Knowing my luck, Rappa’s going to get to me before I can leave.”

“...I can take him for you,” he said.

He shook his head, “No, we need him for the future. More importantly, you’ll be coming with me for lunch right? Okay, call Spinner in, I need him to do something for me. Are these for the meeting?” he asked, motioning to the folders on the table. He took them, leafing through them leisurely but Shigaraki had no doubt that he was already ingraining all the information into his head.

“Yes sir,” he said, for formality’s sake.

The bags under Midoriya’s eyes deepened for a moment and he nodded. “...Damn, this is all we have on them?” he asked. “Alright, looks like we’ll have to prepare some big guns.” He took another drag and stood up, ready to return to his desk and back to his other reports. “Get Compress for me too,” he said without looking at Shigaraki.

Shigaraki stared for a moment longer, but stood up. Right at the door he hesitated and then asked, “...Who were you on the phone with?”

“...Tomura,” Midoriya said quietly, “...I’m your boss. If I don’t tell you something, it means that it’s something you don’t have to worry about.”

The tone was soft, chiding even, but the words were cold. Something hardened inside of Shigaraki. He… he didn’t know how to react around that.

“I’ll see you at lunch.”

### Natural Disaster (1) - Flood

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“

### Stain Joins

“I’m saying that I’m a little stronger, not as uninfluential, and much richer. The dreams that I had are a little closer to reality, ” Midoriya said, “So… I’ve come back with a better proposition.”

Stain turned wondering how the fuck this kid always finds him. He was excellent at covering his tracks, and if he wasn’t the police would be on him by now. He can come and go without anyone knowing. And yet, again, he was found by the same kid who has been able to find him since he was 13.

He looked back to the mouth of the alleyway and sighed. He, everyone actually, knew about him. The ridiculously young upstart that was swallowing parts of the underground and being clean enough that the law couldn't touch him. Rumors painted him as a power hungry beast who has amassed an impressive collection of soldiers. Looking at him, however, he can still see the kid who wanted to pay off his debts and become a hero.

Even though he was at the center at almost every other big incident in the underworld for the last few years, his eyes were still as clear and focused as he was when he first told Stain about he wanted to save the girls ij that high school prostitution ring.

“What do you want?”

“Come with me, sensei.”

“...Don’t call me that,” he said, but he felt too tired to fight, “I don’t have anything left.”

“You do,” Midoriya replied back shaking his head, “And I want it.”

“Oh yeah? What’s that?”

“Your life. If you don't want it then give it to me." He extended a hand out to him, "Come with me.”

“Kid, I’m a little out of practice, but killing you won’t be hard.”

“That’s not a no.”

Stain paused. And he looked up.

“What is it? That you want to show me so badly?”

“...I want to make the world a better place,” Midoriya said, “I want to bring peace.”

“...You’re not a hero.”

The green-haired male nodded back, “Yeah. I’m not. That’s why, I can do this.”

Stain looked at the ground. He wondered where that stumbling, stammering brat went all those years ago, and who the man in front of him is.

“So, Sensei,” Midoriya tried again, “Come with me.”

Stain had hundreds of reasons to say no. He had thousands of reasons why this was a very bad idea.

But, when he took the smaller hand in his, he feels something slid into place where his heart used to be, and it began to beat again.

-

“Boss! There you are! Where did you… Is that Stain?”

Twice pointed with one hand and the other hand came up to his mouth.

“Oh.”

He eyed the way their hands were still conjoined.

“That’s not fair!” he wailed back, “You never hold my hand!” he blurted out. “Oh no, Chisaki’s going to be pissed when he finds this out. But you know, Stain, you look a lot worse than I thought you were-”

“Twice,” Midoriya cut in, and the man turned back, “Did you get what I wanted?”

“Huh? Oh yeah, we have it in the backseat. Are we getting dinner first?”

“Of course, I promised you I’d take you to the nice Italian place.”

“Yay! I knew I could count on you boss!” he said brightly before he shook his head madly, “but I hate eating Italian food!” and within the same breath, blurted out, “Although, it’s been a while since we’ve been out on our own. I’m a little said that the Hero-Killer is going to be crashing out long-awaited date.” He sighed and then added on very angrily, “This isn’t a date, okay?!”

“No need to be rude,” Midoriya chided back. “Come, the night will rush by us, and I need to be back at the office by morning.”

-

Within ten hours, Stain had cleaned up, ate more food in a night than he did in a week, was properly fitted into a suit, and was wearing it into his first workday at the office in Yokohama.

“Good morning, everyone,” Midoriya said as he walked in.

“Oh, boss, good mor- is that Stain?”

“I fucking told you so,” Twice yelled out from their makeshift kitchen. “Told you we got a new guy, and you guys were all ‘No that’s just a rumor’ well look at us now!”

“We can celebrate at a later time,” Midoriya announced. “More importantly, call everyone over for dinner tomorrow. I have news.”

### Humanitarian efforts (1) -

"A… what?"

"A scholarship foundation."

There was a silence.

"We are not hurting for money," Midoriya said, "What I do with my chump change is home of your business to begin with."

It was specifically for the students who aren't going to the hero or support courses. Kids who have goals and a desire to fill the often-overlooked occupations that need to be filled. Engineers, doctors, artists, designers, everyone had a place in the world and to be locked out because of something as frivolous as money was ridiculous.

Midoriya was now at the age where he should give back to the community. He will start here.

He placed the last bit of the paper into the folder and stood up. He tucked it under his arm.

“Let’s go,” he said.

-

“What’s next, taking in the homeless?”

Midoriya opened his mouth, and then he closed it.

Shigaraki pinched the bridge of his nose.

“No, you’ve always done that, haven’t you?” he asked. “How could I have forget?”

-

An idiot would say that these are all humanitarian endeavors. They would say that Midoriya is a fool with a heart of god. He was someone who was willing to give up everything and throw away all his fortunes into a sink hole. He was naive and a fool, an easy prey.

But Midoriya was always good at calculating risks.

### Flowers in December - DabiMidoriya

“...Did you know?” Midoriya asked quietly, “These are pansy flowers.”

Dabi looked up from where he was lighting his cigarette with his finger, but didn’t say anything.

“They’re a strong flower, and one of the only ones that can withstand the winter frost and snow.”

He watched as Deku’s green eyes took them in.

“They’re small and look frail, don’t they? I guess, we just assume that all flowers are weak things, don’t we?” he continued, his eyes warm. “But, it’s good to see some color even in the winter. I should really praise our gardening team, they did a great job. The flowers are beautiful, don’t you think?”

Dabi, staring right at Midoriya, nodded back.

“...Yeah,” he said, taking a moment to open the umbrella to keep the snow off of his boss before he stepped off the patio space, “I think I get it.”

“I wonder what they mean,” Midoriya said absentmindedly.

Admiration, Dabi thought to himself, his eyes fixated on the way Midoriya takes the cigarette out of his mouth and exhales slowly instead. Pansies are flowers that mean admiration.

He knew, because once upon a time, when his mom told him that her favorite flowers were rindous, he said that they were his favorite too, just so that they would have something in common. However, when she told him that it was her favorite flower because of her husband, a long time ago, the feeling soured. He hadn’t even seen one in years. He doesn’t know if he’ll recognize it if he does.

“Do you?”

“Hm?” He pulled himself out of memory lane.

“Do you have a favorite flower?”

Dabi stared at Midoriya, his gentle gaze, and smiled back.

“Rindous,” he said.

“Rindous?” Midoriya blinked back. “I don’t even know what those are.”

“What about you?” he asked. “You like pansies?”

His boss dropped his gaze, a somber smile gracing his lips, “I guess I do,” he said. “To be honest, I never really thought about flowers and stuff. Whenever I had to go in to visit, I just got whatever the florist said would be nice, and then the white irises or the pom-pom flowers for funerals. I guess I never really paid more attention.”

Dabi pulled the car door open for him, the gush of the heater washing over them, and Midoriya climbed in.

He couldn’t help but call bull on this. There was no way that Midoriya, who knows the rotation of socks that Twice wears with 100% accuracy for the last four years straight, wouldn’t know a thing or a hundred on flowers. It may not be important, but it could be. That was reason enough for Midoriya to sit and memorize things until he spew blood.

“...Then, if you don’t want to be chained up for a lecture, don’t ever tell Magne,” he said.

Midoriya blinked before he burst out laughing. Dabi, under the gentle snowfall, felt warmed and satisfied by the sound before he closed the door. He made for the passenger side, closing his umbrella and climbing in. Spinner, who was in charge of driving today, shot him a glance, and he nodded curtly back.

-

*Rindos: “Lonely affection.”*

### Kurogiri Joins

The door swung open, and Kurogiri had been waiting for so long that he isn’t sure if he knows how to do anything else anymore. Just last year, there was this energy that electrified the air and he always felt like there was too much to do.

“...Good evening, Kurogiri-san.”

"Yes," Kurogiri suddenly blurted out. "I… my loyalties are to Sensei, so I am afraid that my place will be here."

It was a flimsy excuse. Neither of them believed it.

"Kurogiri-san, I understand that you are waiting for someone. I think that… that it's admirable. But I need you right now. What do you think about making sure your skills don’t rust while you wait?"

It was a shitty excuse.

Kurogiri didn’t even hesitate, as though this was what he had been waiting for this entire time.

### To Be Born Again -

“You know,” Midoriya said, eyes bright as he watched the fireworks paint the skies like cannon fire, “I read somewhere that, if you have an unexplainable feeling to something you’ve never experienced before, then it’s because you had a great experience with it your previous life.”

“...You didn’t peg me as the type to be the type to believe in reincarnation, or care,” Spinner said, side-eyeing him as he looked back to the sky even though the display was over. “But I think that would explain a lot of things.”

Staring up at the blackened skies, where the stars have yet to appear after the lightshow, Dabi couldn’t help but think that they must have met in the previous life.

He gave a little chuckle at the thought, comforted with the fact that in the next life too then, they’ll find each other again and be just fine.

Hope is like a weed. It’s everywhere and usually grows wildly without any proper maintenance. No, even with proper maintenance, any bit of negligence could have it growing out of control. It’s ridiculous how enduring it could be, to be point that it feels like betrayal every time it springs up.

He eyed his boss, who was standing up with a lazy smile on his face as he pulled a cigarette out. Out of habit, he lit it for him, and hope sprouted again.

## Inheritance Battle

### Sakazuki (Dabi):

“Alright,” Midoriya said, “...I believe you. So let’s make this official.”

“Wait, you didn’t believe me before?” Dabi asked, seriously offended for a second.

“I… I don’t want to clip your wings,” Midoriya replied back quietly. “But now… Now there’s no going back.”

He pulled out one of his most expensive Sake bottles he had for this moment. He placed it on the table.

“Originally, I wanted to share this with everyone at New Years, but I think it’s fitting for us.”

He put two cups on the table.

“Actually, I haven’t done this in a while so I’m a little nervous. I hope I don’t mess this up,” he said, sitting down. He patted the seat next to him, “Come on,” he paused as his eyes flickered up to Dabi’s face, despite how confident he sounded, the nervous twitch of his lips gave him away. “Unless you’re getting cold feet?”

Dabi stared back, those green eyes that have captured him and trapped him and molded him into something he never thought he would want.

He silently took a seat next to the man.

“So, we just finish this whole bottle?” he asked, eyeing the ceremonial drink.

“...You know what a Sakazuki is?” Midoriya asked.

Dabi shrugged, “Watched enough films to know what it’s all about at least,” he said.

Midoriya reached over to pour the drink in, the smile on his face turning a little more sombre. Dabi wanted to burn it away and replace it with that bright-eyed kid who managed to pull the Ultra Rare All Might toy from a toy machine. His hands trembled, but the drink miraculously didn’t spill.

“Well, we have a lot of specific and special things that we should say but… but that’s not something we would do, right?” Midoriya said quietly. “So, I figured that we’d do something that’s more… us.”

