## Summary:

<have you ever seen a rage so pure- so full of hatred- that it was clear? If he could crystalize that color, the world will see its first blood emerald. >

“There are monsters out there, you know, teeth as big as fucking schoolchildren and you think,” he made a wild motion at Midoriya, “that having an omega as our leader is the strange part?!”

## Notes:

* Apple-Picking & Hospital Run & Springer Fight
* ending with fighting Kouta + Muscular
* and his face coming out
* Springer war
* also getting brava + gentle,
* Rehab -> chimera & orchids

### **Survivor Notes**

* Group run by a Pure Omega [1 O + 10 A]
* Atypical Group [1 a, 1 o, 9-ish beta]
* Beta-only Group [15 b]
* children only [25a&b: 8-13]
* ppl are good so long as you can use them [30]

## Post

### **1. Of Failed Escapes (Midoriya)**

### **2. Of Fraying Structure (Yamada)**

### **3. Of Waiting for Nothing (Chisaki)**

### **4. Of Unanswered Questions (All Might)**

### **5. Of Stares (Midoriya)**

### **6. Of Loss**

### **C**

## Unposted

### **Informing Patrol - Dabi**

The idea was that the base was safe. The ideal was that nothing would happen on base because it was the closest thing to safe that anyone knew. It was one of the only comforts that they could hold onto.

They killed so many monsters in the area that they could go days without ever seeing one. People who never leave their compound area haven't seen a monster since they got there. They had destroyed potential hiding spots, cleared out areas, and set up traps with meticulous detail and precision.

Returning to their base, normally bubbly with life and energy, without the usual fanfare was beyond strange and altogether frightening. The stench of fear and blood hung in the air. Coupled with the sight of a small puddle of blood staining the snow, they were reasonably worried and instantly on guard. There was a broken window by the infirmary, and clear signs of a struggle.

"Oh, the patrol team is back!"

Dabi's eyes landed on the young woman who spoke.

"I'll let everyone know that the Westward group returned, " she said, clearly a little frazzled but trying to smile for them. "Welcome back, everyone."

She was too laid back for them to think that there was any threat left here. The problem was contained, but that didn't stop the crux of the issue that there was a problem to begin with.

“Geez, what happened here?” Ingenium asked, worried eyes looking around the compound, “Is everything okay?”

"Ah, Helmet-san panicked when he woke up. We uh... got it under control though."

Dabi’s breath caught in his throat. His mind flashed to the mangled child that was in a helmet that they carried in. He thought about how the base was nearly silent aside from the infirmary wing. Heart lodged in his throat, he wondered what the last thing he said to Helmet even was.

"...He what?!" came the shout from behind Dabi.

In the few hours that they went on a standard patrol, what the hell had happened on base?

-

Everyone was alive and accounted for. Helmet was, apparently, knocked out and supposedly resting in his room.

Supposedly, because they used to think that before and then he dragged his battered body against the white snow.

### **UA Adults try to understand [aizawa & yamada]**

Yamada couldn’t do it.

He couldn’t forget that look, an specific type of anger he saw in a few people back when he was on active-duty. Funny enough, it was almost never villains or criminals who looked at him like that, but typically parents. People who had nothing but their kid that Yamada couldn’t save or helped capture. Those were the people that looked at him like that. People who had already lost everything.

He wouldn’t say that he was familiar with it, but it definitely was something he had seen one or two times before. It made sense that people with that raw kind of desperate agony on their face, as though the only way they could live was by channeling all their despair into anger, but that didn’t mean he wanted to see it.

It definitely didn’t mean that he ever thought that the person who saved his life would look at him like that.

He knew that he wasn’t the most reliable. He knew that, in comparison, people like Tsukauchi, or even young Mirio, was a better option.

Still, the fury that lit Helmet’s eyes was haunting.

Yamada, who was more upset about that then the injuries, placed his forehead onto the table and sighed loudly.

"This is so fucked."

Next to him, Kan patted his back sympathetically. Even though he knew that no one was really blaming him in particular, the guilt took root deep in Yamada’s heart.

"I can't believe it took almost ten of us to capture a dying man," Natsuo said, slumped in the seat across from Yamada. "He tore out all those stitches and broke through all the supports for his body." He rubbed his face. The blond was sure that this man was probably the most stressed, as the doctor that had to be called in to suddenly have another surgery. “I don’t get it. He should have been out cold for another six hours. How’d he wake up?” he bemoaned.

"All this while we were out on patrol," Aizawa said quietly. He placed some water bottles on the table, probably for everyone to freshen up. If Yamada was in a better mood, he’d tease his old time friend for being so cute. “From the sounds of it, he was incredibly close to getting away too.”

“Well, it was clear that Helmet used the element of surprise better than anyone else,” Vlad said.

"Like seriously, we were so surprised to come back and see all that blood," Nemuri added. "Is he really okay now?"

"The closer to death he is, the harder he fights," Natsuo moaned. "I really thought he was going to die this time."

"So, why did he decide to bolt?" Aizawa asked. "Before he wakes up again, we should figure that out."

"You didn't see it, Shota, that was planned," Yamada mumbled quietly. "He didn't just bolt because something scared him, or he remembered something all of a sudden. That shit was premeditated.” He tried to find the right word to explain that four seconds. “He was trying to … to escape."

"So what, he's been planning on... running away from his own base? His own food, shelter, medical attention and the people he saved?"

The blond lifted his head up.

"I don't know," he said, his frustrations boiling over. "It's not like I got to say much more than 'hey, what's up'? And he didn't say anything at all. He just... God, his eyes. He... he hated it. I think we were wrong. I don’t think he’s ever trusted us."

Which, as hard as it might be to face, was understandable. If Helmet was bright and cheerful and really willing to accept them, he would have taken the helmet off or at least spoken to them, a long time ago. As much as it stung to have confirmation like this, it was something that they had clues of from the get go.

"...Are you sure he wasn't trying to go somewhere?" Nemuri asked. "Or he thought that he was somewhere else?"

"Unlikely, apparently, Hawks caught him when he tried to stop Kirishima from slipping and falling on his face," Natsuo added.

The words spun in his head like a vortex surrounding a single truth he couldn't get a read on. Aizawa leaned back.

A premeditated escape. Helmet wasted no time and effort taking down the people he ran into, but hindered his own escape plan to help someone else out. All the people he ran into on the way out had a few bruises and were otherwise unharmed.

Aizawa had seen Midoriya's face once, what was left of the bloody, bruised mess, and his first thought was that they put a lot of burdens on a very young man.

And now, it looked like they were going to be reaping what the sowed.

-

“How’d it go?”

Aizawa shook his head. Yamada closed his eyes, not bothering to show his disappointment. From the looks of it, Aizawa was just as upset, or rather, more frustrated. His friend leaned against the same window he was looking out of, crossed arm.

“I left it so that he could eat, but…” He shook his head, “I saw what you meant. About his eyes.”

The blond felt his heart squeeze. It was naive to think that they could always be happy, and live without ever fighting, but this wasn’t what he was expecting.

“If this was how he was going to act, maybe it would have been better if we waited,” Yamada said.

“He’d be dead,” Aizawa said. “You remember how we found him, right?”

The blond covered his face and groaned. He can’t forget it, no matter how hard he tried, the mangled body sitting on top of a mountain of corpses. The sound his helmet made when they pulled it off, slick and sticky as though the skin on Helmet was starting to grow around the helmet he was wearing. He covered his face.

“You know what I mean,” he said, doing his best not to lose his temper when tensions were high enough.

“...I do,” Aizawa said, “but there’s no point in dwelling on what has already passed. We need to-”

“-look forward. I know.”

The two shared a silence. Even though they weren’t alone on base, it definitely felt like that at times. There were two of them, but they were alone. Did that even make sense? It should be a little appalling, to know that the people that they shared sleeping quarters with might turn against them so easily but…

Even without saying it, they knew what kind of stakes they were risking.

-

“Yamada...san?”

Yamada looked over where Kirishima came up to him. It never failed to amaze him how tall kids could grow in a small amount of time. The trembling wreck that came almost six months ago was already to his chest, looking up at him but probably not for long.

“Hey!” the blnd cheered, “What’s up, Little Listener?”

By a fraction of an inch, Kirishima seemed to relax, and the blond’s grin widened. At the very least, he could still provide this much comfort for him. Hopefully, that meant that it wasn't too late and they could-

“Is… Helmet okay?”

Yamada twitched, giving away too much in a single moment. The kid in front of him, because they were all still such small kids who shouldn’t need to carry so much on their backs, slouched.

“Oh,” he said.

But then he did something that restored the strength inside of him. He did something that made Yamada remember the most important thing about being a hero.

“Can I help?”

The willingness to try.

“...Well, he definitely needs rest right now,” Yamada said, “so I’m sure that if we did some of the chores around here, he won’t feel as rushed to get better.”

It was a flimsy lie. It was a shitty lie. Yamada actually had no idea, because he’s seen Midoriya’s eyes and those weren’t the eyes of someone that wanted to get along with everyone else, and they don’t know what set him off. But he couldn’t admit it.

