## Graduation Gift

### **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.

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“...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.”

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“...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.

He smiled back, because he was an infomat first, and they didn’t pay the price for it. It could be in a week. It could be at the end of the night. None of them would know, and there was no way that Midoriya would tell them.

### **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 whenever 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 nodded, he’s certain that he never will.

The sake cups that they exchanged that night was cheap. Midoriya promised 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-**

“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 him. 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? Was he a hero now, stepping into the world for the first time?

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

### **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 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 found it a little insulting, but the rest of him was overwhelmingly 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! // Ugh, I can’t believe I’m excited to see those fuckers 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.

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“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.”

### **Chisaki meets Dabi-**

“...Oh?” Chisaki tilted his head, eyes wide, “His quirk is-”

Dabi listed his hand and did a light demonstration, a little fire at the tip of his index finger. “Bingo. Not even ashes are left when I’m done.”

And whatever expression he was expecting to see out of Chisaki (something, anything other than that stone-cold poker face) morphed into shocked. It was a wide-eyed shock as his head snapped to Midoriya.

“...A fire-quirk?” the man repeated. “You, Izuku? After everything Hiyama-”

“Chisaki-san,” Midoriya’s voice was frigid, even though his smile was as polite and gentle as when he offered coffee just a moment before, “There’s no need to bring up such old stories. I thought you were younger than that.”

Gold eyes stared for a moment longer. It meant a lot that Midoriya would cut someone’s sentence off, especially so since Chisaki was higher in ranking.

Somewhere in Dabi’s heart, he began to feel restless. Why was there still things that Midoriya wished to keep from him?

Why did Midoriya still try to shield and protect him from things?

“With your track record, I was just… shocked,” Chisaki said.

“Nothing to worry about now,” Midoriya said.

### **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.

-

“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 duplicator, 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 Cremator.”

Midoriya’s pokerface was that infuriatingly gentle smile. Chisaki should do him a favor and just Overhaul it already.

“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 trust-worthy.”

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. Disgusting. Did they really have to do this right now, when he was sitting right across from them?

“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't want to do damage control between him and Chisaki. Or Shigaraki and Chisaki. God, if he ever got stranded on an island with them, he might actually just choose to die.

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 blew again, 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, 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?

## Assembly

### **Dabi not weapon**

"He's not a weapon. His name is Dabi."

And again, Dabi's breath caught again-

"Because a weapon knows how to obey orders."

And Jin's laughter would follow him all the way back to their apartment.

### **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. “That’s exactly what it means to not know anything!”

Dabi reeled back at that, since Midoriya had 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 phones 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 Disasters

### **Natural Disaster (1) - Flood**

### **Dabi's [not] Betrayal**

"No, it's just us."

"Just... us?" Spinner turned around, confused, "But... what about Dabi?"

Midoriya closed his eyes and shook his head. "He made his choice-"

"-And would much rather you didn't make it for me."

Just like that, the last person that they were waiting for jumped into the back of the van.

Dabi looked at Midoriya, his expression blank.

"What's the matter?" he asked, "You look like you've seen a ghost."

"You... Why are you here?" Midoriya asked, his mouth falling open. "Endeavor was right there! You could have killed him or ended his career or whatever it was that you wanted!"

The man arched an eyebrow at him, before his features warped into anger. His hand shot out to catch Midoriya's collar and pushed him to the back of his seat. He was hunched, since the van wasn't made to accommodate someone his size, but it only served to enhance the difference in their size.

"So you did set me up," he said, eyes narrowed.

"It doesn't matter what you fucking call it!" Midoriya snapped back, his eyes furrowed as his lips pulled back into a fierce snarl. "Why are you here, Dabi? You said that you wanted revenge or whatever it was, didn't you? It was the perfect opportunity for you to do that!"

"Yeah," Dabi agreed, "It would have. I was in his blindspot. He was busy on all sides and at all angles. There were a lot of cameras focused on us. I know."

"Then-"

"And if it was about four years ago, I would have thrown you away for that opportunity."

He took a deep breath. He pushed his dripping wet hair out of his face, unintentionally making it look like he was slicking it back. He leaned back to grab a towel and placed it on Midoriya's head.

"But that was four years ago. Now, dry up and tell us the next plan you want us to execute."

And only Midoriya looked lost and confused, while Spinner put the pedal to the metal and brought them all back home.

### **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.

### **Remembering the Past**

"Do you remember?" Dabi asked, "When you asked me what I liked in the world?"

Midoriya furrowed his brows, not because he didn't remember, but because he confused why Dabi was bringing it up as they ate instant ramen in the office at three am. Or maybe he was shocked that Dabi had remembered at all.