“...Are we going to set it on fire?”

Midoriya laughed back, “I wouldn’t mind. If we could liquidize your fire,” he said, eyes twinkling, “I’ll be warm on the way down to hell.”

Dabi stared at the man for a moment and then back to the cup extended out to him.

“...When you do go to hell,” he said, “I’ll be one step behind you.”

“...Dabi, I…” Midoriya turned a little, putting his leg up on the couch so that he could face him a little better, “I… It’s okay. If you don’t want to do this. If you want to return back to the streets. It is really okay. We can still go for drinks every now and then. It’s not like you have to choose to stay here or never see any of us again.”

“...Yeah, I know. You’ve already said this like three times.”

“I just… I guess I still can’t believe it,” the younger man said, shaking his head, “You… You’re so dazzling, Dabi. I just can’t believe that you, after everything, would choose to stay with me, you know? I’m still that weakling kid that almost gets killed every week. And even if you’re mine, that doesn't mean-”

Midoriya’s words deserted him as icy blue eyes stared back at him.

“...You are,” Dabi said quietly, “the one I choose.”

“...Okay,” Midoriya said quietly, his eyes starting to brim with unshed tears. “If we do this, I’ll never let you go. Even if you change your mind somewhere down the line, I won’t let you leave me. After this, I will never, ever let you go again.”

Dabi’s lips curled upwards.

“Good.”

They lifted the cups and crossed their arms. Their eyes locked, and they took the shot of sake.

-

“...So you guys got married?”

Midoriya spluttered back, nearly choking on his water, “Toga-chan, please, we just exchanged sake cups.”

“No, no, no,” she said, pointing out the doorway, “Look at him, he’s literally smiling. He’s actually beaming. It’s scary.”

The two peaked over where Dabi, looking more relaxed than ever, flipped through the reports. As though sensing the gaze of his boss and longtime coworker, he looked up. He caught Midoriya’s eyes and his smile widened, a gentle little thing that seemed to make him glow. God, they swore that they could see the flowers blooming all around him, like they were opening up to that particular radiance. He lifted his fingers up in a small wave, and looked as though he was ready to come towards them.

Himiko and Midoriya turned their eyes away from him and they squatted down in front of their makeshift kitchen, presumably out of sight from Dabi.

“I didn’t think it’d make him this… happy,” Midoriya hissed out quietly, a little distrubed that someone like Dabi could pull off such a tender expression in their yakuza office.

“...I want to do it too,” she said quietly.

Midoriya sobered up immediately, “I’m sorry, Toga-chan. But… there’s a few things to consider..”

“Right, women aren’t yakuza. I know. But that’s easy to fix, Chisaki’s always looking for experiments.”

The young man blanched at that, “I think this and that are different things.”

“...Then, if I take Dabi’s blood, will I be able to be that happy, too?”

The boss turned to his employee, his heart aching with that small question.

“...Toga…”

“Heyya there boss, whatcha doing instead of the paperwork?”

Midoriya shot up to his feet, straightening like a child caught with their hand in the cookie jar and spun around to see Dabi’s more neutral expression. His half-lidded eyes, the expression they were much more familiar with even though his skin was clear, slid from his boss’s face to Toga and then back to him.

“Spinner is back with the new report,” he said, as though that was the real reason why he was here.

Immediately, Midoriya’s features schooled into something tighter, and he nodded. “Thank you for telling me,” he said. He turned to leave and paused. He looked down to where Himiko was walking over to the kitchen set to get another slice of cake out.

He stared at her for a moment, and then called out, “Toga-chan.”

She turned, a smile on her face even though it looked only marginal to the one she usually had.

“...We’re not bound by the vows we make, or the words we say,” he said. “But the time we have. And the time that we shared,” he hesitated before he gave a small smile at her, “I enjoy and treasure that time … all the times. I think that means something.”

Her eyes shone, and he wished he could take a picture of it to show her that her radiance was nothing less than Dabi’s.

### Sakazuki - Shigaraki

“Tomura,” Midoriya called out, “Let’s get dinner tonight.”

Shigaraki paused from where he was helping Midoriya into his jacket for a split second before he got the suit perfectly together, and walked around to the front to button it. Midoriya looked up at him, eyes searching his face and sometimes Shigaraki regretted the decision to slick any part of his hair back.

Under curious emerald eyes, he doesn’t think he’s ever felt more vulnerable.

“Well?”

“...It was a question?” Shigaraki responded back, “Hn. I guess I’ll have to check my schedule then.”

“Don’t be so coy. This is important,” he said.

The older man stared at him for a moment, and gave a small huff.

“Of course it’s important, this is you we’re talking about,” he replied back.

Midoriya stared at him, surprised as he watched the man get the door for him. He gave a nod as he took a step out and couldn’t help himself. It was rare for Shigaraki to indulge him so easily.

“What could you possibly mean?” he asked, a small smile on his face as his eyes twinkled mischievously.

“...There’s nothing about you that isn’t important to me,” Shigaraki replied. He side-eyed his boss and then gave a low, “Hooh? That’s a nice color for your face.”

Midoriya, feeling his face burn at the unashamed declaration, spluttered back.

“Augh,” he muttered back, more annoyed at the smug expression on his employee’s face.

-

“What’s all this?” Shigaraki asked after he cleaned up the mess that they made.

To think, he would be cleaning up someone else’s mess after eating with them. That he would, voluntarily, without being threatened or blackmailed to. While he thought it was a little funny, he could tell that Midoriya was still uncomfortable with it. If anything, that served to make it funnier for him.

“We’re… I need to talk to you,” Midoriya said slowly, even as he placed a large bottle of expensive sake onto the table and two small sake cups. “And if… if you agree, we’re going to drink these.”

“Sakazuki?” he asked, kneeling down in front of where Midoriya was sitting cross-legged. The young boss stared at him, wondering where that shut-in had gone from all those years ago. “Finally.”

“...What do you mean finally?”

“I’ve been waiting for this,” Shigaraki replied with ease, leaning over to take the cups and top both of them off. “I was … annoyed that Dabi got to go first, but I don’t really care about that anymore,” he said. He turned his eyes to Midoriya’s, red eyes seeming to glow with a particular kind of joy that Midoriya never thought that he could give him, “because right now, you mean more.”

The current boss of Yokohama intellectually responded, “Uh….”

“When we exchange the cups, it’s official, right?” he asked, almost even excited, “You’re finally leaning on me a little, right?”

“...Well, yes,” Midoriya nodded back, “It means that… that I’m never going to let you go after this. Once we go through with this, even if you’re broken and dying, I’ll still use you. I’ll work you to the bone. Your life will lose all meaning and identity.”

He hesitated, tilting his head back.

“You… want that?”

Shigaraki snorted back, lifting his cup up, “You… you have to ask?”

Midoriya’s eyes widened.

“...Once upon a time, this crazy bastard came crash-landing into my game station. I had nothing to do for fucking weeks. And then… and then, I had too much to do.”

Shigaraki chuckled, as though remembering something fond.

“Midoriya,” he said quietly but still overflowing with confidence, “This is everything I ever wanted. You’re… I don’t know what you did to me, but for the first time in my life, I think I’ve made my own decision. Thank you.”

The young boss stared at him for a long, long time, and lifted his cup up.

“I swear to you,” he said, “that I’ll become someone worthy of your gratitude. I won’t let you regret this.”

It would have sounded a lot cooler if there weren’t tears at the corner of his eyes, but as they leaned in to cross their arms and down the promise, they don’t think this could have gone any other way.

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### Declaration of War

Kurono’s eyes darted around the room as soon as he walked in behind Chisaki. The Expendables were all present, dressed in their best, as fitting for a meeting of this magnitude. At one of the underground bases that they had created, the top members of the Yokohama branch convened at 7pm underneath the main office.

Upon walking in, the room itself was long. He could already hear Rappa bitching about having to remain sitting down for so long while wearing something stifling, but something cold began to settle into his heart. This wasn’t just a symbol of power. This was something that would only happen among the top brass of any yakuza family. This was far out of his comfort zone. The only person who has ever even see something resembling this level of formality was…

His eyes dragged to Chisaki, who looked calm, but he could see how tightly his jaw was clenched.

More importantly, there were people already seated on the other side. There was a seat, slightly elevated, that represented where the head would sit. At the head’s immediate left was Shigaraki, and on his left was Dabi. The rest of the street rats Midoriya picked up over the years sat across the way, but most telling of all of them was Stain., who sat between Twice and Spinner.

He had heard that Midoriya had some connection to Stain, but to think that this man would be joining them at the dinner. He knew that the young man was meticulous and diligent to an abhorrent degree, so he knew that this was more than just flexing. This casual display of power and connection had a different meaning.

It was clear what was expected of them, and Chisaki took the seat closest to the head, right on the right and across from Shigaraki. Kurono sat on his right, and they filled in from there. In theory, Chisaki should have sat at the head, as the higher ranking member, but this was clearly not something for the Shie Hassakai.

Seven minutes before the promised time, all the seats have been filled except the head. With the way Chisaki and Shigaraki were staring at each other impassively, the tension became too tight for anyone to do anything other than sit in silence.

“Wow, everyone is so early.”

All eyes turned to the door where they entered from, and Midoriya walked in. Immediately, everyone got up to give him a polite bow. Normally, this was just a formality, but the weight of the atmosphere and the people present made it hard to believe that this was just a formality.

Dressed in something that could buy a house, the young man gave a polite nod and wave to the rest of them as he made his way to his seat. “Please, sit down. We have a lot to talk about today, so let’s first enjoy dinner.”

Dinner would have been delicious, but Kurono couldn’t taste anything while he was choking on the tension. A few seats down, Sakaki was fidgeting but Kurono could feel it from where he was sitting. His perception and sense were at their maximum potential, and his nerves felt shot. He ate mechanically as a result.

“Cut to the chase,” Chisaki said suddenly, his voice carrying over the sounds of chipsticks hitting plates.

It was telling that his childhood friend ate anything at all. His plague mask had been left at the office, so he was wearing his plain black facemask instead. He was here as Chisaki Kai, not Overhaul. While it was hard to say that his mysophobia had gotten better, it definitely feels like it has become much more manageable in the past few years. Still, he never eats out, and only eats food that he deems “clean” enough for him.

The fact that he had taken his mask off to eat the food that Midoriya brought out to be served already spoke volumes.

“Hm, I suppose you’re right,” Midoriya said, “I was hoping that you guys would get along better, since I have big plans for the future, but I guess we need more common ground.” He placed his chopsticks down, “I called all of you here to officially declare my intentions to enter the inheritance battle. I would like those present today to take my side and formally become mine.”

“...And, let’s say you become the head,” Chisaki said, while the rest of them was staring at the young man in open-mouth shocked. “What will you do?”

“My top priority will be returning the yakuza to their former glory," Midoriya began, not missing a beat, “Of course, that means that we will have to take over the entire underworld. We already have Yokohama, so that will be my guidelines and a good example of what I want to make all my territories. Then, I’m going to dominate Japan from the shadows. Once I get there, I’ll decide what I want to do after that.”

“...But you have a plan, don’t you?”

Midoriya actually laughed at that, “As expected, you’re the one that pins me down on methodology,” he said. “Yes, I have several plans, but all of them are just pipe dreams until I get all of you on board.”

“And if we disagree?"

“If you wanted to disagree,” the young man said with a smile, betrayed only by the dangerous glint in his eyes as he lifted his cup up, “You wouldn’t have shown up.”

Kurono stared back and the final piece slid into place. The sudden call for a meeting, the demand for being well-dressed, and without any question or complaint, they had been compliant. Not just this time, but any time Midoriya gave them a text, called them up, they had dropped almost everything in an effort to come running to his side.

For a long time now, they were already his. This was just making it formal.

"It's like my own personal war council," Midoriya said. He tried to smile but there was no humor in his expression and it came out more like a grimace. “So, pledge yourself to me and my cause, and I will show you the morning after victory.”