Admitting it, saying it to someone with eyes as cautiously hopeful as Kirishima… He would rather die.

So right now, have something to help them to bide time. Right now.

Right now.

-

“Oh? Hero-san.”

Augh, Yamada cursed his luck. Just his fucking luck.

Chisaki Kai.

“Perfect timing, please inform Lunchrush that food that obviously can’t be tampered with would be best for Midoriya-kun moving forward.”

Yamada’s eyebrows furrowed.

“Midoriya?” he parroted, already running through all the people on base. To begin with, was there anyone that Chisaki could call the name of without sounding like he was spitting the name out of his mouth?

“Hm? Ah right, I suppose you didn’t know.”

Augh, Yamada wanted to punch this guy. How could someone look that condescending with only his eyes? Chisaki could pull it off, with style.

“Helmet’s name is Midoriya.”

Yamada felt something inside of him curl up and die.

-

He took a deep breath. He could do this. He’s faced off worse odds, against villains and monsters alike, so this shouldn’t scare him. This shouldn’t bother him. Just because Midoriya, not Helmet, was

Yamada turned the corner, a grin on his face after his self-administrated pep talk. In all honesty, it was easy to come up with the things he wanted to talk to Midoriya about. From his favorite song to how he grew up, the blond had a long, long list of questions that he wanted to know the answer to. Obviously, everyone on base probably felt the same way, so he tried to keep it to minimal things.

### **Post-Escape Attempt [Hawks]**

That cemented it.

Hawks closed the door behind him. He didn't lock it or anything, but he did lean against it. He took a deep, long breath, and covered his face with his hands.

Helmet… Midoriya never trusted them.

The reason why he was always armed and guarded to the teeth was the same as the reason why he was adamant against having walls. He didn't trust anyone here, and needed to ensure that he could escape given any moment. Everything fell into place so much easier now that he had that one key point.

And even though Hawks finally knew what color his eyes were, he'd only see the eternal depth of absolute rage inside of them. He was ready to run at any given moment. He was ready to fight his way out, even if it meant that all his organs would come spilling out of his sides. He'd break his own arms to get out of restraints, he wouldn't hesitate against any of them.

He...

The blond closed his eyes. Tried to think of why being distrusted hurt so much. Couldn't find an answer. Tried to think of how he could earn his trust. Failed to get a conclusion.

He was an alpha. He smelled good and healthy. Of course, good diet, proper hygiene, regular amounts of stress, and decent sleep did that to anyone, but that also only because of Midoriya. He didn't alpha out, hasn't really since he got here, but he had gotten very close to losing his sanity several times but he was better now. He was fine now.

And Helmet, who doesn't smell like a lost omega who wanted comfort, glared at him like he was incurable sin. Helmet, who still smells like pain and blood, met his gaze evenly.

If he said something, then Hawks could do something. If he could just explain or mention whatever, Hawks would hold onto those words like a lifeline. If he did something unforgivable, Hawks would kill himself to atone, if it meant that he wouldn't look at him with those eyes-

The blond rubbed the bridge of his nose.

The tense way he was, it reminded him so much of how he fights. Alone. Always alone.

As far as Helmet was concerned, the monsters outside, society before the end, and people he saved, they were all the same damn thing. They were all just a threat to him. It didn’t matter if it was at the school or out in the middle of battle, Helmet fought like he was alone because he still thought he was.

Hawks leaned backwards and took a deep breath out.

While he was here, high off the thought that Helmet finally took off the damn helmet, Helmet never once trusted them.

If he didn't feel so stupid, he might have felt guilt.

### **Unfed - aideku**

Somewhere, deep and far away, he wanted Yamada to be a liar. It would have been easier if he was lying.

That Helmet wasn’t trying to escape from them. That Helmet was just confused and lost but he definitely trusted them, the people that he had saved. He had hoped and prayed that his friend was a liar, or just didn’t see the full picture, or literally anything that wasn’t this.

Midoriya’s gaze was cold. Almost as cold as the soup that he left untouched where Aizawa placed it. With the placement of the spoon on the tray, it was almost like it was a picture.

He hated it.

How long had this been going on? How long did Helmet not trust them? The questions spun in his head, adding to a vortex

### **Chisaki-san visits [Chisaki]**

Did Helmet remember?

Chisaki thought about it. If he was a little younger, and a little more naive, he would have hoped using circumstantial evidence. If he was a little more haughty and arrogant, he would have been certain of it. Because he was special. He was akin to a ‘chosen’ one.

It was something that made him shake his head in hopes of forgetting. That feeble-mindedness had him fooled. From the beginning, that question didn’t mean anything. It didn’t matter if Helmet remembered or not.

The real question was, could Chisaki become useful to him?

He had to. In order for his life to have meaning, it must become useful. He must be, at the very least, useful.

Chisaki Kai, who remembered the number of clouds in the sky when he left the first time, would never allow himself to forget.

-

"Helmet, I'm coming in," Chisaki announced after he knocked on the door. He waited for another second before he took the doorknob in hand and walked in. "Oh good, you're up. Then, can you tell me what hurts? Don't say everything, even though I know that it applies to you."

Helmet, pale and sweating, sat up in the bed. Green eyes were vibrant and wary, despite how exhausted his body looked. Good, Chisaki thought. He was worried that he would never open his eyes again.

Chisaki was here when he was dragged in to begin with. He remembered the distinct feeling of bitter disappointment when he realized that he could not help the man who helped him as well as he once boasted. Once his vitals were stabilized after twelve grueling hours on his feet and doing his best not to snap at everything in the general vicinity, he wallowed in his self-pity.

He had stepped away from the infirmary for a fucking second, sending Setsuno and Tabe to go and check on his patient. Imagine his surprise when his half-dead patient had wasted several people, broke a window, and dragged his dying, bleeding ass halfway across the compound through the snow. If he wasn't so disgusted at the sudden influx of work cut out for him, he might have been impressed.

He lifted up a can of peaches, two pairs of wooden chopsticks, and a can-opener.

"You need to eat. You want to live, right? Don't know what you were living for before, but it wasn't like you were planning to die then, was it? Eat up. Heal. And get back on your feet." He said, walking over to him.

He took a seat in the stool in front of him, and opened the can the old-fashioned way. Normally, he would have just overhauled it, (but not eat it, he hated this kind of shit) but it was important that Helmet got to see how his food wasn't going to be tampered with. He knew what that kind of look came from, and while he didn't know how to get rid of it, he knew how not to exacerbate it.

No wonder Helmet was so good with the most paranoid among them. He was exactly the same.

Chisaki handed it to him.

"Your arms work, don't they?"

If he had it his way, he and Helmet would finally be together and eating something delicious in the Rental-Office. The same as the last person that Chisaki swore his allegiance to, they would share their thoughts about the future and plan their next steps. Helmet would smile, tell him how impressed he was with Chisaki's work and that he was looking forward to working with him.

And Chisaki...

Well, Chisaki wasn't the type to live in delusions.

Helmet took the canned peaches into his trembling hands and placed it on his lap. When Chisaki passed him the chopsticks, took it into his hands and then looked back down at the peaches.

"I'm not leaving till you eat all of it," Chisaki announced. He pulled a small book out from his inside pocket, "I'm trying to finish this book anyways, so take your time."

With that, he returned to his readings. Obviously, the most important and interesting thing in his life was not anything that was in those pages, but Chisaki was a patient man when he wanted to be. It seemed like, unlike the others, he wasn't as affected by the deliriously delicious smell that radiated off the young man in front of him.

No wonder he hid.

Well, Chisaki was scum of the world for a reason. Born and raised. Sitting around and biding for the perfect opportunity to sink his teeth into something precious was what he did. This was no different.

His plan from before Helmet took off his helmet to now wasn't different. Nothing had changed. He will prove his worth and earn his place next to Helmet. He will become such an integral part of his life that Helmet can no longer imagine life without him.

See? Nothing had changed.

Or rather, one thing had changed.

He now knew that Helmet had green eyes.

He flipped the page in the novel he was reading. It was unrefined and more like watching paint dry as he entered the third page describing the mountain scenery. He heard a quiet slurping sound, something that normally annoyed him to no end, but this time, it brought relief.

Good, he was eating something.

-

"Done?" Chisaki asked when the slurping stopped for several long minutes. He slipped his bookmark into the book as he closed it, He pocketed it and stared at the young man.

The wary look in his eyes hadn't died in the slightest. Vaguely, Chisaki wondered if that's how he always looked under that helmet, and understood where the phrase 'ignorance is bliss' came from.

Well, nothing he can do about it now. He kept the used chopsticks in the can and placed it to the side, absent-mindedly noticing that about half was left. The important part, he reminded himself, was that he ate anything at all. With that in mind, he turned back around.

"I have to change your bandages," he said, bluntly. "If it doesn't look awful, we'd get rid of it altogether, but that probably won't happen till next week."

When he took a step closer, the young man tensed up. His hands balled into fists.

"...You look like you want to say something," he said. "Can you speak or do you want me to grab you some paper and a pen?"