"Yes?" he said. "Uh... I mean, yes, I remember but... Why are you bringing that up?"

"I have an answer now," Dabi said.

"Dabi that was years ago," Midoriya said, eyes wide. "You were holding onto that this whole time?"

The taller man snorted, but the humor that shined in his eyes was breathtaking. He tilted his head, a smile starting to stretch his lips.

"Yeah."

He slurped his noodles unnessesarily loudly.

"Wait, are you going to answer the question?" Midoriya asked, eyes wide.

"I did," Dabi replied back.

"When?"

Midoriya narrowed his eys, their conversation no doubt already repeating in his head. Dabi's grin grew two sizes too big, feeling his face twitch in the effort to keep it up. If he was a little younger and a bit more bright-eyed, he might have been more explict about it. But, there was joy in seeing the realization sink in his eyes and his face explode out into that shade of red. Dabi chuckled, feeling lighter and brighter than anything else.

The last of his chuckles felt like the last sparks at the bottom of a fire, and Dabi didn't realied being extinguished was such an uplifting feeling.

"That's cheap," Midoriya huffed. His eyes trailed from Dabi to his ramen and then back again. Dabi's insufferable gin could still be seen from the corners of his face.

And Dabi, satisfied that Midoriya would be thinking soley of him for some time, thought that their instant meal was even better than usual.

### **Twice & Dabi - Regular Orders**

"And two eggs for him," Twice said, pointing to Dabi.

Dabi watched the ramenstand owner scowl, but do just that. How come all the standowners that they go to are all old assholes? As curious as it was, he supposed that Midoriya just attrached that kind of energy. More importantly, he tilted his head to stare at the blond he came in with.

"Two eggs?"

"Yeah, that's what you always get, right?" Twice replied back, "I thought it was your favorite."

Dabi hesitated, because it didn't use to be.

"And you know what I want on my okonamiyaki, right?"

Double servings of unagi with a side of peppers to the side, he didn't say aloud.

"How would I know? I don't care."

But they've been together for too long after all, because Twice pointed at laughed at Dabi.

"And that's the expression you make when you lie about something that'll make you look considerate. You big kitten! // Shitty dog!"

Dabi scowled harder, ready to kick some sense into Twice, but remembering where they were, restrained himself.

He'll trash Twice later.

### **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

### **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.

### **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.

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! Practice mall!”

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.

-

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 fuck around when it comes 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.

## The Reveal of Touya

### **Looking Familiar & Natsuo**

“...You know,” Twice said, tapping his chin, “I can’t help but think that you look really familiar to someone, now that you have real skin on your face.”

“Oh, really?” Dabi asked, his lips on edge of his cup, taking sips as he listened to Twice be himself.

The blond gave a loud hum, making a big show of how hard he was thinking. Dabi could only hope that his partner for the evening wouldn’t hurt himself thinking so hard again.

“Yeah, like… Hm, are you related to someone that I know?”

The white-haired man snorted back, “How would I know who you know? I’m not Midoriya.”

“Ahh!” The blond violently tousled his own hair. “Shit! I should know this-”

“Nii-san?”

Both stopped and turned around, where a wide-eyed young man, thicker than Twice and taller than Dabi. Eyes gray like storm clouds, he looked up at the men in front of him. Suddenly, Twice snapped.

“Oh my god, Dabi! It’s our love-child! I’m a dad!”

### **Midoriya & Touya**

“So?”

“So what?”

“I know that you already heard about it,” Dabi said as he plopped down onto the space in front of his boss. “What do you want me to do?”

Midoriya looked at Dabi, a little bit helpless but altogether exasperated.

“You never make anything easy for me, do you?” he sighed. “Well, at the very least, I can cover it up here, but if it makes it out to mainstream media, considering,” he motioned to the shelf of Endeavor Figurines to the left, “we might have a problem. You’re an adult and we have an actual work agreement contract that can’t be annulled against either of our will, so in theory the law should be on our side.”

“...In theory,” Dabi repeated.

Midoriya tilted his head, “but if Endeavor-san wants to play dirty. I’ll play dirty too.”

A shiver of fear ran down Dabi’s back, and it brought a wide grin on his lips instead.

“Anything I can do to help?” he asked, uncomfortably turned on.

His boss’ smile could make milk curdle and it made the blood in Dabi sing.

“Stay put.”

Immediately, hsi joy was deprived of him.

“What?” he asked, scandalized.

“Did I stutter? You made this mess, do me a favor and don’t make it bigger.”

### **“Todoroki Touya, Not Dead but Yakuza?!”**

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 “

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.