When Kurono and everyone else lifted their cups to do just that, he wished there was a way to inform Midoriya that they weren’t giving in for his cause or him. They were pledging themselves to a future that Chisaki wanted.

And from the moment Midoriya had started talking, a light was rekindled in Chisaki’s eyes, and Kurono tried to remember the last time he looked that eager.

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Still, all things considered, Midoriya wanted to tell his mom that he was going to do it. He was going to save the world, like a hero.

But he won’t do it like a hero, but it was close enough. He’ll save the world from the darkness that pulled over the city since All Might’s retirement. He’ll give the people hope. He’ll remind them that the world can be a wonderful place.

### Sakazuki - Chisaki

Of course, they have already shared sake from the same bottle. Most of the members of the family have already shared sakes in order to properly and formally join the family.

But Chisaki and Midoriya have yet to share sake with an oath.

In all honesty, this was something he should have done a long time ago.

“Chisaki-san, thanks for making some time for me.”

“...Kai is fine,” the older man replied back, “Especially when we’re alone.”

The man’s face colored a little, and he dropped his gaze in his embarrassment. A small smile tugged at the corner of his lips and Chisaki was faced with the thought that he was just… too young for this job. Nevermind the fact that this man single-handedly overtook Yokohama and presented it to the boss with a lovely bow in less than six months, but the fact that he could still look so sincerely bashful reaffirmed in his head that he didn’t belong here.

But the fact that, after all this time, his eyes were still so clear, Chisaki was beginning to really understand why Kurobane was so dead-set on taking in his kid.

There was something about him that was different than anyone else. What should have been a weakness remained, and instead of making him crash and burn, has continued to fuel his path forward.

“...Kai then,” he said, his voice impossibly soft for his position. “...There’s something… that I would like to make official with you.”

Chisaki’s eyes slid from the sake to the cup and nodded.

“Funny,” he said, “I was thinking the exact same thing.”

Midoriya pours the drink, even though Chisaki was the one that should have and they picked up their cups.

“...This is it,” Midoriya said quietly, “With this, I won’t ever let you go. If you drink this, that means we’ll be together forever.”

“...I know,” Chisaki replied back, “and this also means that I won’t let you go either. That future that you and Oyaji seem to be able to see… I will be by your side to witness it for myself.”

A world where the Yakuza will reclaim their former glory, a world where the people trust their neighborhood yakuza instead of the police and heroes… It was a crippling thought, but more than anything, his eyes find Midoriya’s again.

“...I wouldn’t have it any other way,” Midoriya said, “To be honest, I’m sure that, with you by my side, there’s very little that I couldn’t do.”

Chisaki wants to snort, because it was the other way around.

In reality, the person that could do anything was Midoriya. That much was certain.

Chiaski… He was just a miniscule piece on the board, easily replaceable, easily forgotten. To think that he’s anything else would be living a delusion.

The sake was bitter. All this time, and Midoriya still crinkled his nose at the taste, and when Chisaki felt something warm bloom in his chest, wondered if his tolerance for alcohol had plummeted.

-

“I exchanged cups with him,” Chisaki explained to his Eight Precepts. “He’s as much your boss as I am now.”

### Toy Collection - ChisaIzu

Chisaki was escorting Midoriya through the streets on their way to a late lunch. Now that he was working under him (and wasn’t that a strange thought), he was beginning to understand just how much work Midoriya put into his job.

After all, connections don’t appear overnight. It was something that only appeared with more and more interactions of a specific kind. He thinks back to the disappointed look Oyaji had always sent him, and watching Midoriya make friendly banter with the florist down the street and return with innocently received information, he understands now.

To begin with, they were on completely different levels.

“Don’t worry too much about it,” Midoriya told him. “I’m different from you. The only way for me to climb up is by using other people.”

As he said that, four young boys came running up to him.

“Izu-nii! Izu-nii! You gotta help us!” one of them shouted out and then stopped as they eyed Chisaki.

Immediately, they cowered away from his gaze and Midoriya turned to face them.

“Don’t worry, Chisaki-jisan behind me is with me. He was born like that.” he said.

They eyed him and Chisaki, who gave a very annoyed look to the back of his boss’ head.

“Sorry, but I just came out of the office, so I don’t have the Hawks figurine I promised you,” he added on.

Vividly, Chisaki remembers standing at the table of various hero merchandise, and the gears began to turn in his head as the missing cogs began to fill in.

“That’s not the problem! This is some serious poo!” one of them shouted out. The other two grabbed the third by the shoulder, as they eyed Chisaki warily. Whatever made them come running to the Boss of Yokohama’s Yakuzas clearly won out as the one in the front started to cry. “He has my sister!”

“...What? Kano-chan?”

The one at the front sniffled loudly and the kid next to him spoke up.

“...I-It wasn’t the normal guys! But this huge guy! He had these tattoos on his hands and, and, and,” he looked around wildly, “He was talking on the phone with a Kimihiro! And he took my sister into a car!”

Kimihiro? Why did that name sound so familiar? Kimi...hiro? Yellow eyes widened when he realized what was going on.

“...Do you have the license plate number? How long has it been?”

The kid sniffled loudly and handed his phone over. Midoriya stared at the picture and pulled his phone out to make some quick notes with one hand.

“They took her yesterday and mom won’t even call the police and dad hasn’t come home and I don’t know what else to do or where else to go. But they’re dangerous guys, right?”

He was reduced to loud sobs, wiping at his eyes furiously before he looked back up. His voice broke and snot ran down his nose. He coughed on his despair and sniffled loudly.

“And you’re yakuza, right? So you can go save her, right? I… I ate her pudding so she hates me right now, but I don’t hate her.”

Midoriya stared back and gave a sigh. “...You know, I don’t do jobs for free.”

“I’ll do anything! I’ll even give you my deluxe special Kamui Woods figure!”

It meant nothing to Chisaki, but clearly everything to the kid.

“Please, Izu-nii!”

“...Alright, we’ll take payment later. Don’t forget that you said anything.”

-

“...Why didn’t you go to the police?” Chisaki asked.

“...Why would I go to the police?” the kid replied back, tilting his head in confusion. “Izu-nii said he’ll take care of it.”

“You’re new, aren’tcha?” one of the other boys asked. “So I bet you don’t know about the time Izu-nii covered for my aniki at the convenience store!”

“Uh … huh. And your heroes?”

“Heroes have to save everyone,” the kid said, “But Izu-nii helps them! Like, even if a hero saves Kano-nee, she'll just get taken again unless something changes. But Izu-nii helps solve the whole thing so they'll never bother us again! Like, heroes are like super cool but they’re not… not… Augh, sensei says that word all the time! Why can’t I remember it!”

“Oh, that word! Practitioner!”

Chisaki frowned, “Practical?”

“Yeah! That’s the one!”

Chisaki stared at them for a moment longer. Oyaji often preached about his dream, his vision, a world where the yakuza reclaimed their position. It was a vision that everyone agreed and thought it was amazing, but no one had any clue what it really meant.

These days, he thinks that he understands.

### Oyaji’s Visit - Chisaki

“Kumicho-sama,welcome,” Midoriya said, bowing his head deeply.

The old man took one look at him, lifted his cane, and broke it across his the young man’s shoulder.

When Dabi got lifted his head, the fire licking his hands, Setsuno burned his to hold his hands steady. The burnt smell of flesh scorched the room, and when Dabi turned to glare at the young man, he kept his head down.

“Do not shame our boss,” he said quietly, keeping his facial features steady and his eyes to the ground.

“I see that you are in good health, sir,” Midoriya said, calmly as though he hadn’t been hit. He stood straighter and the old man scowled back.

“I see you’re the same cheeky brat! I told you to call me Oyaji! Or Otou-san!”

“...Of course, Oyaji-sama. How could I ever forget,” Midoriya deadpanned back. And then, the old man finally laughed, it was a loud laugh that filled the room with joy, and he reached over to ruffle the young man.

“That’s my boy!” he cheered loudly. “I’ve heard about what you’ve been doing here! Excellent job.”

“Thank you. I wouldn’t have been able to do it without the support I have.”

“Yes, yes, I’ve heard some scary rumors about you. I must hear all about your stories now. Come, let’s not stand out here and have something to eat. I don’t think we’ll need them, so I’ll leave my guards here,” he said. “Kurobane, with me.”

“Yes sir,” the man immediately behind him said. He turned to Midoriya and nodded. “Midoriya, good to see you’re doing well.”

“Thank you, Kurobane-san,” Midoriya said. He turned over his shoulder, “Chisaki, if you will.”

Chisaki stepped forward, and gave a bow to his boss and his boss’s boss. “Good evening, Oyaji-sama.”

“Ara?” the old man rubbed his chin and narrowed his eyes at Chisaki, “You’re still here?”

The golden eyes widened, and he picked his head up. “....Excuse me?”

“Oh no, I just figured you would have left by now. This life doesn’t suit you.”

All eyes fell on him and Chisaki dipped his head, “I would never leave when I have yet to repay you for everything you’ve done for me.”

“Midoriya, I thought I told you that you should keep trustworthy people by your side,” Kumicho sighed, moving on as though Chisaki didn’t even speak. This time, Dabi’s hand shot out to keep Setsuno in place as the older man continued, “Well, no matter, we can discuss this over dinner. Bring someone trustworthy. I will wait in the car.”

The Kumicho and most of his guards left. Midoriya turned to Chisaki and the older man pulled himself upright.

“Enjoy your dinner. I’ll be working on the serum.”

“...Right, Spinner, with me.”

“Spinner?!” Shigaraki spat out.

“Yes,” Midoriya reiterated with a sharp glance, “Spinner. With me.”

The lizard-man stared at him, opening and closing his mouth in shock, because he was chosen over everyone else to stand as Midoriya’s only guard when he was eating with the Kumicho.

“...I will not disappoint you.”

“Let’s get going then. Kumicho acts like that, but he has a sadistic streak when his patience is stretched.”

They left at that, and the silence in the office was painful.

-

“Uh, Oyaji-sama, if you don’t mind me asking, what was that about Chisaki?”

“Ah, that guy. He’s… He’s got a couple of loose screws. After all, out of everyone here, he could leave this world behind, and get a fresh start on the world, but he’s still here. He may say things like he’s doing it for you, or that he has a just cause, but in the end, he’s the worst scum out there.”

“The worst…?”

“Ah, the type that doesn’t even know it. That selfish bastard only cares about himself, but speaks well enough that no one knows. Be careful around him Midoriya, that man only sees his own end-goal.”

“...I’ll keep that in mind. But, if that was the case, why did you give me to him?”

“Hah? I figured that, if anyone, you could survive it.”

Midoriya gave a long pause.

“And you went above and beyond with everything, Midoriya. You have truly exceeded my expectations. I am eager to see what the next thing you’ll do will be.”

The young man stared at him, thinking that, if people were able to change, then he was finally changing himself. He wanted to change. He didn’t want to be that spineless kid that quietly tried to fight off the expectations that he was useless. He didn’t want to be worthless, useless, weakling Midoriya. He wanted to protect what he had, the first people he had met that wanted him as much as he wanted them.

“Oyaji-sama, did you know? We’re family. Even scumbags like us are family. That’s what the yakuza is. And I… I don’t think I have the heart to cut my family out like that. If I start cutting people out based on such arbitrary values like trust… then when do I stop?”

The man’s face turned into a frown.

“You foolish, naive idiot. If you keep that many things close to your heart, you can bet that you’ll never be happy.”

-

At the end of the night, Spinner stood next to Midoriya with pride and they both gave a polite bow.

While boss drove away, the lizard man turned to him right as he began speaking.

“Do you understand now?” he asked quietly, “That’s going to be my position next.”

Spinner couldn’t suppress the roll of fear run down his spine, leaving him with the tingly sensation replacing the blood in his veins. He only saw a portion of his face, but he remembers a time when he used to think that this world would eat Midoriya alive.

And now, here they were.