There was a long silence, and right when Chisaki was about to get the pen and paper, he spoke up. His voice was scratchy and raw, like it hadn't been used in days, which Chisaki supposed was painfully accurate. He's seen Helmet tossed through walls, but never heard a peep.

"Why am I being kept alive?"

Chisaki slowly turned around to stare at him.

"Because you saved me," he responded. When his eyebrows furrowed in his confusion, he elaborated. "The idiot that saved me, on that day, was you. I fully intend on holding you responsible for that. If I have to be alive, then you will as well. The only thing that changed from the moment I returned to your side to now is that your helmet is off."

"...The ... only thing?" Midoriya asked, "Do you... truly mean that?"

As expected, it was about that sweet smell, wasn't it?

"...Yes," Chisaki said, kneeling down next to his bed. "Unless you wanted something to change?"

There was a long moment of silence. Right when he was about to repeat himself, clarify himself, try to speak up because maybe Helmet's hearing was fucked, the young man shook his head. It was a slight movement, but Chisaki was an observant man.

"Excellent, then, Helmet. Raise your hands so I can get to your wounds-"

"Midoriya," he said. "...My name, it’s Midoriya Izuku."

"...I see," Chisaki nodded, "Then, I suppose you might as well call me Kai." Something inside of his curled around his heart pleasantly. This exchange would remain just between the two of them.

"Chisaki."

Or not. He supposed that it would be strange if Midoriya would listen to him so easily. Still, he gave him his full attention. Perhaps, one day was not so far away anymore.

"...Thank you."

"I've already told you this before, and I'll say it as many times as I need to. Just think of me as a helpful tool."

He got up slowly, making his way to the counters. He grabbed a few rolls of bandages, some more disinfect and a few bandages. He turned back, making sure that Helmet, Midoriya, could see all of it and dropped them in his lap. It made a mess, but watching the hesitant way Midoriya looked and touched the bandages brought him confidence.

Good. This was good.

"Now, your bandages."

-

The door closed behind him and he took a deep breath. After spending so long so freely, trying to keep his eye on his scent was annoying. When he thought about the pale figure in bed, he took a lid on it. A mild annoyance for a great load of comfort for Midoriya.

For now, they had a blanket rule that anyone that couldn’t reign their scent in couldn’t come in. Even among supposed ‘medical personnel,’ they couldn’t fuck up. Nothing was too much.

His teeth ached to sink into Midoriya’s pale skin. The small scent he could pick up made his mouth water. Feeling like some basal beast, Chisaki clenched his hands hard. This would be the exact reason why Midoriya never showed his face, revealed his identity, and why he hid that delicious scent.

Chisaki covered his face. His hands were trembling as his pulse jumped at the opportunity to go back into that room. He was already counting the time down to when Midoriya gave the book back, and hopefully, his smell would have rubbed off on it.

It would figure that the omega that could make him feel like this was an omega he was unworthy of.

“Chisaki? How was he?”

He almost bared his teeth at Natsuo, when he came in. Barely managing to restrain himself, because if he was not chosen then Natsuo definitely wouldn’t be, he gave a curt nod.

“He ate peaches just fine.”

“I see… Is it because it was sweet?” Natsuo asked. Chisaki rolled his eyes, and the younger man slumped his shoulders, “Yeah, I know. I… I didn’t want to think that he did distrust us to that extent.”

The former yakuza didn’t respond. He didn’t want to recognize that the two of them shared the same thoughts, in that sense.

### **About Kouta - Midoriya**

"...Kouta-kun," Midoriya suddenly spoke up, "...How is he?"

"He was malnourished and beaten up. It'll take him some time to be back to good health. At the rate he's going, hm, maybe in a month or so? Kids are tougher than you think," the man explained easily. "You're good to go," he said, trying to banish the feeling of his skin against his fingers. It haunted him, tickling a subconscious part in his head and he wanted to run his teeth against Midoriya's pulse point.

He leaned back, getting into his seat as though nothing was amiss.

"Do you wanna see him?" he asked as Midoriya shook his head. He nodded back. "Well, I say that but it's only a matter of time he sneaks in to see you himself. He thinks that we're keeping you guys apart."

"...Wouldn't it scare him?" Midoriya asked quietly. "To see a reminder of..."

Chisaki arched an eyebrow back at him, "You think he'll make it if he's scared?"

The young man couldn't refute that.

"Well, at least this is a fair warning for when the kid comes in," Chisaki said. "How do you feel?"

Midoriya nodded his head and looked down at his lap. His condition wasn't something he wanted to share, but he'll share his feelings about what might scare Kouta. Chisaki filed the information for later.

"We have pain medication-"

Midoriya tensed up so much that Chisaki could feel it, even though there were several feet away.

"-but if you're that against it, I won't force you to eat it. It'll help with the swelling and the pain. We have antibiotics to prevent infections as well. If it gets bad, we will use them on you, regardless of your consent," he explained clearly.

His tone didn't change in pitch or timing. His voice remained even and steadfast. These are facts and plans. When Midoriya relaxed just the slightest bit, he relished in the tiny victory.

"...Alright, well, you're going to be here for at least another day and a half. You want me to bring you anything?"

Green eyes peered at him, curious, and Chisaki sighed back. He reached into his pocket and pulled the book he was reading earlier out.

"Here," he said, "It's not that interesting, but it'll keep you occupied for the moment. It's about some kid taking a tour in the mountains." He placed the book next to him on the bed. "Bell," he said, pointing at it, "Ring it if something hurts more or something starts to bleed. You want to get out faster, right? Cooperate."

And with that, Chisaki left the room.

Like everyone said, Chisaki's bedside manner is rude and blunt. It was clear that would do what he needed to do to make sure that his patient didn't die, but really didn't care about how they felt. Taking the book into his hands, Midoriya was incredibly grateful for that.

### **Walk - [Mido]**

Standing on his own feet should have given him a sense of courage. However, he felt uneven, and the pain made his stomach lurch. Still, he took a deep breath and endured it.

"You good? You sure you don't want a wheelchair?"

A wheelchair? That would be harder to react out of. And he didn't want to rely on someone else to move.

He took one step, then another. Bearable. He can do this.

"...You're tough, I would be on the ground screaming."

He looked to where Setsuno stood, watching in awe.

"But here's a crutch. It'll help with balancing the weight a little."

A crutch... It looked like it was the closest thing to a weapon he'll get here. With a sigh, he nodded and graciously accepted it.

"Thank you," he said.

"Yeah, I..." Setsuno stared at him, eyes wide and Midoriya could hit himself. How could he forget? This man was also an alpha. Shit, he needed to get his scent in order, but all of his senses were shot to hell. He didn't want anyone to think that he wanted (and especially not needed) their help. He could barely stay on his feet as it was, and at the center of the mess his thoughts became, Setsuno spoke up again, "Huh, your voice is lower than I thought."

He blinked back and looked down. What the fuck was he supposed to say to that?

"But it feels good to finally hear your voice. We were worried that you lost your voice to something that we couldn't help with," he said nonchalantly. "Ah, Kurono's going to wreck me if we take too long. Ready to go?"

He nodded. Setsuno took a step back, and pushed the door open. He held it open so that Midoriya could get through, and Midoriya tried not to think too hard about the pit of dread in his stomach.

Did he trust Chisaki? No, not at all.

How could he? The man was probably dazed by what he smelled. It must have been especially strong, since Midoriya was unbonded, unlike the other omegas on base, and they cleaned off all the layers of blood and sweat he caked on himself over the months. The only thing that surprised him was that they hadn't immediately slapped a bond on him to lock him in.

He'll play along until his next chance to run.

If they really wanted to make sure he didn't run, they would have gotten rid of his legs. If they really wanted to make sure that he didn't fight back, they would have gotten rid of his arms. If they're just underestimating him, then that's fine too. That would work in his favor. He would deal with whatever they want until an opportunity struck.

He missed his knife.

Just as he thought that, he entered the main lounge area. Trailing behind him like a ball and chain, Setsuno's steps dogged him. Leaning against the wall on the other side of the room, Stain stood. He wasn't sure how long the man must have been here, since he was still in his winter parka, but he looked completely dry.

"Yo," he said. Red eyes bore into his eyes. "As I thought, it's weird to see you without a weapon."

Just like that, his knife, holster, belt and all, was handed to him.

"...Never hurts to be armed, right?" he asked, a crooked grin on his face. "I got it out of that dumpster fire for you."

Midoriya extended his bandaged arm out and took the belt into his hand. He could feel his eyes water at the thought of being reunited with this knife, but he couldn't help it. Sharp eyes cut up to Stain's face.

He wanted to know why. Why did Stain bring this to him? Why did Stain wait? Why did Stain go back to that awful place to get him this blade?

Stain stared at him, and took a few seconds to reply. "You always have the same knife, so I figured there was a reason. If it's important to you, it's important to me. That's enough."

He took a step back.

"We're wrapping up cleaning that area. When you're up to it, let's go together."

He turned around to walk out, believing that he was done since he turned in the knife and his report.