“You told me to stay out of that,” Dabi said, “but not come in.” He turned, blue eyes assessing.

Figuring that the man wasn’t going to leave otherwise, Midoriya shrugged back. “I thought you were going to just wait it out.”

“Pft, it’s not like the media is going to come to a yakuza office. If they had the balls for that, heroes would be out of a job,” 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.

Without saying it, the both of them heard the quiet, “Thank you.”

“It’s going to get really noisy soon,” Midoriya said, looping his arm around Dabi’s neck and bringing him closer.

“Hm, good thing the office is soundproof,” the older man replied, his hand reaching for his tie. With deft fingers, he loosened the knot.

When they’re done and settled, he’ll tie it back on him, but for now, his teeth ached to trace his collarbone.

### **Natsuo’s Resume**

“Let me work here.”

“...Do you even know what kind of work we do here?”

Natsuo shrugged back, “You guys are financiers, right?”

Midoriya opened his mouth, closed it, worried for the entire family, and then tried again.

“Close,” he said, because they do a lot of financing. But it wasn’t the first word that came into people’s head when they heard about their… company.

“Well, what’s the problem?” Natsuo asked.

“We don’t solve our problems in a legal and neat manner.”

“Does anyone?”

“We’re statistically more likely to be arrested.”

“The system’s always been corrupt.”

“We can’t pay you very well.”

“That’s fine.”

“Well, we’re not looking for a university student-”

“I’m studying about medical welfare,” he spoke up, “and since I’m not far into the curriculum, I can change courses.”

“Don’t you think that’s a waste?”

“I think that I’ve wasted enough of my life to willingly waste more.”

He bowed his head, as low as he physically could, and his head bent past his waist.

“Please.”

-

“Damn that was cold,” Twice whistled, “You’re a hot man, boss!”

Midoriya sighed, rubbing the back of his neck. “It won’t be enough,” he said. “Maybe we should just use him.”

“But he’s Dabi’s brother.”

### **Shot - twice & rain**

For Twice, the rain was soothing. The sound was consistent and noisy, and it was something that echoed and something that he couldn’t even yell over sometimes. It was cold and could get annoying, too, like drenching all of his cigarettes or causing all the mud to come up and ruin his clothes, but he liked it more often than not.

So watching shows where the rain was always used to enhance how dramatic or sad a scene was always annoyed him.

That was, until he met Dabi. And more specifically, the man that Midoriya made of him.

Twice stood, numb and unfeeling as his brain slowly tried to comprehend the image in front of him. Just next to him, Spinner was yelling out for him to help him, but how could he help?

He watched, numb and unfeeling as Kurono’s hand pushed down on Midoriya’s open wound. The sound of the rain was so loud that Twice couldn’t hear anything else. He wondered what he was saying, as water rolled down his arms and robbed him of the warmth. He stared.

Next to him, Spinner was holding back Dabi. It looked like Dabi was yelling something too, but Twice couldn’t… Could Dabi yell? He doesn’t think he could. He’s never heard him yell, and they’ve experienced a lot of shit together.

Spinner, however, yelled a lot. All things considered, no one lost their composure as fast or as often as Spinner did. Well, Twice couldn’t hate such an honest guy, but what was the point of yelling like that all the time when no one listened? The guy was a waste of energy, honestly, he should take a lesson from Twice, who was the King of Being Calm and all that.

A hand came to grab his.

He stared, where Toga’s eyes hadn’t left Midoriya’s figure, as her trembling fingers grabbed his. He almost didn’t recognize her, because it was raining so much. He didn’t know how to describe it otherwise. It was shocking to think that he would forget her beautiful face, but she wasn’t smiling. She wasn’t yelling or anything either. Just holding his hand in her cold hands.

The rain must have robbed her of that too.

The rain was a beautiful thing. He remembered a time when he and Midoriya ducked into an abandoned warehouse, all those years ago, and looked up at him through wet bangs. He remembered feeling his pulse jump and his body flush like he embodied heat. The rain did little to cool them off then. For people with fire-quirks, he wondered if that was how it all felt.

Then, wasn’t the rain a blessing? It washed things away like a free shower. They just needed soap. And Dabi needed a lot of soap, the guy was disgusting, okay?

He turned back to Dabi, who was screaming as Spinner and Hojo now came to hold him back as his mouth opened. He couldn’t hear anything, but he could see the veins and muscles protruding out of his neck. He must be straining himself.

The rain would help cool him down.

Twice always thought that it was annoying for popular media to use something as soothing and chill-axing as the rain to frame the devastation and disparity of the situation, but for guys like Dabi, he figured that this was going to be the closest thing to [crying] as he’d get.