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Shigaraki stared at his hands.

Why did he choose Spinner?

### Court Order

“I’m sorry, what?”

“I had to pull a lot of strings for this,” Midoriya said, “But it’s fine. I got it all in the clear.”

They stared in shock as Midoriya dropped a file in front of them.

“Magne, Jin, Sako, Shuichi, and…” he turned to Dabi, who gave a nod back, “and Touya. You guys are Shie Hassakai property now. Officially speaking, you guys are under me, but with this, as long as you guys don’t go flying off the handle, the law won’t give you much trouble.”

Spinner leaned into flip through the papers.

“...Holy shit, you got a judge to sign off on these?”

Their tired looking boss nodded back, he sat back in the seat and pulled a cigarette out. He placed it between his lips and like always, Dabi leaned in to light it.

“Yep,” he said. “So if you do something illegal, let me know so I can do proper damage control. Right now, it’s written as probation period, but in reality, it’s just a really thin line. I… I don’t think I can do something like this ever again, so don’t mess it up.”

They stared, almost gawking at the paper.

“...That’s why you asked for all those papers,” Spinner blurted out suddenly.

“...I’m surprised that they let this slide at all,” Dabi commented as he looked through his papers.

Midoriya gave a dry laugh, “It’s a law back from when Quirks were first coming out. It’s not active and buried really fast, but there was never any official regulations that said it wouldn’t fly anymore. Back then, people really relied on the yakuza to take control over the streets. More people were committing crimes than they could fit into prison, so they knocked it open so that people who were at least hurting people because they didn’t know how to control their quirk, like kids, could be taken into the Yakuza for probation periods. A judge signs it off and they get six months to get it under control or actually go to prison.”

He rubbed the back of his neck as he took a long drag and released it with a sigh.

“When heroes and the likes appeared and quirks became more of the norm, this stuff wasn’t needed as much. The tradition has long since died out, and the likelihood of getting this kind of thing is near zero, since a judge has to sign off on it.”

“...Then how…”

“I asked a friend for a favor,” Midoriya replied back curtly. “...And I got some connections.”

All this time, and the web of networks that Midoriya had gathered under his fingertips still caught them off guard. Despite the fact that they were spent the most amount of time with him, they still didn’t know the depth or spread of his network.

“More importantly, if I got caught for housing criminals, a lot of bad shit would happen to me. I can’t afford to go to prison right now,” he explained easily, like this was simple concept. He lifted his chin up, confident and sure of himself as he said, “I’m going to rise to the top and rule over it all. Now is the perfect time to put my plans to work.”

And they undoubtedly believed that if anyone, he could do it.

-

“So, this… Todoroki Touya is you? Dabi, you’re Endeavor’s kid?”

“I told Dabi that with his face like that,” Midoriya said, “No one was going to link to him, but…”

“I’m not running anymore,” Dabi replied back. His icy blue eyes shined back, “And it’s better to wear your weaknesses as a shield, right boss?”

Midoriya’s eyes widened and he sighed back, “That’s not at all what I meant for you to use it as,Dabi. But alright. I’ll respect it.”

“So, are we calling you ‘Touya’ or ‘Dabi’?”

“I’m still me,” Dabi said, “And while I’m here. I’ll be whatever Bossman here wants from me.”

Dabi wasn’t fucking around when he had made that promise.

### Natural Disaster- Hurricane

There was a hurricane that came in and made a fucking wreck of his territories. It was especially bad in Yokohama, but every place was absolutely awful.

Of course, since Midoriya doesn't duck around when it ckmes to these kinds of emergencies, has already set up several emergency shelters with limited but free supplies and enough scary looking guards that people stayed in their fucking places until the worst had passed.

Luckily, he thought ironically, he's not a hero so it's okay that he's not kind. At the same time, he wasn't allowed to come in contact with any civilian until the whole thing boiled down. To ensure this, Shigaraki was glued to his side.

### Chisaki - looking back on quirks…

“Do you remember, Kai? You used to say that you were going to purge the whole world from quirks,” Midoriya said, lifting the sake cup. He gave a giggle as he leaned heavily to one side.

Chisaki eyed him warily, and then sighed.

“You’re done drinking,” he said, grabbing the cups and remaining bottle of sake. “How many did you get through…?”

“Nooooo…” Midoriya whined, and when his startling green eyes found Chisaki’s, the boss paused briefly. He placed the cup down, rested his head against his knuckles, and his expression melted into something kind. “You used to be so much scarier. Saying things like that…”

“...Yeah,” Chisaki’s lips quipped into a smile, maybe he did drink too much too. He felt the heat in his chest rise to his face as he remembered a time period when he was a little more bold and reckless. “I changed my mind about it.”

“Really?” Midoriya looked up. “What made you change your mind?”

“...Quirks are a disease that runs rampant in the world. To clean them is the correct thing to do.”

“Mn-hm,” Midoriya hummed back, like he was humming along to a well-known song from his childhood. The sight of him, his flushed face and bright smile, had Chisaki smiling, exasperated, back. “Yep!”

“To live in a world filled with the quirkless,” he continued, “was what I wanted the most.”

Midoriya, as rare as it was, sounded impatient, “Yes, yes, but why did you change your mind?”

“I finally met one,” he deadpanned. He gave the younger man a pointed look.“When I thought about a world filled with people like him, I worried for the future instead.”

Midoriya blinked, and for a brief moment, Chisaki thought that he was sober.

“And I realized that our quirks were the only thing that was keeping us safe from you. It wouldn’t do to get rid of our one edge.”

Green eyes widened comically, and the older man barked out a laugh.

Was he that surprised that he remembered? Of course he remembered. Chisaki Kai was no fool. He wasn’t going to forget anything about Midoriya. It was just in his best interest. And if it meant that he could still stun the young man speechless like this, it was well worth it.

He leaned over, pouring some sake into Midoriya’s cup, and drank it himself.

Somehow, Midoriya’s cup always tasted so sweet.

“Now then, let’s get you to bed. We have a big day tomorrow.”

Numbly, his boss nodded right back.

### Orphan's Gratitude- stainMidoriya

with every natural disaster there were more orphans. He knows that some of them are orphaned because their parents have died and others were abandoned because this was a convenient time to be abandoned.

"Unfortunately," Midoriya said to all of them, "We have limited resources to take care of all of you." He clapped his hand, a smile on his face, "So we will only take the ones worth taking. If you want to live, you have three days to prove it."

Their trembling expression, fear and despair compacted into the gymnasium they are borrowing for the moment, was something that he wanted to rid the world of. But he couldn't. He wasn't a hero. He can't give them hope.

But he'll give them a chance.

-

"Those kids… for those kids, it's not a hero that saved them," Akakuro said. "You understand that, right?"

Midoriya looked up from where he they were watching Twice wrestle with some of the small kids down below. "...Huh?"

The older man remembers a time when the kid was so easily snuck up on.

"Those kids might think it now, but in a few years, they'll understand it. The people that actually saved them, the person who did, wasn't the guy who pulled them out of a burning building or got them to safety from a typhoon. It was you."

The young man's eyes widened. And when he was about to object, the older man shook his head.

"Heroes aren't the ones pouring their money and efforts to getting them food and shelter. And after this, the person that makes it so that they can go to school, break out of the cycle of abuse, have something to live for instead of surviving day to day, it was you."

The older man sighed, bringing his hand up to rub his back.

"You… would have made a great hero."

The irony of all of this was the fact that, had Midoriya did go into heroics, he would have never been able to help and support these people. From the strained smile they shared, it didn't escape them.

### Todoroki Touya

When the media caught wind of it, the news went wild.

Number 1 Hero Endeavor’s first Son, Todoroki Touya, is actually an active member of the Shie Hassakai!

And things like that sold really well. Dirty laundry became aired laundry, but the biggest thing was probably…

“I brought you some more coffee, Boss,” Dabi said as he walked into the room with a fresh pot.

“Thank you,” Midoriya said, “I was just about to get some more.”

The man sauntered in, pouring the drink into the cup without much fanfare. He slowly looked up to Deku, who had put the papers onto his laptop keyboard so he could stare at him.

“What’s up?” he asked.

Midoriya took the All Might mug (the only one that the others hadn’t managed to destroy) and brought it up to his lips. He took a little sip, closing his eyes and inhaling the coffee before taking another sip. He opened his eyes and looked up to Dabi, who was staring at him patiently.

“...I was just surprised that you came in,” Midoriya admitted, figuring that the man wasn’t going to leave otherwise. “I thought you were going to just wait it out.”

“Pft, it’s not like the media is going to knowingly come to a yakuza office,” he snorted back. He moved to grab a spare coaster off the shelf, and set it down on the corner of Deku’s desk. “If you need to use this, then it’ll be easier if I’m closer,” he continued to explain.

He set the coffee pot down, before he walked around the desk. The boss spun in his seat, a little surprised but not alarmed, as Dabi grabbed the top of his seat and pushed back. He towered over Midoriya as he leaned over him with a wide grin.

“Unless, you wanted me gone?”

His boss stared up at him for a long moment. Right when his longtime employee was about to pull away, he lifted his hand, palm-up, towards him. Without a beat of hesitation, Dabi closed his eyes and rested his cheek against the touch.

“I see,” Midoriya murmured quietly, “You did it for me? Sorry about that.”

Dabi opened his eyes slowly, his eyelashes dragging against the skin on Midoriya’s hand.

The smile on his boss’ face didn’t look apologetic at all.

Dabi grinned back.

“Thank you,” he said quietly.

### UA Grads & ME - ShotoIzu

While being stuck in a dim and dark room with a hero wasn’t the worst thing that has happened to him this week, it definitely wasn’t a highlight either. He rapped his knuckles against the walls of the metal box that they were in.

It had to be a trailer of some sort.

“Light, light, augh if only Dabi was here,” Midoriya sighed. He pat himself down and sighed. “Figures, they took my phone and my lighter huh.” He put his head against the cold wall and took a deep breath. He was certain of it.

They had to be in a trailer of some sort.

“Won’t even let me have a smoke…”

“...You would smoke in this kind of situation?”

Right. He was with someone. There was a crack of sunlight, just enough for him to make out the outline of the person, but not enough for him to know who it was.

“Well, this definitely feels like the time to smoke. Help me clear my nerves for a bit before I figure out how we get out of here,” he explained.

“...How do you plan to escape?”

“Well, if I had a smoke, I’m sure that I would be able to tell you,” Midoriya replied dryly. He already felt the itch coming, and he sighed. “Well, if you’re here, then either Kenya doesn’t care who else is involved or I’m involved in something I really shouldn’t be. If you don’t mind me asking, could I know who you are?”

“....Ice-Bition,” he said. “Todoroki Shoto.”

“Ah. Of course.”

Midoriya wanted to bash his head into a wall. A fucking hero. He was stuck in here with a hero.

“...Are you injured or suffering from anything otherwise?” he asked slowly, remembering to be polite.

“...No.”

Excellent, at the very least, he was still answering his questions. Perhaps, at this rate, they will be able to make it out alive.

No, they will.

“Okay. That means we have two able-bodied people and-”

Midoriya was suddenly caught off-guard as their entire platform began to be shifted and rocked around. He yelped in surprise, and immediately widened his stance in a futile effort to keep his posture steady. He gave a low curse as he toppled over and into the side of the trailer anyways. Loud clanging and clicking sounds rang through the trailer and against the metals, echoed through.

“No way,” Midoriya muttered. “Those fucking assholes wouldn’t-”

Outside of the trailer that they were in, two men laughed as one of eight trailers were picked up 32 feet off the ground and dropped into the water.

-

Midoriya barely had enough sense to grab the other hero and brace themselves for the fall. As luck would have it, nothing broke, and from the two of them, it seemed that Midoriya did do a good job grabbing and shielding the hero from the worst of the fall. He hissed in pain, and hoped that Chisaki wouldn’t lecture him for too long about this.