"Thank you," Midoriya blurted out, even though he didn't want to.

In an instant, Stain spun back around. "Don't fucking thank me until I do something worth your goddamn gratitude," he hissed out. Nearly seething in his frustrated anger, he scowled before he left, leaving Midoriya surprised and Setsuno understanding behind. The door closed quietly behind him.

"Ah, I guess he really does feel responsible for the whole damn mess," Setsuno noted. "Since he was the one that was grouped with you when you got caught up with that whole mess."

Vaguely, Midoriya remembered this, but he never cared. His mistakes are his, and he was never a lucky guy to begin with.

"Well, this way for the walk. Go ahead and strap the knife on first. To be honest, I don't really like being without a weapon. Even if it's like... 'safer' or whatever here, I don't... I just feel better with it on. I think it's because I'm incorrigible trash. Like, not even recyclable or compost..."

If Chisaki gave Midoriya someone as talkative as Setsuno, who was open and honest and a blabbermouth, in an effort to help give Midoriya something to ground himself on, then Chisaki was a lot more kinder than he initially thought.

"So if you wanna put that on, go ahead."

-

"Why does the patient have a knife?" Kurono asked as soon as he laid eyes on him.

"Huh? You said to make him comfortable. Believe me, he looks more comfortable with a knife."

"He really shouldn't be holding anything," Kurono sighed, rubbing his temples.

"Well, I'm not going to take it from him. Chisaki-san said to make him comfortable."

Midoriya arched an eyebrow at them. He was in the room, but with the way they were talking, he wasn't even in front of him. Or rather, they could see him and that was about it.

What was it again? Be seen, not heard?

Ah, he wanted to leave. His eyes trailed to the window, staring until Setsuno stood in front of him.

"How you feeling? It's probably hard to get around so maybe you should take a break now, and we can head back to your room. If you feel up to it, we'll get to the courtyard tomorrow."

Frustration in Midoriya looked like nothing. Carefully kept under a blank expression, Midoriya tried really, really hard not to just stare at the fucking window.

He could leave. He could try and knock them out again and maybe this time even get out. He could...

"...If you want, we can open the window for you," Kurono said, from behind. The thought that he was surrounded and cornered didn't escape him. Midoriya didn't doubt that he could break free from them, but the problem became what to do when he left. "It'll be cold, so it has to only be for a moment. But we can do that for you."

If they open the window, Midoriya would launch himself out of it. Probably, Hawks would catch him, again, and he would end up in something much worse than handcuffs when he woke up. He needed a better, more concrete plan. Then, he'll leave.

He'll leave and be free or something.

-

Within a few days, Midoriya felt good. Or at least, good enough. What used to hurt so bad he felt his stomach twist finally faded away enough for him. The scars that remained, according to Chisaki, were injuries that he could not Overhaul away.

Midoriya didn't really care about the scars. He didn't care about how he looked. Or at least, he just wanted to look so ugly, smell so bad, that people would choose to be alone than be with him. Could he have that? Would that be freedom?

While he waited to heal, he also waited for something precious to be taken from him.

### **walking - [Mido]**

Midoriya was not in good condition. He wasn't even close. He spent far too long near-starving, on the brink of death, in constant states of exhaustion and stress. The injuries that they couldn't Overhaul would take a brutalizing long time to heal, if it ever does. It wasn’t deliberating, and it wasn’t something he couldn’t get used to, so Midoriya told himself to just get over it quickly.

Midoriya struggled to stomach anything at the moment. With the way the others talked about it, the problem was that he didn't trust them and didn't want to eat. But he was pretty sure that wasn't the case. When he took a bite of anything, he felt his stomach violently reject it. It was honest to god, hard to eat anything.

But he was certain that no one would believe him, so he didn't say anything, and they drew their own conclusions. It wasted less of his energy to just accept it and move on.

Well, whatever, he was out now. He would be able to judge for himself exactly what they really expected from him.

-

Unable to lift his arms higher than his shoulder without white hot pain choking him, it took Midoriya an ungodly long time to get into a sweater. Once it was on, however, he got a pair of jeans, and his sneakers. Eventually, he'll make it to his stash of extra padding and equipment, assuming no one took all of his things, and hopefully, they'll all pretend that nothing changed.

Unlikely, yet Midoriya still hoped and prayed with his entire being that nothing would be different and everyone would be distant.

"Good morning, Izuku-chan!"

Midoriya stepped out of his room, not even out of the infirmary, and came face to face with resident sunshine, Togato. His heart dropped to his feet in his disappointment.

He pulled his shoulders back. The brittle rage, in combination dismay because of course it had to change, had his lips pulling back into a fierce scowl as he glared at the man in front of him.

Luckily, god bless that Togato had some sort of social awareness, the blond took a full step back. His smile dimmed a little (good), and he lifted his hands up in surrender.

"Ah, sorry, I was just really excited to see you," he said.

Midoriya clenched his jaw.

"I thought that maybe I could go around with you," he said. "Do you mind?"

Why ask when he would just do as he pleased anyways? Midoriya gritted his teeth down harder. Did they think that he would be open and accepting of being stalked and spied on just because it was Togato? Every omega should be weak in the knees when an alpha flashed them a smile. He would feel better if it was someone as big and as strong as Togato looking after him.

Suddenly, Midoriya felt naked without his helmet to cover his neck. He hated this. He hated feeling weak and vulnerable under those prying eyes-eyes that bade their time and waited patiently for him to slip and fall so they could sink their teeth into him-

"Izuku-chan?"

He jerked backwards, raising his arm to block any chance anyone ever had of even touching him. He'd choke on his blood as he died out before he ever considered the notion of giving in.

There was so much in his life that he wanted to do-

Togato had the audacity to look hurt. If Midoriya cared, he might have apologized. Instead, he kept his back to the wall and slowly backed away.

At the very least, Togato had enough sense to stay away.

-

"Heyya, Helmet-san! Ah, I mean, Izuku-chan!"

"Chan" is supposedly the correct way to address an omega. And there was no need for an omega to hold onto their family name anyways, so it was final and totally normal to not even bother. Still, this was the confirmation he didn't want. They all knew. Well, it wasn't like he had the ability to smear his scent away while he was passed out in the infirmary.

It was a small thing. It should be meaningless. It shouldn't mean anything. The fact that they would now have to fix how they address him because of something that he couldn't change instead of something that he did for them and he just...

Tense, ready to be attacked because they weren't coming for his life but his freedom, Midoriya tried to walk faster-but there was no speed he could go at that a desperate Fuyumi couldn't overtake.

"W-Wait, Izuku-chan!"

She should just yell louder. Blast it out to the whole world. Here he was.

Come one and come all! Here he was! A silly little omega for everyone to come and point and laugh at. Look at him! He truly and genuinely thought that he could escape his biology, and everyone here would ensure that he would never forget. What naivety! Someone who thought that, just because buildings collapsed and people were scattered from their daily lives, that something would change. What a foolish omega! It really is a wonder how he managed to live and survive this long to begin with. But luckily, he lived long enough for everyone to get one last good laugh.

They could live with monsters showing up and eating people on the streets but they couldn’t deal with the fact that this silly omega thought he could be anything other than an incubator.

The rage sat under his heart, boiling his blood as it traveled through his entire body.

Her hand, her kind, gentle hand that wants good things to happen to a small omega who doesn't know better and doesn't need to fight anymore, came and snagged the back of his sweater and he felt something in him snap.

Fuyumi’s hands didn’t really have any callouses. He heard that she was a teacher before, but coupled with her incredible genetics, she also had a great skin-care routine. Her fingers were soft, strong, and firm, but they’ve never been broken in seven directions and healed in awkward angles. They were white-colalr worker hands, in the truest form of the word.

But that instant those beautiful piano fingers came to him, it felt like there was a monster reaching its claws out for his life.

Needless to say, he slapped her hand away. The pain that ran from his shoulder to the tips of his finger felt like it would split his arm open, but it would be better than dying so pathetically. Still, his eyes found hers and he wanted to laugh. She looked so shocked.

Why was she so shocked? What did she think would happen? That, since his helmet was off, he would just absolutely love to be touched by someone? Was that what she was expecting? For him to roll over and beg and keen and whine? Did she think that he was just dying without being with an alpha? Why did she get to look so shocked? Of course he didn't want to be touched. Or course he didn't want to be grabbed. Of course he didn't want to talk to her or anyone. Of course he wanted to be alone. Of course, of course, of course-

But that was just impossible for anyone to believe, wasn't it?

"I-" Fuyumi blinked twice, looking terribly wrong-footed, and Midoriya took sick, sadistic glee in that. He ground his teeth down, until his jaw ached. "I-I uh, sorry, I didn't uhm... I just wanted to talk to you."

And he didn't. That was it.

He turned on his heel.

"W-Wait," she called out, "Wait, I promise n-not to take too much of your time. I was just curious about-"

He walked faster. What would she ask about? If he was interested in bondmates? How many children did he want? Why did he fight so hard when he could have spread his legs for any alpha here to sustain his life? It would be interesting, wouldn’t it? It wasn’t like he had anything more important to do-

"-Please! Eri-chan was curious too!"