For an ikeman, he was really ugly when he cried.

### **Natsuo Gets Hired**

"Amazing," Midoriya whispered in awe.

Natsuo looked from the blood red ice and then back to Midoriya, rubbing his neck sheepishly.

"Really? I uh... I'm really out of practice."

In the middle of a blistering heatwave in Tokyo, Midoriya could watch his breath materialize in front of him because of how cold it was.

"D-dry ice," Midoriya stammered, "Can you..."

"Make it? Yeah. I need time and a lot of heat packs afterwards," he said.

The young man turned to him, eyes wide and and mouth agape, the words from his heart spilling from his mouth-

"You're hired."

Natsuo opened his mouth. Closed it.

"Do you know what kind of trafficking I can do with dry ice?"

And it was fine. Natsuo didn't mind getting his hands dirty. He didn't mind doing the wrong thing and hurting people and ruining himself anymore. His father did plenty of dirty things too, except he was a hero. So it was fine. Natsuo was just being honest. And he honestly didn't care.

The silence that came after a raging forest fire-he was sick of it.

"Alright," Natsuo nodded, "When do I start, boss?"

"Come this way, I'll get you started. Despite how I look, we do have some form of officialities that we have to follow."

"Yes sir."

The way Midoriya would use him to line his pockets, Natuso would use him.

He would use and be used, and finally eat with his brother, his Hero, again.

### **Natsuo’s Day 1**

Natsuo was hired because he was useful. Natsuo was hired because Midoriya thought he could be useful.

If Midoriya had hired Natsuo because he was Dabi’s relative, Dabi would have been fine. He would have preferred that. Then everyone could see and know that Natsuo wasn’t special or particularly amazing or anything. He was someone that would be stuck under Dabi’s shadow, and all that he does and didn’t do would be a reflection on Dabi.

So if Natsuo was really as useful and good as Midoriya claimed, then Dabi would look that much better because Natsuo was his little brother. Natsuo would have been hired as an extension of Dabi.

Instead, Midoriya hired Natsuo for Natsuo. And Dabi hated that.

### Natsuo & Dabi get Ramen

"You still like hard-boiled eggs in your ramen?" Natsuo asked, short of amazed as his eyes stared at the ramen.

"Don't think too hard about it," Dabi said. After a second, he sighed, "And for a while, I really hated it."

Natsuo peered up at him, the question clear in his eyes. Where did he go? Why didn't he come home? Why didn't he take Natsuo with him?

Dabi sighed, reaching into his ramen to pass him one of his two eggs into Natsuo's bowl, the same way they used to when they were convinced that they could be worthy of someone's love if they just tried hard enough.

"I just don't hate it as much as I hate other things. Don't think too hard about it."

Natsuo nodded slowly, like he was slowly processing the words. The taller man looked down at his ramen. Supposedly, they were older and therefore had all the answers they didn't have as children. Supposedly, they should have seen and experienced enough of the world to know how to act with each other, and have everything feel better with a snap of their fingers.

Maybe they haven't grown up. All that they've seen and experienced in the world only accumulated in that they should have continued to pretend that Touya was dead and they were strangers with startling similarities.

"I knew it was Dabi and Natsuo-san!" a bright voice came, and as always, Natsuo watched a smile stretch across Dabi's face as he straightened in his seat.

"Ah boss," Dabi called back, just as lazy, "You know, if you stalk your employees to their lunch break, we gotta call HR on you for harrasment." He scooted over for the young man to take his jacket off and drape it over the booth seat as he climbed in.

"Don't be silly Dabi, I pay HR too much to be taken in for such a small scheme," the young man replied back with a sweet smile.

Dabi rolled his eyes, and Midoriya motioned for one of the petrified waitstaff to take his order.

"Try their Godzilla," he said, "It's pretty good. Get extra chashu."

"Are you paying for it?" Mioriya sniped back. The taller man took this chance to slurp on some noodles. "Yeah, that's what I thought." Still, when he turned to the pale waitstaff member, he ordered a Godzilla with extra chashu."

"And another egg," Dabi added to the order.

With a long-suffered sigh from Midoriya, another egg was added to the order.

"It can't be healthy to eat as much eggs as you do."

"If we cared about being healthy, we wouldn't be eating ramen."

Midoriya rolled his eyes, but didn't say anything more.

And Natsuo wondered when they would remember that he was here. He thought it was incredibly telling, that he didn't even realize how tense Dabi was until Midoriya. He wondered if, he was born to a family made of love and not ambition, he would understand what it was like.

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### **A**