As it was, he pulled away from the hero. To his dismay, there was already water beginning to stream in from the gaps where sunlight used to come in. As it was, it was clear that the trailer had tipped over so that the area they had fallen into was submerging first. The stench of metal was pugnant, and now that adrenaline was coursing through his veins from their nasty fall, it was getting exponentially hotter.

“W-Why would you do that-”

“I’ll answer all your questions when we get out. But right now, I’m certain that we have been tossed into the Tokyo Bay in a trailer. We are slowly sinking to our deaths. I believe you have an ice quirk, right?”

The man hesitated.

“Yes.”

“Great. Make a lot of ice to destroy the trailer outwards. Then, we’ll climb out and swim down, okay? As it is, there’s probably a bunch of them up there with guns, so we’ll give them some time to waste their ammo first. Just be careful, the ocean currents are going to be rough. You know how to swim right?”

The water was already up to his ankles. They needed to move.

“Y-yeah.”

“Great. I’ll leave this to you.”

There was a moment of hesitance and the young man did as instructed. What a great guy. Midoriya loved it when people worked with him during a time of crisis. The ice was created beautifully, shattering outwards from next to Todoroki by a premade hole and forcing it to burst open. The young man cheered quietly and looked to the other man.

“Go ahead,” he said, motioning to the edge.

“I… I don’t get it. Why are you helping me?”

“I don’t want to die,” Midoriya said, “And since you’re with me, I’ll go ahead and make sure that you don’t die either.”

“But why, you… you’re yakuza aren’t you? Why are you trying so hard to help me? I’m a hero, son of Endeavor!”

The way the man said it, the spite and confusion of the words rang louder than the waves crashing around them outside.

“Why didn’t you leave me to die?”

Oh boy, Midoriya thought to himself. What the fuck did UA do to their students, that this was one of their top graduates? Vaguely, he wondered if, had he gone to UA like All Might wanted him to all those years ago, would he have also come out like this?

He couldn’t imagine it.

“...When I was a kid, I loved heroes,” he said. “Actually, I still do. But anyways, my favorite hero. He once said in an interview… that heroes are people who save other people, even when they don’t want to be saved.”

With that, Midoriya grabbed Todoroki by his shirt and bodily dragged him to the gaping hole he created. The water was up to his knees and Todoroki’s thighs, but surely, they’ll be able to get out with relatively little difficulties now, right?

“You can hate me and try to kill me after we get out of this. For now, swim!”

And with a strength that couldn’t have been his, all but shoved Todoroki into the water.

He stared at it, his expensive clothes, tipped his head back to take a deep breath and jumped right after him.

-

“...You should take responsibility,” Todoroki said, “For making me live.”

“You wanted to live,” Midoriya said, “If you really wanted to die, you would have by now. That’s just the kind of life heroes live. What you should be saying right now is ‘thank you for saving my life, Midoriya-sama. I will turn over a new leaf with this newfound courage’.”

The hero gave him a deadpanned look and the smaller man laughed back. However, as they were still trying to catch their breath while they managed to swim onto a beach two or three miles away from the initial drop. It was exhausting and something that neither wanted to repeat anytime soon.

“...Is it alright? That I’m alive? That I was ever born?”

Midoriya stared back, wondering where education failed this attractive man so that he was coming to a yakuza man for questions about his existential crisis.

“...I don’t know what happened to you,” he said, “but isn’t it obvious that if you’re still alive, you got a chance to prove that it’s okay?”

The heterochromatic eyes stared at him in awe, like he had never considered the notion. Midoriya didn’t know if it was the words he needed or the words he wanted, but he hoped that it would help him find the him he wanted to be.

“...You’re a hero. If you can’t save yourself, who can you save?”

“...I’m sorry,” he said. “I’ll… I’ll do better.”

“...I think you’re doing fine,” Midoriya replied back, “Your numbers are good. You catch the bad guys in less than two minutes 95% of the time. Concerning the number of cases you’re apart of day-to-day, that’s amazing. If you’re still feeling like this after that, isn’t it because there’s something that you know you need to do?”

Had that been their first and last meeting, Midoriya would have been satisfied. However, his life was not that easy nor simple.

-

Three weeks since the trailer incident, and Midoriya was getting a pack of cigarettes from a convenience store. He walked right back outside, when suddenly, a pillar of ice appeared and Ice-bition slid down it.

In a second, Dabi’s flames danced by his hands as he stood in front of Midoriya. The young man, out of reflex, grabbed him by the back of his jacket to remind him where they were.

While no one in Midoriya’s district would ever make claims against him, it wasn’t something that Midoriya wanted to abuse.

“It’s very hard to find you,” Todoroki said as greeting. “Let’s exchange numbers so that it’ll be easier in the future.”

“Excuse me what?”

The young man frowned back, ruining his good looks, and Midoriya groaned back. He pulled out his new phone and did as told. The smile that rewarded him could kill someone with a weaker constitution.

As quick as he came, he left, and even got rid of all the ice for them. It dispersed into cold air, and Midoriya shivered against the sudden cold front.

“...When did you make friends?”

Midoriya looked at his phone and gave a nervous laugh, “I wish I could tell you.”

### Caught - Enter: Bakugo

The number one reason why any yakuza member goes to jail, on paper, is because of their Quirk. They mark it up as a quirk-related violence, maybe some drug-involvement or organized-crime sentence of some sort, and they whisk their kids away.

For Midoriya Izuku, this was never a problem.

He was quirkless. This was by far, his greatest asset. Occasionally, he thinks that, if he was born with a quirk, he would have been satisfied with life even if he didn’t become a hero. However, that was neither there or here.

More importantly, being quirkless means that, if he was going to go to jail, it was for something fucking huge. And, it meant that he fucked up bad and he was going to be put away for a long time. He would have had to, if he had gotten caught in this day and age.

Getting caught means that all of his operations, his carefully laid plans, everything that he has made up till this moment would crumble. It also meant that his people would be hunted down, either from their own group because they didn’t protect him or because he had a lot of enemies. There were plenty of people who wanted to completely and absolutely destroy everything he’s built up to this point.

He knew that. Of course he did. As he ran for Bakugo, who was screaming, who was writhing as his hands burned, who looked at him like he wanted to be saved, he recited to himself all his current projects. He had to wait for the construction plans, and pull money from the stocks to fund the scholarships. There was that open list of debts that he had to collect, and an entire experiment that should be getting results within the next week or two.

All of this required his supervision and presence. He knew that. And he ran for Bakugo.

“Kachan!” he called out, “Stop sweating!”

“I’m-fuckkk- trying!”

And then, as though remembering where they were and who he was and how long it’s been, red eyes zoned right back onto him.

“Deku?!”

There were even more explosions. Apparently, seeing your long-lost almost childhood friend made you sweat more. It would be a lot more endearing if Midoriya couldn’t feel the force of fire from where he was. He gritted his teeth but forged on.

“Kacchan! It’s going to be okay!”

“Wh-What are you doing here?”

“It looked like… like you wanted to be saved!”

Ah, it was like they never grew up. Have they changed? It’s been almost years since they last saw each other, right?

Midoriya’s greatest fault was that he was kind. Then, his second greatest fault was that he operated on the assumption that it was okay to be injured if it meant everyone else was okay. It’s what made him forget about human limits and the Greater Goal. It’s what made him rush recklessly forward to Bakugo with a fire blanket. Even though the burns and the explosion brought forth a rush of emotions, memories and pain all around, he forged on.

Bakugo would never admit it to anyone, but he really did miss that nervous smile.

-

"Put your hands up where I can see them!"

Midoriya could confidently say that this wasn't the worst thing that happened to him, but it was definitely one of the up there. He apologized, long and hard, to Oyaji-sama for failing him a nd then to Chisaki, who was going to have to keep hold of the family until he got out.

If he got out.

"...I'm afraid I can't lift my arms up at the moment, Officer-san."

His arms, the bloodied, burnt remains of flesh sticking onto bones rested against his thighs. In all honesty, he was surprised that they were still attached. Being handcuffed when you don't have hands is very hard, after all, and making the police’s job harder was only going to make his life harder. He can’t move his fingers, even though he can see that they’re attached, and has no idea if he was so exhausted that can’t feel or if all his nerve endings have been blown off.

Add armless to the list of things that Midoriya is, it’ll fit nicely between “useless” and “quirkless”.

His pants were barely hanging on, and the only thing left of his shirt was the colar and left sleeve, and it exposed his burnt and mangled body for all eyes to see. At the very least, they could also see that he had no weapons, and didn’t bother trying to do a pat-down.

It could also be because of how badly he smelled, sweat, burnt flesh, and all.

While being manhandled away, however, he managed to see Bakugo's peaceful sleeping expression out of the corner of his eyes. Amazing, he still slept the same way he did when they were kids. Six years could be a long time, but he feels much closer to his childhood friend than anyone else in the whole world.

-

There was a protect against his arrest.

### ix Years

It’s been about six years since the last time they got to talk to each other. The time before, in that stilted building, they had to fight together in a fight against each other. It was everything that he didn’t want, rolled into one, but it was such a fitting reunion.

So the second time they met, it was a little better.

Midoriya stared at Bakugo. The blond doesn’t even look surprised when he sees him, and he thinks that this is so fitting. At the center of the fallen buildings and rubble from the recent villain attack, the two confronted each other at the heart of Mustafuyu.

He took a deep drag out of his cigarette before stubbing it out under his shoe. He turned to the blond hero, and thinks that he looks every bit the dream he always associated with him. It seemed that he was still bigger than him, taller and thicker in his tights while Midoriya’s pristine suit was a little dusty.

“...Good evening, Kacchan,” he said. “How have you been?”

How have you changed in six years?

In six years, Bakugo has attended and then graduated from UA with Honors. In six years, he was working as an up-and-coming hero as Kamui Wood’s sidekick. In six years, he was a registered Pro-Hero with a license, and was voted in the Top 10 Up-And-Coming Rookies-of-the-Year.

In six years, Midoriya Izuku became the Shie Hassakai Boss and owns about 1/8th of Japan’s underbelly.

Who woulda thought?

Bakugo eyed him critically. His gaze felt considerably heavy. Was it because they hadn’t seen each other in so long? Was it because Midoriya knew he didn’t even deserve to be alive at this point? He hadn’t thought about the things his childhood dreamed of in so long, but looking at Kacchan’s face, he didn’t realize that it would hurt so much.

“...Stop fucking around, Deku,” the blond said.

He could almost cry, because as it turned out, they didn’t change at all. Pro Hero and Yakuza, or two childhood friends torn apart by the forces of the universe, their relationship had twisted into something neither of them could name. And yet.

The whole world could end right now but right now, in this moment, they hadn’t changed.

They were still Deku and Kacchan.

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### Justice for the Person Who Did it

Midoriya’s arrest is over quirk violence, just as he thought. It made his fight much easier and he took a deep breath. He could do this.

“Ah, well… This is a little embarrassing to say, but that’s impossible. Because I’m quirkless.”

-

The best kind of victory was when all odds were stacked against you, and you still come out on top. This was something Midoriya knew intimately well.

With a cigarette in between his lips, he took a deep, long drag.

And the first drag after a complete victory was something that Midoriya truly enjoyed. Leaning back, he stared down at the papers in front of him, unsure if it was the rush of nicotine or high of victory that made his fingers tremble.

He was finally, finally, finally able to see the fruit of his victory.

It was indisputable. It was irrefutable. His hard work was finally paying off on the bigger scale.

After all, the crime rate in his territories has finally dipped below 3%. He knows that it's not solely because of him and that it's possible that he had no connection to that number, but he couldn't help but beam down at the number.

His towns were getting safer. Wasn't that a good thing?

Sitting back in his car, he felt his heart lighten. For a bit, he had thought he had gotten too powerful. He had a stern hand over the underbelly in this area, and was on good terms with the police in the area. The people now rallied underneath him, and he had friends in all sorts of strange places. He was very, very close to becoming the undisputed Top of the Underworld.