His steps faltered. He was curious now. He didn't think that any child deserved to live like this. But if he stopped now, if he stopped because he heard a child's name, what would that label him as in their head? That he cares for children? As expected of someone so soft, and they're certain that he daydreamed all day and all night about having some of his own.

Midoriya couldn’t.

It was cold. It was a lie. But he couldn’t. Prioritizing himself over everything else was the marking of a human, wasn’t it? That’s why he managed to scrape together a life, right?

"I..."

And finally, Fuyumi was quiet as he left her behind.

He can do this. And he would do this for as long as he needed to.

-

As expected, no one kept the logs updated.

Which was fine. That's pretty much what he expected from them. No one thought that they were important, and actually, now that he was looking at it, he was surprised they kept all of his records here.

Why would they keep records of an omega's crazy thoughts and feelings? None of the records were probably real, since they know who authored them, right? Just some crazy delusions from an omega who never grew up. There was nothing truthful. In class, they learned about this while they had to read through old historic pieces. They had to learn and be taught about the bias in writing. The reliability of the writer.

What a thing to remember.

"Are you looking for the logs from the last few days?"

Midoriya did not flinch, but his hand dropped to his blade. His eyes flitted up to the person that approached him.

Sasaki looked at him, his gaze following his hand to his knife, and then back up to his face. He pushed his glasses up.

Would they take it from him? Would they force him down? Beat him down with the hands because it was for the betterment of the world? They would have to, since Midoriya wouldn't relent otherwise.

"I have them here. I was updating them," he said. He stepped forward, and Midoriya stepped back.

Sasaki froze for a second, expression unreadable before he placed the notebook down on the ground, gently.

"...I'll leave it here."

And then he left.

Confused, and figuring that the man was mocking him, Midoriya hesitated. He waited a few moments, until the footsteps faded away completely and the world was silent for a few seconds. He slowly crept to the doorway, checking up and down the hallway with his hand on his blade, and seeing that he was absolutely alone, backed up to the notebook. With his eyes on the door, he picked up the notebook quickly and then moved so that his back was against the bookshelves.

He wanted to read. He wanted to check. They kept records? They wrote reports? They...

He looked through the notebook. In a handwriting much neater than his, written in a clear and concise way that would normally take Midoriya a month and a half of editing to get, a thorough report on the neighborhood was written out. From the number of birds sighted to the detailed explanation of the monsters they fought and killed and burned, everything from the last thing that he wrote was written in clear detail.

He flipped the pages, and indeed, the same amount of detail continued but about every aspect of life that occurred here. Measurements and counts on their garden, the counts of the deer in the area, the information concerning what broke and what didn't, and on and on and on. Things that would take him a week, and so he wrote the reports once a week for everything, were written for everyday that he wasn't here.

As though he, if he was more literate and held more finesse with the language, wrote it himself. Things that he would have noticed and written down were there.

Looking at it, he couldn't help but think that it would have been better if they hadn't written anything. Looking at it, he couldn't help but think that they were mocking him. This whole time, they were more than capable of writing their own reports and submitting them. This whole time, they knew what he was looking for when he recorded things and they could have done it better this whole time, but they just let Midoriya do it.

And what? Now that they knew what he was, they wanted to show off? They wanted to let him know that they could have done this, this whole time, but instead, they didn't until they knew for a fact that he would never meet their expectations-

He closed the notebook.

He knew what he should be feeling. He should be grateful that they continued what he used to do. He should be grateful that they didn't shit all over his work and set all his previous records on fire. He should be relieved that their life progressed just fine without him. He should be grateful he should be relieved he should be happy and instead-

Instead, Midoriya leaned against the bookshelf and wished that he had died under Muscular's fist.

Quietly, where no one would know, he mourned the loss of something that he never really had. He slowly sank to the ground and read the reports in greater detail.

Like that, the sun sank into the horizon, but he didn't stop until he heard footsteps coming up to the doorway. And then, a heavy knock on the doorframe.

Midoriya looked up, and Sakamata was there with a tray.

"I heard that you were in here," he said. "You want something to eat? I have some onigiri."

No, Midoriya didn't want to eat the same way he didn't want to live and he didn't want company. Knowing that it didn't matter what he said, he saved himself the trouble and kept his mouth shut instead. It was just easier like that.

For all of them. They can just mark him off as they pleased, and Midoriya didn't have to feel frustrated that no one could hear him.

Somehow, Chisaki's face returned to the forefront of his mind. And when he realized that he thought about him, felt sick to his stomach. Was he so starved for any modicum of hope and belief that something could be different that he’d hold on so tightly to some loft words?

"Alright, well, I'll leave it here," Sakamata said. He took a step into the room, pausing as Midoriya tensed.

Instinctually, his hand was already on his blade.

"...Over here," Sakamata said, stepping away from them and to the table on the side. "I will place it here," he said, setting it down slowly. He pulled his hands away and stepped away. "There's hot tea in the thermos. I don't recommend waiting until it's lukewarm to drink."

He stepped away, ready to leave (finally), but lingered at the doorway. Right before he left, he turned back.

"I... I can't speak for everyone, but I ... I can speak for myself. If there is something, anything, like your favorite food or an old memory or how patrols have been, that I could tell you, or you would like to share with me, I will listen. I swear to you that I will."

And Midoriya gave him three days before he changed his mind.

The thought of food was appetizing, but he didn't trust it. He'll eat when he wanted to eat, at his own time and place and away from everyone else.

But right now, he was reading about how the deer were moving through the snowstorms.

-

"So, how did we do?"

Midoriya wanted to be alone. What did he have to give up for that? He didn't have much left.

Or rather, if he just let them do whatever they wanted to him, would they leave him alone? If he bared his throat for some rando, would they leave him alone? Then, would he be free? He covered his face and took a deep breath.

He gave Setsuno a blank look.

"Like uh, I heard that you were getting the reports for the past week-"

-How fast did word travel here?-

"-So I was wondering how we did. Like, was it, uh, good? Hojo really stressed about it when we had to turn in the reports for our part."

Midoriya felt something cold settle in his chest.

"Did you like it?"

It was great. It was perfect. It was better than anything Midoriya could do, and they all knew it. They all knew, from probably the beginning.

If Midoriya was more mature, he would have smiled and thanked Setsuno for doing such a great job. If he was kinder, he would have explained how much of a help it was. If he was craftier, he would spin Setsuno around with his words and half-promises and allow the man to make his own assumptions.

But he wasn't.

He’s just Midoriya.

At the very least, Midoriya was just smart enough to keep his mouth shut. If he gave them any chance with words, he would lose and end up in an even more miserable state. He didn't know what that would look like, but he had no doubt that it would be absolute misery. That's just how alphas rolled.

He got up and left.

Be calm, Izuku. He told himself. His body ached from wounds that wouldn’t heal, his heart throbbed from festering injuries, but all of it translated to the simmering rage that thrummed through every vein inside of him.

"Wait," Setsuno called out, stumbling his words out as he tried to follow Midoriya out. "w-why are you leaving? I don't get it? Did I say something wrong? Was it bad? We can do better, I swear we can, but uh, a tip might be nice. Like what didn't... why don't you like us?"

He paused, and then realized what he said.

"The report. I mean, why don't you like the report?"

Setsuno wasn't as stupid as he thought then. He understood that it wasn't just about the reports, or at least he understood that to some degree. Then, if Midoriya wouldn't respond, would he get upset? Would he understand that Midoriya wasn't upset at him or anyone specific, but this entire situation and himself? If he understood that, would he leave him alone?

If Midoriya stopped existing, could he be alone? Would he finally be free?

"I... We won't really know anything if you don't say anything," Setsuno tried, the same way they tried to explain this before. "And uhm, we're not... We're not like those heroes who have their own agenda, you know? Chisaki-san and every one of us, we- our agenda's yours. We don’t have anything but each other, and we know that. So like, you can trust us. Since we're trash and bottom-rung society members, and stuff, we're really good at the whole loyalty thing. I..."

And Midoriya didn’t believe it. He didn’t think that Setsuno was so naive to believe it either.

"The future you want. We want to help you get there. Since, for a while, we didn't even think that we could have a future, but now we're here so... So we want to help you. You've been like, working the hardest out of everyone here for the longest time so we just... We just want to help that. So what are you doing? What, what do you want to do now? Can we be apart of that, too?"

Midoriya opened his mouth, searching for the words to say that could explain it, but his eyes caught on Setsuno's hopeful expression. As he did, he tried to remember if there was anything he thought about that could make him feel that hopeful. He thought about it and he couldn't find an answer.

There was no blood on him, but he felt like he was still drenched in it.

Midoriya closed his mouth, and dropped his gaze. He didn't see it, but Setsuno's expression fell.

His heart swung like a pendulum on crack, oscillating with increasing frequency between believing that everything would be just fine and the monsters are all outside, and that insatiable desire to be free. It made his head hurt.

"...The report was fine," he said at last. Because they were more than fine. They were incredibly well-detailed and written. They were beautiful and everything that he wanted to be like.

But he couldn't say anything else without it being laced with hurt and anger and sarcasm. And he couldn’t do that to Setsuno. He couldn’t do that to someone who looked so hopelessly confused when Midoriya walked out of the room.

He left, and this time, Setsuno didn’t say anything.

-

He couldn't sleep.

Majority of the classrooms upstairs were used for sleeping arrangements. When he felt like he absolutely had to sleep, he locked himself into a cramped closet and caught a few hours.

He didn't trust anyone. Not in the “they were going to attack him” kind of way, but in the paralyzing kind of way where he was waiting for the second shoe to drop. He needed to be tucked away somewhere under his violation, and that wasn't possible if he was sleeping in the same room, sprawled out with all the mixed scents and people.

Sleep didn't come easy for him. It never did, but especially so recently.

So, he did what he always did when he couldn't sleep, and made his way outside to the flowerbeds.

There was nothing there, since it was all buried under the snow. The snow crunched under his sneakers and his breath manifested with every huff in front of him. He probably should have grabbed a jacket, but he didn't want anyone's smell, and he hadn't found any of his clothes since he woke up.

Concerning the fact that most of them were rotting from how often they were plunged in gore, he's not shocked.

There was some crunching behind him, and someone stopped right next to him. He took a full step to the left to gain some more distance.

"When you act like that, it hurts my feelings," Dabi said, voice smooth like a marble counter.

A fire emitted from his hands, setting the area right in front of them on fire. Midoriya didn’t know if Dabi knew or cared, but the fire didn’t even reach the flowerbed, remaining right at the sidewalk area. He didn’t think that the man would care, so it must have been a coincidence.

The blue light consumed and melted the snow away instantly, and the resulting warmth seeped into Midoriya's cold bones. Still, he didn't come closer. The fire that he had been so relieved to see now felt like a threat.

"If I didn't know any better, I would say that you didn't like me," he continued, giving a dramatic sigh and heave of the shoulders.

And well, Midoriya really didn't like or dislike him, if he was being honest. He kept his mouth shut, because there wasn't anything worthwhile to say.

"After all, you saved me at the beginning of all this. I was so certain and so happy that I was going to die, and then you came and pulled me out of that," he said. “You know how disappointed I was to know that I was still alive?”

He gave a long sigh like it was a great annoyance, but his expression looked as though he was remembering something fond instead. Midoriya wondered how Dabi remembered those memories, that his expression could look so wistful like that.

"But why would you save and sustain the life of someone you didn't like?" Dabi asked. "I couldn't wrap my mind around it. I figured that I'd ask one day, if I ever figured out if you could speak and communicate."

Midoriya looked from Dabi up to the night sky, where stars dotted the dark blue blanket. The fire in front of them swayed in the wind, and the brilliance of it made it harder to see the dimmer stars. It was just too bright. Dabi's gaze rested heavy on his face.

"But now that I can see your face, I got other questions."

The young man closed his eyes, because he knew what he was going to ask now.

"What do you want?"

Midoriya wanted the same thing he always wanted.

He could feel himself refocusing. The anger, the rage, the frustration, he could handle. The time he spent today was immensely useful. He knew now, more than anything else, what he wanted from the world. And everything else, and everything he felt, all of that was useless if he couldn't use it to get what he really wanted.

He turned to Dabi suddenly. The older man met his gaze evenly, and straightened his posture. Midoriya could see himself in Dabi’s eyes, small, weak, injured, and briefly what Dabi would have added to that list. If at all possible, he would like Dabi to think of one thing when he saw Midoriya.

"I know," Midoriya said to him.

Eyebrows began to furrow, and Midoriya left to go back inside. He had a lot to do starting tomorrow. He felt a little more certain in himself. The anger had subsided enough for him to push it down. It may never disappear, but that was fine.

Let the world know. Midoriya Izuku was small, weak, injured, stupid, naive, and an omega who will be “free.”

### **Past & present - [Fuyumi]**

For as long as Fuyumi could remember, she was told that her decisions were a waste.

She wanted to go attend cooking clubs and flower-arrangement classes, and was always given a patient smile from the people around her, because it didn’t suit her and her biology. Her greatest aspirations were to major in literature, and spend her time reading and understanding old texts of the past or writing her own, but no one could understand why.

Like, she needed another reason that would make them happy.

They told her things like how she was blessed to be beautiful and an alpha and born as a Todoroki, but then questioned the things she liked. Suddenly, she had to justify why she liked what she liked, why she wanted to pursue a career in what she liked, to random strangers she never saw again.

As she grew older and she realized how much she adored watching the kids she tutored and her friend’s siblings grew up, she realized that she wanted it too. Since it felt like, if she got a husband or mate and eventually a family, the Todoroki bloodline would ensure that her family was cursed by misfortune. So instead of having her own family, she could be happy just being with kids instead.

So teaching. She wanted to be a teacher.

She wanted to watch kids grow up. She wanted to be someone’s safety net. She wanted to be the unconditional love and trust that she wanted while she was growing up. She wanted to be that person, for someone, and she wanted, more than anything else, to be a kindergarten teacher.

And she was promptly rejected from all those programs, because it was wrong for an alpha to waste their life doing something that soft-omegas should do. She would ruin children by introducing them to a possibility that an alpha would lower herself to do something like this.

Aside from the fact that her family was the shattered fragments of polarizing climates, she wondered why she couldn’t have at least had a chance to do something that she actually wanted to do.

And then the world ended, and Fuyumi realized that the answer was much easier than she ever believed.

-

Helmet, before she realized that Helmet was Midoriya Izuku, granted all of her lifelong dreams, one by one without even saying a word. It was like he received her magical wishlist to Santa, back when she was six and wanted her family to be like what she saw on the television.

First, a safe place for her and her immediate younger brother to rest their head. A place where other people gathered and while it might be tense and a little bit hostile, it was safe. It was so safe that she hadn’t seen a monster in months.

Her family was reunited, one by one. The youngest came first, since he was already on base. Her father, injured and lost, came next. She hated how it took the end of the world for him to start seeing the people around him as people, but she was so grateful that he wasn’t a lost cause. The thought that her family wasn’t irreparable and broken surfaced and briefly brought her hope.

When Helmet made time and brought Rei (and others) back to them, that hope bloomed.

As more people came to the school they were at, Fuyumi was given a chance to be a teacher to small kids. The kids were practically all alphas anyways, so it was even better that she was the person that helped keep them in line. It was a good thing. It was a welcomed thing.

Her, her life, her choices, everything felt like a second chance. As awful as it sounded, she thought that the apocalypse was a good thing, in that regard. She felt like she finally had a real chance to be happy.

And at the crux of all of that was Helmet.

Fuyumi swore to herself that, even if she couldn’t directly help him, she would never get in his way. It was the least she could do, for the guy that saved her world.

-

### **patrolling**

Midoriya came to the gates when someone realized that he was leaving.

"Eh? Uh, I... uh... Midoriya-uh-san?"

....And what did he just call him?

Kirishima opened his mouth, closed his mouth, and then looked left and right hopelessly.

"I uhm, uh,” he stuttered and stammered, pale like he might fall over any second before he managed a, “how are you uh, feeling?"

He winced, like his own question hurt him.

Midoriya stared back.

"I uh... Are you uh... heading out?"

The red-head, the man that Midoriya stopped his escape for, stared back at him.

"No, no, c'mon Eijirou," he chided himself, he shook his head. "Not manly at all." He took a deep breath and met Midoriya's eyes. And then, gave a full bow forward. "Thanks for breaking my fall last time. I heard you were really injured but still tried to look after me. That's super manly and I think that's really admirable."

There was no response.

Midoriya walked right past him, as though he didn't say anything at all, and he clenched his jaw tightly. But just a few days ago, when the snow was fresh and they had a brief encounter that ended with blood splattering across the white.

"Wait," Kirishima said, turning around, "I... I'll come with you. I don’t think it’s a good idea to be alone.”

The green-haired man didn't stop, didn't even pause, and Kirishima wondered how someone could ignore someone's entire existence except when they needed to be saved. However, he did know that, if he wanted to find something out, he needed to go and try to learn about it first.

Pursing his lips, Kirishima rushed after him. It was, obviously, beyond stupid. At least, Midoriya had a backpack on and his regular winterwear (minus the helmet), but Kirishima was coming back from an impromptu run so he had his pants and his jacket and his shoes.

Still, he had that inkling feeling that if he hesitated right now, he would regret this moment for the rest of his life.

“Midoriya?!”

Oh thank god, Kirishima thought, some of the adults would be great assistance, right? They would be better support, or at least able to stop Midoriya, right?

“Good work,” Ingenium said, pausing just to ruffle his hair. “We can handle the rest, okay?”

He was gone, just as fast as he came, and Kirishima couldn’t help the disappointment lingering behind him. He wasn’t sure why he felt like he had just been cheated out of something.