But thank god, at the very least, he could trust that a hero, that Bakugo, would be able to take him down.

-

“...God,” Chisaki said, rubbing his temples, “Only god could make something as stupid as you.”

Midoriya winced backwards.

“Fucking filthy. His quirk did this to you?” he asked, squinting at the mess that was Midoriya and the remains of his arms. “And he’s a hero. Are you going to put a hit order on his head? I think Shigaraki is actually going to fight Stain for it.”

The young man laughed back, “No, no, no need,” he said. “He’s the future Symbol of Peace.”

Chisaki pulled back suddenly, and green eyes flitted up to meet narrowed yellow eyes.

“...He almost completely blew off one of your arms. Almost leveled an entire building made of concrete. You got your bleeding, dying ass tossed into a hospital where they didn’t even bother treating all your wounds. I don’t know how you managed to organize something when you were ball and chained, but there might not be a next time.”

He kneeled down in front of him, signalling how important this was to him, and Midoriya couldn’t help but smile at the overwhelming wave of warmth as he kept talking.

“...For shits like us, you’re the reason why the world spins. You’re all rhyme, reason, and cause in the world. Losing you is a fate worse than death.”

And then, the mood was ruined when he painfully Overhaul’d him back to peak condition. Midoriya groaned at the sudden bolts of pain and the phantom feelings of getting his limbs all back the way he remembered them made his stomach roll.

“...Augh, can’t you be more gentle?” he asked.

Chisaki responded by reaching his hand to cup his face, and tilted it up. He pulled his face mask down to his chin and pressed a kiss to his cheek, and then pecked his lips. He kept their faces so close that he could feel his eyelashes against his cheeks as he slowly opened his eyes. Yellow eyes, warm and soft in a way that was criminal, and paired with his ridiculously handsome face, Midoriya felt his pulse jump.

“...Is this,” he asked, leaning in to press a kiss against the shell of his ear, “gentle enough, boss?”

Midoriya gave a full body shiver, ever so weak to the people he held close to his heart, and Chisaki gave a full-body chuckle, though it came out more like a deep rumble that echoed against Midoriya’s side.

“...That’s seduction,” he pouted back, his hand coming up to cover his ear as his face flushed like he was fourteen again, “You stupid pervert. I’ll sue you for sexual harassment.”

Chisaki leaned back, pulling his mask back up. “And not even a thank you for using my dirty quirk.”

Midoriya scowled back and swung his legs. He stopped for a moment and looked up to Chisaki with a coy little smile on his face. The sight of it, especially given all the exciting memories he had that always followed that little smile, ignited something inside of the older man.

“You’re right, I suppose I should reward you for all your hard work,” he all but purred out. He tilted his head and tapped his finger against his bottom lip, repressing the urge to shiver at the carnal desire in Chisaki’s gaze when his eyes honed in on his lip. “Do you have anything you particularly want?”

Chisaki pulled at his tie, and locked the door in response.

## (20) Shie Hassaikai’s New Boss

### news

When Shie Hassaikai’s Kumicho passed away, there were uneasy whispers that broke through the ranks. It made sense for Kurobane, the Boss’s Right Hand, or Miyuki, the second lieutenant, to take the place as the next head. Just three years ago, everyone would be convinced that if the Shie Hassaikai didn’t die with Kumicho, Kurobane would probably take the name and carry the burden.

Instead, Midoriya Izuku was named the successor per the will of the Kumicho himself.

Kurobane and Miyuki both supported this decision. It helped eliminate many of these rumors, but the general feeling never left. Many thought he was too young. Sure, he brings the most amount of money, and has amassed some great achievements in his short time here, but by those same reasons, Chisaki should have been chosen instead. He was older and his reputation of being polite and ruthless was ideal in a boss.

“W-what? W-Wait, slow down a little.”

Of course, the person that took this hardest was Midoriya himself.

The young man’s eyes fluttered a little, and he took a step backwards. A hand came up to his head as he battled with his shock.

“O-Oyaji-sama … died?”

“...I understand how you feel, but calm down, Midoriya. We have bigger things to worry about,” Kurobane replied back, voice stern and gaze sharp. “Oyaji-sama has listed you as his sole successor. While I will be honored to plan out the funeral and wake, we must also prepare you to finally take this position. Right now, we need you to pull yourself together before war breaks out.”

That seemed to snap Midoriya right out of his trance. He was a little pale, still, and he nodded.

“Of course.”

Kurobane would give one mercy to the boy who let Kumicho pass on without regrets. He would give him this one mercy as an extension for his gratitude.

He put his hand down on Midoriya’s shoulder and squeezed.

“Take a moment now,” he said. “When you walk through those doors, you’ll be the Kumicho of this empire. So take your last moment right now as Midoriya.”

The young man looked down at the ground, before he took a deep breath in and met Kurobane’s eyes.

“Okay,” he said. “Let’s go.”

Those eyes, clear like glass and so much more durable, met his with the same amount of determination that he saw six years ago in that hospital parking lot.

-

“...It’s not going to be easy,” Kurobane said, right as they walked down the hallways.

On the other side of the wall were the rest of the generals that the former Kumicho had gathered and their two closest lieutenants. It was a large gathering, and Midoriya wouldn’t be surprised if several other groups around the area were also here. He could hear loud shouting, but he couldn’t make out any words.

It proved how shaken he was. His hands trembled.

“No,” he said, “Nothing here ever is.”

Kurobane snorted at that. Midoriya thinks that it’s a testament to how bothered he was about all of this, if he was so open about how he felt.

“...Boss.”

Midoriya looked up to where Chisaki and Shigaraki stood at the entrance way. He stared at them for a moment, feeling his eyes water because Kurobane was wrong. This shit was the easy stuff. He can handle getting the verbal harassment and physical abuse. He was fine with the paperwork and the planning. He could deal with long work hours for little or nothing in return. He can turn a fortune and watch over a group. That shit was the easy things.

But standing there, with Kurobane’s unconditional support, Shigaraki’s unwavering loyalty, and Chisaki’s unquestionable trust, knowing that they were just a few of the many who has foolishly handed their lives and beings to him, he thinks that everyone was wrong this whole time.

This was hard. The hard stuff was knowing that the people that he loved and wanted to protect will be standing in the line of fire with him, for him. Even moreso now than ever, he’s terrified of leaving them. He’s terrified that he has made too much of an impact in their lives, and if something were to happen to him, there would be nothing left of the people that mattered the most to him.

Unlike the Kumicho before him, and Kurobane is walking proof of this, Midoriya has laid no plans for his people once he dies. He only has plans for the here and now. He has plans for the unseen future ahead of him, but he needs to be alive for that. He doesn’t know how to plan for something he can’t do anything about.

“...Hey, you look like you’re about to shit yourself.”

Thank you, Shigaraki.

The comment was so uncalled for, and something that only someone with as little shits to give as Shigaraki could say. Chisaki shot him a really tired look and Kurobane’s eyebrow twitched, but Midoriya huffed a little laugh.

“I’m a little nervous, yes,” Midoriya said. “But I’m okay now.”

He’ll march into the uncertain future. He’ll march blindly into something that he won’t be prepared for, and he’ll leave everything else to the fools that stand by him.

His hand came to the door.

“Let’s go.”

-

“...Grief is a strange thing. It can make a man say things that he has no place to mention,” Midoriya said, cold as he lifted his sake cup. “And so, the amount of disrespect that you have all decided to show me today will be ignored. This is the only mercy I can give you.” He took the shot.

“What did you-”

“I have a vision for the future of this group. This is only the beginning. I need people who are willing to move on with me, to carry the Shie Hassakai to their former glory and then to new heights. This is the will that Kumicho wanted, and I will achieve them.” He placed his cup down, and the clink rang throughout the room. “...The call is yours.”

He took a deep breath.

“If you leave, you leave as the former Kumicho’s closest allies. If you stay, I will show you the sight that Kumicho wanted.”

### overMidoriya

Chisaki would later find him, curled under his brand new desk, made of the sakura trees and stained with memories.

“...Boss,” he said, as he always would have. His eyes trailed the trembling shoulders and he pushed his chair all the way back. He kneeled next to him and reached out slowly. “Midoriya.”

Midoriya’s shoulder trembled harder, but he lifted his head. His face was drenched with tears, bright red, and his eyes were swollen. Long strands of snot dribbled from his nose and he couldn’t keep his saliva in his mouth. It was, on any other person, disgusting.

For Chisaki, it was just Midoriya.

“...Midoriya,” he said again, voice quiet and low, as though trying to coax a frightened animal out of its hiding place

He dropped his hand to the sides, and in that moment, Midoriya launched himself into his arms. He pressed his face to the man’s chest and his hands came to clutch at his vest.

“Oyaji… Oyaji is…”

In times like these, Chisaki thinks that Midoriya doesn’t belong in this world. His heart is too big and even though he play the part, it’s clear that it’s not in his nature. This was a kid who, unlike everyone else there, didn’t forget about the love that was taken from him. Where love and kindness made them bitter, it fortified Midoriya. The things that drew them to him were the same things that came back to hurt him.

If he could, he would just…. Overhaul all of this away.

But he couldn’t.

Of course not. Because one day, that will be him. And the thought that someone, one of the most powerful people in all of the underworld, would mourn him like this, under a desk, looking absolutely wrecked, made him feel warm. While he had no intention of leaving Midoriya’s side anytime in the foreseeable future, he felt as though every passing moment cemented that a little further.

The same man adopted both of them. He adopted both of them off the streets when they had nothing and no one else. However, Midoriya is the one that was sobbing like this. With his face pressed against his chest, Chisaki’s arms wrap around him before he knew what he was doing. He felt, of course, sad that Oyaji died, but Oyaji wasn’t the first person he lost and he wouldn’t be the last.

Yet, his eyes felt dry.

Shie Hassakai’s boss, Midoriya has a special gift. It was a curse. It was a weapon in his hands. It was his greatest weakness. Holding him in his arms, it felt like peace.

“...It’s alright,” he said, voice low and soft as he bent down so that he could say this as close to Midoriya as his back would allow.

He forgets that the man who has his hand on the pulse of the underworld is so small that he could engulf him, even now.

He cries long and hard. Until finally, his breathing evens out and he leans out of the embrace. Chisaki’s shirt is damp now, and he tries his best not to think about it. It’s easy, when he can see Midoriya’s red-rimmed, but clear, eyes.

“Kai,” he said resolutely, “thanks.”

“...You’re getting me a new shirt,” Chisaki replied without any bite.

“Of course,” Midoriya sighed deeply. He placed his hands on his knees, shuffling forward to get out from under the desk and slowly made it to his feet using the desk as leverage.

Without thinking about it, Chisaki’s hand wrapped around his wrist and held him there.

“...Kai?”

“...I’m still here,” he said. He looked up so that their eyes met.

The thought that Midoriya would be the one to cast him aside didn’t even occur to him.

With an angel’s grace, his lips twisted upwards, and Midoriya nodded.

“Yeah,” he said, the devil’s promise on his lips, “Let’s go conquer the rest of Japan.”

When Chisaki agreed again, he knew that they were going to go to hell.

### The Horizon - ShiraMidoriya

“How do I look?”

Part of being the boss meant that his entire wardrobe needed to change. Normally, he would have Magne here to help him with this, and possibly Twice to help model all of these color schemes, but right now, it was just him and Shigaraki.

He opened his arms, the black kimono with pale-pink lotus flowers embroidered on it. While this wasn’t the first time he has worn something so formal (and expensive), it would be the first one he wears to a meeting as the Boss of all Bosses. It was a foolish question, since this was chosen after a fist-fight between Magne and four other kimono designers, but the insecurities he never dealt with came creeping back into his mind.

The longer Shigaraki was quiet, the worse he felt.

“Everything is tied on correctly,” Midoriya said, since he had meticulously tied it himself. “We have a few minutes, right? Maybe I should tie this again-”

“Midoriya,” Shigaraki spoke up and his head snapped to the other man. “You’d look like a boss if you kept your mouth shut.”

Midoriya’s jaw clicked shut at that. And lips pressed closely together, he nodded, jerkily.

“There’s about twenty minutes left,” he said, flashing his phone screen with the time on it at him. He stared at him for a moment longer, “Ready?”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment and then nodded.

The coronation of the new boss was going to be tough. He wasn’t at all impressive, and many people see him as an easy target. Concerning their current state, though, he was their last and only buffer against the law and the Pro-Heroes. He had a trump card that no other boss before him had since quirks first emerged.

Midoriya was quirkless.

Getting to the door, Shigaraki reached to open it for him. Or at least, he should have, but instead, he placed his hand on the door, making sure that no one would be able to open it. In the back of his mind, he stared at the black archery-gloves on Shigaraki’s hand, and felt oddly nostalgic.

Shigaraki moved to stand behind him, leaning over a little so that his breath tickled his ear,as he spoke quietly.

“My answer, Midoriya.”

Midoriya turned around, and Shigaraki leaned back. With his hair slicked back, the younger man could see the vulnerability in his eyes as clear as day.

“...Tomura,” he said quietly, “Do you really think that this is the highest I can go?”

Red eyes widened, and he dropped his gaze. Endeared, Midoriya reached up to cup his face in his hand.

“We have a lot of things to do,” he said while the taller man leaned into the touch. “We’re not even halfway there.”

[ One day, I want to look down on all these lights. ]

The clothes and formal wear are radically different than what they are used to. Midoriya, who barely came up to his chest, can reach his shoulder with little effort, the young man who always had a black eye stands in front of him in near-perfect health.

Of all the things that could have changed, this has not.

“Are you coming with me?”

Shigaraki stepped to the side to pull the door open, because they both knew the answer.

### First Decree

As boss, the first thing he had to do was place down the law. Which was him. He was the law now. He decided who lives, who died, who moves, who stays. The judge, the jury, the executioner, to an extent.

And with his eyes focused on the bigger picture, he knows where to begin.

“Miyuki and Chisaki are remaining as my generals,” he said, picking up the shogi pieces and setting up the board. “Shigaraki and Dabi are my knights. And Stain is going to be my personal attack dog, my lance, if you will.”

He looked down at the pieces, placing them down as he listed them.

“And your rook? What will you do about that?”

“Eri,” Midoriya said, placing the piece down. He pulled out a cigarette to his lips and fumbled a little for his lighter.

“No one is going to approve of that,” Kurobane replied back, sitting down on the other side for old times’ sake.

“That’s fine,” Midoriya said, “I don’t care for their approval. We’re in a place where only results matter, after all.”

“...And if someone bites back?”

“I have you, don’t I?”

Kurobane remembers this kid, almost seven years ago, who coughed and cried when someone blew smoke in his face, and looks at his new boss.

“Then, your first decree?” he moved a piece and Midoriya smiled at it fondly, like he was a kid learning how to play for the first time instead of the man who taught him how to play to begin with.

Midoriya placed another piece down, looking serene.

“I’m going to start with all those silly hit-and-run places that are targeting my stores.” He motioned to the stack of papers next to him, “It’s going to get very busy here.”

Still, his movements were slow and purposeful, and as soon as Kurobane made one move, Midoriya began to move his piece. The time returned to Kurobane, and he knows this tactic. Midoriya wasn’t smart after all, he was perceptive.

And Kurogane has been thoroughly read.

“Hm… I win,” Midoriya said, as though it was a slow realization.

“...How long?” he asked.

“Since we started the game, if you can’t go left, you always rely on your lancers.” Midoriya replied back, shrugging, “And once the timing is thrown, I just need to wait for someone to make a mistake.”

“...That’s not what I meant.”

Midoriya’s eyes softened, and Kurobane doesn’t know how he managed to salvage that small part of himself for so long.

“...I was going to do this anyways,” he said quietly,”But… When someone dies, don’t you think it’s natural that we do a little cleaning?”

Once upon a time, Kurobane followed a man who wanted to make the world a better place by housing those who have been cast aside. Oyaji often referred to it as collecting the trash and making sure the recyclables didn’t add to the waste.

Kurobane bowed from where he sat on the other side of the table, “Thank you, Midoriya.”

“...Yeah, it was a good game,” he said. “Let’s play again, alright?”

### Revenge

“Damn, did you see the look on his face?” Jin cackled.

Midoriya flipped through a few more documents, twirling a pen in his hand as he read through the reports in front of him.

“...Izuku?”

He looked up from the report, but didn’t say anything. He stared at Jin for another moment before looking back down at the papers in his hands.

“Don’t ignore meeeee,” the blond whined as he walked up to him. “Aren’t you happy?”

He must have realized that he wasn’t going to get any work done, because he placed the papers down. He gave Jin a patient smile, “...About what?”

“...Since you’re the boss now and stuff, all those bastards that said shit about you before were silent,” Jin said quietly, like a child waiting to be scolded. “...I thought you’d be happy about that.”

“...Not really,” Midoriya shrugged back, “I… It’s because they treated me the way that they did that I was able to be boss today. We’re pretty much all on the same side now. Holding grudges is only going to hurt us in the long term.”

Jin drooped in his disappointment, no doubt wanting to have something a little more exciting.

“..Well, that’s why it’s just such a shame,” Midoriya said, a smile curling on his lips, “I

### TodoMidoriya - Stupid

“Are you stupid?” Midoriya asked, much harsher than he meant to. For all the things that he boasted about and the things that he built his empire on, he hasn’t felt this wrong-footed in a while. “Your reputation is falling to pieces. You understand this right? The more time you spend with me, the more eyes that find us together, the worse it’ll be for you. You’re a graduate of UA, aren’t you? In the ranking as one of the Top 20 Heroes on the Billboard? You can’t be stupid.”

Todoroki Shouto, stared at him, and instead of that cold demeanor everyone said he had, gave him a disarming smile, like he had just been complimented instead.

“I guess I’m stupid then,” he said easily, shrugging like this wasn’t a problem. He looked over to the side, his eyes catching on the new toy line-up and pointed at it, “Hey, the new Uravity Toyline should have launched. You were looking forward to that, right?”

“Of course I am!” Midoriya snapped back, and then flinched backwards.

Since he was 13 and holding his mom’s thin hand in that hospital room, he had done his absolute best to keep absolute control over his emotions. Still, in front of a Pro-Hero who just didn’t care, his defenses crumbled and he felt vulnerable.

In all the time that he was weak and powerless, he’s never felt impatient. He’s never been vulnerable. He’s been locked up and tortured on several occasions, but there was something about the way that Absolute Zero could smile that he felt himself unravel.

The world felt a little more unsteady on his feet, and he didn’t even know how to fix it.

“Midoriya-san,” Todoroki said, too handsome to be anything other than an angel, “you don’t have to believe me. And you don’t have to trust me. And you don’t have to like me. I like that about you.”

His words were deceiving, and if it wasn’t for the fact that Midoriya could see his face, he would have even believed it. He would have taken the words to heart and believed that this was fine the way it was and probably would have incorporated it into his plans as a back-up for something or another.

But he could see Todoroki’s face. It made his skin crawl and his stomach churn.

Midoriya wasn’t a good guy. He wasn’t a good person. His hands were stained with the blood of innocents and he’s made profit off of tragedy. The dreams of being a hero was long-since trashed, and he was content with watching them from afar. He was fine with that.

“If it’s you,” Todoroki said certainly and quietly, voice gentle and soft,“I don’t mind being used.”

It wasn’t something he ever wanted to hear from Todoroki, a man in the light with everything going for him. This wasn’t what he wanted. The words that he struggled to accept, the unwavering amount of confidence in that gratitude-he didn’t want it.

He didn’t want it from Jin or Chisaki or-or anyone really.

And he sure as hell didn’t want it from a hero.

### Dabi & Leaving

“...Osaka?” Dabi repeated. “You’re… sending me to Osaka?”

“Yes, that’s what I said. And it’s just for a week.”

And Dabi, who is normally lackadaisical and calm in all that he is, shook his head, “I don’t want to.”

Midoriya, who was still holding the files out to the man, narrowed his eyes. Assessing Dabi’s features, he opened his mouth, but Dabi cut him off.

“My place is by your side. If there is no place for me there, then I might as well be dead. Just kill me.”

“You’re so melodramatic,” Midoriya sighed back, more than tired of this man and his childish tantrums.

Dabi, in response, crossed his arms over his chest and looked at the wall. Did he really think that he would be taken seriously if he pouted at him? Honestly. He wondered where that gruff man who scared people just by walking by went.

“Do you want me to die?” Dabi asked quietly.

“No. now stop-”

“Then don’t send me away.”

“Dabi-”

“I don’t want to be alive if I can’t see you everyday-”

“Dabi, Eri’s going on a trip to Osaka, I’m sending you as her temporary guard from afar.”

“Oh.”

“...Yeah. Oh. So you’re leaving-”

“Are you coming too?”

“Dabi.”

The man gave him a lazy smile, his arms uncrossing as he stuck his hands into his pocket.

“I’ll go if you go.”

“Dabi.”

“...Please?”

-

“So, why am I going?”

“You have a great aptitude for remaining hidden and out of sight. You have a great sense for danger. I know that I can leave her in your very capable hands-”

“Dabi didn’t want to go, did he?”

Midoriya buried his face in his hands and sighed. He was about three seconds from screaming.

Iguchi grimaced.

“You don’t mind, right? It’s a week. I’ll give you a bonus in your next pay.”

“It’s fine, boss,” the lizard man said. “I… I’m glad that you rely on me.”

Surrounded, Midoriya suddenly realized, catching the little blush on Iguchi’s face. He was surrounded by them. He gave this defeated little sigh, and thought that there was nowhere else he would rather be.

### V. Kacchan

-

“Boss!” Spinner cried out as soon as he saw him. And, when he saw who was standing across the way of him, drew a blade as he jumped in between them.

He knew this man. This man was the reason why Midoriya got arrested. He was he only Hero that managed that victory resulting in near permament loss of both of Midoriya’s arms if it wasn’t for Chisaki, and Spinner would fucking burn the world down before he saw it happen again.

“Peace, Spinner,” Midoriya replied back, “...There’s no fight here.”

Spinner risked a quick glance at him, glad that his white-suit was still pretty white, and lowered his blade but not his guard. He narrowed his eyes at the Pro.

“Spinner, did you find- Boss!”

Midoriya raised his hands, without taking his eyes off of the blond across the way.

“...I’ll see you around, Kacchan. Congrats on going Pro,” he said. He dipped his head, and turned away to slide down the leftover rubble so that he could join Dabi down below with the others.

The older man narrowed his eyes at the boss, and turned his ferocious glare to Spinner, who gave a helpless shrug back.

“Midoriya!” Bakugo called out suddenly, “Just you watch, you fucking scumbag! This is just the start! I’m going to become the Number One hero!”

In a world rattled by natural disasters, the heroes that rocked the top of the charts were overwhelmingly rescue-based heroes. At the center of all that, the blond who lived as though he was the center of the universe and had a duty to shine down on the world, made this bold declaration.

To anyone else, it was ill-received. The destruction required all hands on deck. The flashy, explosion quirk could result in more damage than help. Bakugo was out of his time.

But Midoriya could always see something that no one else could, because Spinner saw an expression he had never seen before cross Midoriya’s face. The man spun on his heel to stare back, as though he didn’t dare miss a second of this, with his mouth opening and his eyes widening and watering all at once. Before long, his lips quivered up, like he wanted to smile but suddenly forgot how to do it.

Spinner watched their eyes meet again.

They, who had operated on the ideals that life could always get worse, and spent those hopeless nights together, had never seen what Midoriya looked like when he was given hope. He turned to the Pro Hero like a flower turns to the sun, and Spinner felt dread under the radiance of his beauty.

Instead, he gave a breathless laugh as he nodded back.