### **End of Muscular**

The world was a beautiful place. Even in its ruins, broken buildings, the ground split open, and the likes, Midoriya couldn’t help but stare in awe at the picture the world created. He stepped over the rubble of this and that. In his head, he could already get a picture on what had happened.

“Hey uh, are you sure you wanna go down there?”

No, that’s why he dragged his mangled body out here, he retorted dryly in his head. He ignored Enji’s extended hand and stumbled down the side of what used to be a building. He slid down half a foot, and when he shot his arm out to rebalance himself, felt it ache. His hand scraped down something.

But where he was right now, he was getting short-sighted. There was something more important than the aches he still had. More than that, there was that feeling in his heart. That throbbing emptiness as old memories resurfaced painfully.

This was where he was held? He looked around. It was smaller now that he was here. Probably because it had been some time, and everything was knocked down, the air felt fresh.

There were some leftover corpses, not quite ash yet but burnt to a crisp. He wondered who they used to be. Was it…?

Well, whatever, that wasn’t the important part. Midoriya jumped down and started to rummage through the area. The biggest problem of having the building collapse down like this was definitely how hard it made it to get all the things that he was looking for afterwards. Well, he supposed that he didn’t really have a choice at the moment.

...He wistfully wished he died when the building collapsed. It would have been easier to deal with than all of this.

He wiped at his chin, eyes bright as he kept looking through rubble and the likes.

There it was!

He grabbed the door and heaved at it. It was too heavy. He took a step back, eyeing the rubble that was on it, and decided to move the shit on this piece of plaster to get what was underneath it. His plan was cut short when four Twices came around.

“This one, right?” one of them asked before pushing the piece of the rubble away.

“Heave-ho!”

“Hey asshole, don’t date all of us like that!”

“You waste of carbon dioxide!”

“Idiot, it’s oxygen.”

“Don’t call me idiot, you idiot! I’m you!”

“Ta-da!!!”

“Impressive right? Nothing beats numbers-”

Midoriya smoothly ignored him in favor of getting the safe that was underneath it. Did he remember the combination? He twisted the dial, this way and that, until it popped open.

Indeed, inside was a picture frame and a journal. He pulled both out and sighed. He thought that this might be the case. He looked at the picture, and flipped through the journal. His eyes skimmed the contents and he sighed deeply.

“Whatcha… looking at?”

Deku shucked off his backpack and placed it inside.

The memoirs of a man and his daughter were nothing when both of them were dead and there was no one to accept their remains.

He flipped through the journal. It looked like the journal didn’t mention anything of great and immediate importance. It was one of many faces and stories that would disappear as though it never happened. At the very least, Midoriya would be able to record their names down as deceased. Since, well, he was the one that killed them. Perhaps, if he could find some photo identification for them, if anyone that remembered them ever appeared, he would be able to get it to them.

More importantly, he had other things to do. Other things to see. He left and started to climb back up the steep hill. A hand came down in front of him, and he brushed past it to get up. His rib cage ached from the nearly 45 degree angle he crawled up, but he didn’t make any notice of it.

Next to him, Twice whined loudly that Enji extended a hand to Midoriya and not him.

Then be an omega, Midoriya almost snapped back.

Almost.

He wiped at his chin, where the sweat had gathered and looked back into the mess of destroyed buildings and desolated areas. His side throbbed painfully, but he couldn’t stop now.

Midoriya Izuku, still naive, truly and honestly hoped that would be the case. Maybe things were different now. Maybe, just fucking maybe, something could be different. He took a deep breath, and tried to remember a time when speaking was much easier than it was.

The horizon, the place where the skyline kissed the ground, the place where the sky laid across the buildings, all of it was just as he remembered. The world had continued to turn. The heavens and the earth didn’t change at all.

The same sky that he grew up dreaming about felt just as distant now as it did then.

It was the only grounding he needed to know that nothing had changed.

-

Finished with what he came out for, Midoriya slung the backpack back on. He grabbed the sides of the crater and slowly pulled himself up and over the ledge. It was harder than he thought, and he was panting hard as he got up to his feet.

“I think it’ll be a good idea to head back. You don’t look so good,” Ingenium’s gentle voice cashed over him.

It was probably kindness. He was looking after a kid that was smaller than his little brother, after all. Even though, in his head, he knew and understood that, his heart couldn’t accept it. His lips pulled back into a soundless snarl. He closed his eyes, lest he glared at him, and focused on his breathing instead.

It was raggedly and uneven. And unlike before, they could see his face. It wasn’t shocking to think that they didn’t want to see him keel over and die, but he would rather die than accept their pity. His heart pounded against his ribcage, like it was too small for it, and he felt like he was going to throw up again.

He pulled breaths through his teeth sharply before he straightened up. Two deep inhales through his nostrils later, Midoriya had regained control over his features and could act like he was fine.

But, before anyone could say anything else, a loud sound caught their eyes.

Figures.

Midoriya pulled the bat off his back, and ran for the source of the sound.

“Wait-” someone might have called him, but he could feel it. Right then and there, the closest moment he would ever get to freedom carried through his bloodstream.

### **Killing without a mask - EnDeku**

As it turned out, Midoriya did not derive any visible joy from killing monsters.

Enji felt ashamed at his observation.

Looking at Midoriya, the way his expression shut down as he closed his eyes and took a deep breath, he wasn't sure what would be better. Would it be better for him to look forward to killing things, like how he saw Himiko do? Would it better if he cried and mourned for every loss he saw, like how he saw Shiozaki pray? He wasn’t sure.

There was, at no point in his life, thought to ever become someone so desensitized to death.

He’s seen that kind of person. People who feel nothing regardless if good things or bad things happen to them. A life devoid of joy or despair, where success was the same as getting stuck in the downpour, and the death of a friend was the same as the birth of their kid.

Enji would never wish that upon anyone. It would have been better for Midoriya to have felt something-anything-right?

It felt like, especially in these times where heroes were needed the most, he could the Hero Ideal become further away.

Midoriya Izuku didn’t kill because he wanted to, but he was ruthless when he did.

Broken ribs? Trauma from being captured and pitted to fight monsters and the cursed bare-handed? Midoriya’s eyes found the horizon, and he looked back to the others for just a moment, as though to assess if they were friend or foe, and then leaned down to start dragging the bodies into a pile. There was work to do. Work to be done. Regardless of what occurred around him, he would adapt and then resume work.

Helmet or not, he was indeed the same person.

It was a comforting notion. As pitiful as it was to find comfort in something like that, Enji also used that feeling to reorient himself. If Helmet hadn’t changed, then there was no reason for him to either. His confidence returned to him.

A far and long time into the future, after all of them and all those who knew them had perished, historians could look back at him and decide then if what he did was the ‘right’ thing to do or not. Until then, all he had was what he believed was the right thing to do. Enji took a deep breath.

He can’t be a lot of things. A good father, a real hero, a kind person, a reliable adult, and he’s well aware of that. Still, his life was the product of the choices he made. Saying they were right or wrong was easy now that he was out of the moment and it had passed.

Given his track record, he was certain that this was probably a decision he would regret in the future, but he could live with that. He was okay with that. If it meant that Midoriya didn’t think that he was a liar, he didn’t mind what anyone called him in the future.

He meant it, when he told Midoriya that he would be on his side.

-

“We’ll handle the bodies,” Enji spoke firmly, “You take too long.”

The look that Midoriya leveled him would have made a lesser man quail, but Enji stood firm. Like fools, the others who were willing to watch Midoriya destroy himself stepped about, uncertain like he was just a few moments ago.

“I have no desire to watch you bleed out again. I assure you that we will finish up with this as fast as we can without losing the quality of work that you have.” And then, Enji took a deep breath and did something unthinkable for a person of his statue and reputation. He dipped his entire body forward into a polite bow towards this tiny and stubborn omega.

“Please,” he pleaded.

For a long moment, it looked like Midoriya was going to ignore him and work until he passed out or died, whichever came first. The young man stared at him for a moment longer before he gave a curt not instead. Enji took a deep breath, and turned back to finish up the fire.

There weren’t many monsters that they needed to deal with. And it looked like Midoriya was busying himself by rummaging other things.

The former flame-hero looked a step from yelling at the man but ultimately turned back around. Restraint was not a good look on him, fire spilling across his features and his jaw clenching and unclenching several times. If he had a coach who was helping him work on his patience, they would be crying at this incredible sight.

Otherwise, the impromptu patrol (if they could even call it that) was uneventful, and they all returned back alive to base within two hours.

### **Differences for an omega**

But because there was now a (known) unbonded omega, the words and actions became a little different.

For Midoriya, the worst of it all was probably how easily everything he had ever done was justified because he was an omega now. Ranging from wanting a clean home to nest in to keeping his distance from other alphas, everything had a reason, and that reason was because he was an omega.

Couldn’t he just want to live in a place that was nice and clean? Maybe he was tired of smelling like rot and gore. Couldn’t he just value his personal space and bubble? Maybe he was sick of how annoyingly clingy everyone else.