Since receiving the title as the Boss, Midoriya pulled his shoulders back and walked with a spring in his step. A big grin grew on his face and the lights danced playfully in those green eyes, as he made his way towards the rendezvous point.

### dabiMido - getting laid

“Dabi, I’m begging you,” Midoriya said, rubbing his temples with one hand as he pulled a cigarette out from his case on his desk. “Please, go get laid.”

In response, Dabi crossed the room. Leaning over the desk, he reached his hand towards Midoriya. His eyes flitted from the cigarette to his eyes, and his boss dropped his hand. He tilted his head, cigarette between his lips, so that Dabi had some more room to light it up for him.

And then, Dabi pulled the cigarette out of his lips with one hand. His other hand grabbed the back of his neck and he yanked Midoriya forward. The young boss choked on his surprise before their lips crashed together. Dabi’s teeth clanged painfully against his, and he forced his tongue in to wrap around Midoriya’s. With one hand against his desk and one hand against Dabi’s chest, his surprised cries quickly turned into quiet whimpers.

Dabi pulled back, licking his lips like he had something delicious. His features were neutral but it felt like his gaze would set him on fire.

“Why,” Dabi purred, starting a fire inside of his boss’s gut, “I thought you would never ask.” His lips stretched, showing off his ridiculously perfect teeth.

“Not with me,” Midoriya said, scowling. He pushed him away, righting himself as he wiped his mouth.

At that, his heated look turned just a little curious, and Dabi tilted his head. He stepped back though, putting a more respectable distance between the two of them. “If not you, then who?”

“Don’t know, but you should figure that out. You really should get a life outside of work. It’s unhealthy-”

He trailed off when Dabi’s hand extended his cigarette towards him. He hesitated but leaned in to accept the cancer stick into his mouth.

“You… after all that, still trusted me, huh?” he said.

“It’s a fucking cig,” Midoriya said, quite well for something being in his mouth, and Dabi lit it up for him using his index finger.

“...Yeah,” he said quietly, smiling as though he was looking at something fond. “Nothing hotter.”

Midoriya choked on his smoke, and Dabi’s peaceful smile turned into a laugh. He tugged at his tie, loosening it up and unbuttoning the top three of his shirt.

“It’s been a while, right?” he asked, pearly whites shining as his lips stretched out into a large grin, “Did you miss me that much? Boss, you know I’d do anything for you.”

Midoriya scowled again.

“Don’t wrinkle my shirt.”

“Yes sir.”

## 10 YO - Kota

### Kota &

Izumi Kota is ten and a half years old when he runs away from home and straight to Tokyo. He wanders the streets until it’s 2AM and he’s falling asleep where he’s sitting down next to the convenience store.

“...Kid, you shouldn’t be sleeping out here.”

He groggily looked up to see some old guy looking down at him.

“Whatcha… gonna do about it,” he muttered back. “I ain’t got… a place to stay for the night, ossan.”

“...Alright then, you wanna go with the police or you wanna come with me?”

And Kouta thought about it. Police meant that he would have to return to Mandalay. But he didn’t want to go back to the place where they glorify the death of his parents. So.

“Okay.” he said, looking at the man. “I’ll go with you, weird ossan.”

Sharp blue eyes narrowed at him and the man clicked his tongue.

“Don’t you know that you shouldn’t trust strangers?”

“Don’t you know that you can get arrested for talking to a kid in the middle of the night?”

“...Cheeky brat. I know people that will kill for less.”

“Can I meet them? I wanna see my parents again.”

And unlike anyone else he met before when he said that, the man looked down on him and laughed.

“Poor kid, you expecting sympathy from me?”

And then suddenly, he stilled before reaching into his pocket and pulled out his phone. He didn’t even look at the screen as he placed the phone against his ear.

“Yeah, yeah, they were sold out. Just ask Twice to clone you a box till tomorrow,” the man said, a lazy drawl in his voice. “I’m on my way back now.”

He hung up and pocketed his phone. He turned around, ready to leave, when the kid spoke up again.

“Where are we going?”

“...I’m going back to the office,” the man replied back after a second. “Don’t know about you.”

He peered up at the man, his smooth skin, the casual slouch in his posture and thinks that he’s the living opposite on Mandalay.

“If you really wanna die, then speak your mind,” the strange adult said.

Kouta didn’t hesitate, “You don’t look like a hard-worker. So why are you going back to the office?”

The man who promised him a life of pain in exchange for the truth barked out a laugh. The sound was quiet, but so sudden, and biting, like even his laughter had to be a weapon.

“Oh my god, kid,” the man said, “How are you still alive?”

“So, can I come with you? So you can kill me?”

His blue eyes shined with an expression that made Kouta think that he should run. If he wanted to live, he needed to run and get away right now. But Kouta didn’t care if he was alive or dead. He didn’t really care if he woke up tomorrow or not.

“...Alright kid, I guess you can tag along.”

And thus, Kouta met Dabi.

### Meeting Midoriya -

“I’m back,” Dabi called as he entered the room.

“Dabi!” a man in a mask flew towards him, crying dramatically as he waved his arms frantically in front of him, “Dabi, we’re fucked! We’re in trouble! We-”

He stopped, his eyes meeting Kouta and Kouta met his gaze resolutely.

“What are you?” he asked.

“W-what am I? What are you?!” Twice yelled back, pointing at him, and then at Dabi, “Is this what you’ve been doing? Instead of getting cigarettes, you were p-p-procreating?!”

The man scowled back and Kouta frowned..

“What does procating mean?” he asked.

“...Procreating,” Dabi amended, “And if you don’t know what that means, go to school-”

“Boss!” Twice yelled into the office space, “Dabi isn’t pure anymore!”

“Twice, you freak-” he hissed out.

“Dabi is a daddy!”

Kouta gasped and took a step away from Dabi. “Ew.”

“What do you mean, ‘ew’?”

“Is Dabi back?”

Kouta turned to see the most underwhelming person he’s ever seen before. Which wasn’t saying much since all he talks to are schoolmates and the occasional reporter who wants sensational news, but still. Underwhelming. With a mop of green curls on his face, bags under his eyes and a yawn ripping out of his lips, the young man that stood in front of him looked like an overworked and underpaid office drone.

“Boss,” Dabi said, sketching a bow before his hand dropped onto Kouta’s face. “Bow, you’re in the presence of the most powerful guy here.”

Him? Kouta frowned.

“If you piss him off, you won’t rest even in death,” he said slowly. It wasn’t a threat. It was something else, but Kouta was too young to understand that.

“Don’t say such scary things to your son, Dabi,” the boss said, a small smile on his face.

“Not my kid,” Dabi replied back, his hand tight on Kouta’s head. He wasn’t going to relent, and was steadily trying to shove Kouta closer to the floor. “Unless you want to adopt him with me.”

Kouta gagged, but did give a bow ifonly so that Dabi’s hand would release their death grip on him.

“Very funny, a child between us would be a walking hazard.”

The grin on Dabi’s face made him young, like he was a teenager who believed that all his dreams were going to come true.

“...Well, come in,” Midoriya said, “Twice, get our guest some hot chocolate-”

“I don’t want hot chocolate,” Kouta said. “I’m an adult. Give me what the adults drink.”

### Kota & Dabi- Scarves

Kota stared at Dabi.

He is what the girls in his class, except the Princess, squeals and blushes at. They ask him for pictures of him, his favorite colors and all that stuff, like Kouta would know.

(He does by the way, Dabi’s favorite color is green, and his favorite flower are rindous. The purple ones, whatever that means.)

He has attractive physical features and a suit that could buy a house. He wears his clothes like a model, and fights like he was born and bred for it. And working directly under one of the most powerful men in Japan, he finishes the ensemble with a raggedy scarf.

It’s midnight blue with intricate silver designs of something, and might have been beautiful and intricate once, but right now, it looked like he was wearing a rag around his neck.

“That’s an ugly scarf,” Kouta said, point blank.

Dabi arched his eyebrow at him, but remained otherwise silent. His hands remained in his pocket, keeping the appearance that he was bored.

“You’re like, a super big bad rich guy, right? Can’t you afford a better scarf?”

“...You’re a kid,” Dabi said, “So I’ll let you go. But you’re wrong, I can’t afford better.”

“Is it because you’re Midoriya-ni’s kept man?”

The older man looked absolutely amused, “Who taught you that word?”

“Soramitsu-aniki was watching Korean Dramas in the kitchen,” he replied back.

The flame-quirk user scowled back, “Damn, I owe Shigaraki dinner then.” He gave a little sigh, and rubbed his neck. “But no, I’m not a kept man,” he said, “Izuku doesn’t like me like that.”

Kouta didn’t get it then, and frowned.

“So you’re… like a reverse-hooker? Paying someone to want you?”

Dabi burst out laughing at that.

### Loyalties:

“Listen carefully, Bouya-kun.”

“Kouta, my name is Kouta.”

Toga’s grin made it known that she didn’t care what his name was. She tilted her head to the side as she spun around. Her long skirt flayed out, and from above, she would have looked like a beautiful flower in full-bloom when she turned.

“Hm, you see, there are three types of people in the world,” she explained. She lifted her index finger, and poked his nose. He frowned and jerked his head back in response, and she laughed at him. “People who are loyal to Izuku.” She lifted her middle finger to join her index finger, “And then the people who are loyal to Izuku’s cause!”

There was a long pause, as she leaned back when the server nervously gave her the take-out order.

“Thank you!” she cheered brightly. Her eyes flickered onto the server’s face, eyed the way the woman bowed and kept her pale face looking at the ground. “Hmmm, it smells so good,” she said brightly as she took a whiff of the food in her bag. “See you guys around!”

The server breathed a sigh of relief.

“Oh, wait,” Toga said, stopping in her tracks. She turned around, her smile widening as she reached into her pocket. The server’s eye widened, trembling where she stood like a statue, and Toga pulled out an envelope. The blond laughed, “Take it easy, alright? This is from our boss.”

She handed the envelope and Toga left without another word. Kouta watched from over his shoulder how the server brightened when she opened the envelope and eyed the wad of cash tucked inside of it. She bowed ecstatically to their backs and Kouta jogged up to walk next to Toga.

They climbed into the back of the sleek car they came in.

“Then, what about the last type? The last type of people in the world?”

Toga looked at him, and for a moment, Kouta thought that he would have to remind her what they were talking about.

The blond’s smile turned predatory, “Enemies.”

Kouta suppressed a shiver, feeling his body turn cold all over. He looked down.

“So, bouya-kun, you should make your decision quickly,” she said. “Which one are you going to be?”

### F

## Other

### Interlude: Three Conditions

There were three conditions that would lead to someone losing to Midoriya.

It didn’t matter who that <someone> was, but if these three conditions were to line up, whether they like it or not, they will lose to Midoriya.

The first condition is that someone believes that Midoriya is useless. In addition to the fact that he wasn’t much of a shot and easily outmatched in a fight, it’s easy to come to the conclusion that he’s weak. Then, when someone learns that he is <Quirkless> the seeds have been successfully planted.

No one would ever think that they would lose against this man, one on one.

The second condition is that Midoriya does not lie.

He may give half-truths, gloss over some facts, and withhold information, but he does not lie. It’s what makes his word so powerful, so believable. By far, this reputation he has greatly outweighs almost everything else about him.

The last condition is that Midoriya Izuku has bestowed <kindness> onto you.

At the underbelly of this world, surrounded by deceit and the threat of death around every corner, anyone who wants survive will take. They will take and take, without regard for anything else other than their own life and pleasure.

And so, those who give, those with <kindness> are the first to die.

For the creatures that dwell in the shithole of society, it’s obvious that they will instinctively take everything. They will take and take and take the kindness, with a fever that only the devil would smile on.

Then, at the end of that, at the edge of desperation and complete annihilation, without fail, that man would extend his hand out. To all those that he trample over, he will smile down at them.

“Come with me.”

These conditions, followed by a complete loss, result in taking his hand.

### S