No, no. What would he know? Obviously, these people who only recently learned that he was actually human like them, would know better than him. Without ever receiving an answer, they knew all that there was to him.

Midoriya closed his eyes. Back before his Helmet and all that, they all justified it by saying that he was just a quiet person or that he was mute or maybe he was ugly but now everything that he was and everything that he did could be summarized into one word.

Omega.

The gazes had changed. The initial respect and curiosity has turned into something more inquisitive and demeaning. It was familiar. It was the same look others used to give him, a mix of condescending pity because he was such a silly little omega who was in for a painful reality check when he entered the Real World.

For Midoriya, it was like the world didn’t end at all.

### **Giving OFA**

“...Midoriya-shounen,” Yagi called out, jogging up to the young man, “Are you busy? May I intrude in a few minutes? There’s something that I would like to talk to you about, concerning the way you found me.”

Green eyes looked from his face to his fingers nervously wringing each other, and then back up to his eyes. He titled his head, before he gave a curt nod. Turning back around, he walked towards the school’s main entrance and Yagi followed him.

Just as Sasaki said, if he tried to start with the strange conditions he was found in, Midoriya would give him the time of day. More and more, they were beginning to understand how much information meant to this man.

It was a little strange to not change their shoes at the shoe locker, but neither of them mentioned anything as Midoriya led them straight to one of the smaller lounges. It was probably used for some teacher-parent, and student counseling meetings, but now, it would be used to do something else.

The two sat down, Yagi on the couch and Midoriya dragging a stool by the window. He made a motion to unlock the window, as though to prepare for his emergency exit. The thought that Midoriya either assumed that they would be attacked or that Yagi would attack him made him deflate. He wouldn’t.

The blond stared at Midoriya.

“That day,” he said quietly, “I was always curious, but I wanted to be certain of it. Before I say anything else, may I… inquire on why you saved my life? I’m sure that I didn’t look very… alive.”

The young man sighed, as though this was a pain in the ass, and he looked out the window.

“Because I felt like it,” he said quietly, but he said something so Yagi hoped that they were going somewhere with this. A long silence fell and Midoriya brought one of his hands to his temple and rubbed them hard enough that his fingernails turned white. “I know that you want a real reason but I… I didn’t really have a reason. I didn’t really think. My body just moved.”

Yagi released a breath, and dropped his head into his hands. His shuddery breath seemed to echo in the room.

“I … was hoping that was the case,” he said, because he’s seen how Midoriya operated. He’s seen and he’s heard about what he’s done and how he’s met some of the other people here.

He smiled back, his heart lightening as his best hopes reignited.

“Shounen,” he said, “My quirk is the ability to pass on my quirk. Using this quirk, and all the efforts of the people before me, I became the Symbol of Peace for the world, All Might.”

He took a deep breath, looked for a power he lost for a bit, and then pulled himself into the muscled-figure he never thought he’d be ashamed. But standing in front of Midoriya, he wondered if this was what his teacher saw when she saw him, all those years ago. That pull in his heart, the pull to get back onto his feet and fight for what was worth living for, had him up on his feet as the smoke cleared and he met Midoriya’s shocked gaze with a grin of his own. He reached his hand out.

“Would you like my quirk?”

-

"...Are you stupid?" Midoriya blurted out, taking in the whole ‘All-Might reveal’ in stride. "I'm... I'm an omega. If you give me this quirk, the quirk of Number One Hero, I'll fight back harder. I won't submit to anything."

Yagi nodded his head. "Yes, that is the point." A hiss was heard and he returned to his regular size. It would appear that he couldn’t keep his size even a fraction of what he normally could.

"Using this quirk, I might just kill all the people I encounter. Maybe even everyone on base. I’ll kill them with the power that once protected society. Especially alphas, like you and your friends.”

"Yes," the blond agreed, taking Midoriya’s words with ease. "You could do that. But, I don't think that's what you will use it for."

He furrowed his brow. "Then, what would I use it for?"

"You'll protect people’s hopes," the blond replied back, certain. "Regardless of who it is, the adversaries you may face, or the struggles you endured, you still chose to protect people again and again. You respect those who have fallen. You, through and through, have the quality that I admire the most in someone."

"...It's nothing that honorable," Midoriya said, dropping his gaze. "It just happened to be like that. I'm a terrible person. I was... I was happy that society fell apart. I am an awful person.” He turned back to meet All Might’s eyes, regretting something that he didn’t have as he stressed out his words, “If this is valuable to you, then you shouldn't give it to me. I am a very selfish person who will use this only for myself."

Yagi's lanky hands came together in front of him, and he waited patiently. Midoriya’s eyes flitted back up to his face, and Yagi gave him a bright smile. The thin man, who finally didn’t look like a walking skeleton anymore, somehow encompassed the warmth of the entire sun on a chilly fall day. He extended his hand to Midoriya with much more grace and elegance than Midoriya did, on that day, just a year ago.

"Midoriya-shounen," he said, "I think that your selfishness is a wonderful thing."

Midoriya stared at the hand, wanting nothing more than to jump on the opportunity, but an entire childhood of being told the opposite haunted his ears. They formed shackles around his neck and joints, locking him in place so he could do nothing but dance to their tune. He tightened his jaw.

Yagi's hand looked warm and inviting.

He probably didn't remember that one omega kid he helped out a few years ago, but for Midoriya, these were the words that he had been waiting to hear his whole damn life. The words didn’t feel real, and he felt like a fool for even considering believing them. What had changed from then and now? Was it okay now that the world had fallen into tatters? Did that mean that he could only be free, could only attempt to be free, because the world had ended?

As awful as it was, he was again so grateful for the monsters that destroyed modern civilization and society as he knew it.

He nodded, feeling his eyes burn with tears. He brought his hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose and he took several deep breaths.

"You too," Midoriya said, his jaw clenched. "You have to live too. I don't care how, but you have to claw to survive everyday."

His eyes met Yagi's, both of his small hands reaching to grab his, exchanging a lot more than a simple handshake.

"And you will witness for yourself the world I will by my selfish wish."

"How... gruesome," the blond said, but he nodded. "But yes, I will be your support. I will not allow you to journey through this alone."

Yagi's last act of heroism would only be known by one person. Midoriya could only hope that one day, he will have an act of heroism too.

"Now, eat this."

Midoriya blinked blankly at the strand of hair.

"You need to ingest some of my DNA for the quirk transfer to work. Now, eat up."

Ingest... DNA? He stared at Yagi, the strand of hair, back at the man, and somewhere deep in his heart, felt disgusted at the thought of feeling gratitude for not being taken advantage of.

He took the hair.

Please, he thought, please let something change. Please let something be different. Please let him be more than everything everyone always said he was.

Please let him be free.

-

“Come on, let’s get you started on some training! It’ll help with control. Due to how my quirk worked, it’ll be about nine times stronger since you’re the ninth user.”

Midoriya nodded along. At the end of this training, he would have to run on patrol. Perhaps he would be able to put some practical use to it.

### **Training - [Torino]**

The first sign that something was wrong was that Rappa was happy.

Rappa was happy, but after a very quick walk around the block, Chisaki knew that none of the buildings were in immediate need of reconstruction. Meaning, Rappa was happy about something that wasn't fighting and breaking things, or something was going on that Chisaki didn't know.

And he didn't know which would be worst.

-

"Alright! Let's take a break!"

As the words came from Torino's mouth, Midoriya fell backwards onto his butt. He heaved for every breath, sweat dripping down his face as he looked up at them. The ghost of a smile rested on his face, and Torino wondered how someone who could look that innocent when he smiled could hold so much rage in him otherwise.

Torino shook the thoughts out of his head as he approached the young man with a water bottle. Midoriya took it, too tired to even thank him, but his smile was more than enough to convey his thoughts.

"Now, this is going to be hard to stomach, but I want you to hear me out first," he said. He waited until Midoriya gave him a nod before he continued. "You've improved tremendously, but I'm sure that you already knew that. Your left side lags a little, and your right side isn't as flexible as the other side. Your eyes follow the movement, but your body is slow to react. Your strength is coming together."

Midoriya gulped down the water and wiped his mouth when a few stray drops spilled. His eyes remained focused on Torino as he talked.

"As it is now, this is your limit. You won't improve past this point."

Midoriya's shoulders slumped, his eyes wide and his jaw clenched while his hand tightened around his water bottle.

But he kept quiet, his eyes still looking at Torino. Good, he was willing to actually hear him out. The older man sighed deeply as he pointed at the young man's hand.

"You don't eat enough. Right now, you're not shaking because you're exhausted. You're shaking because your body doesn't have the means to support you."

He kneeled down in front of the young man, watching as he stared at his own hand. His pale hand had bulging veins protruding over his bones and against his skin. It was more fitting to call him a skeleton that pulled a blanket of skin tightly over itself in order to look human. It was frightening to think that there was someone literally starving to death just a few feet from them at all times.

"We have plenty of food," Torino added, in case that was the worry. "Feeding yourself won't take away from someone else's plate."

Midoriya stared at his hand, making it a fist and then opening it up again. Torino knew that there was no way he could make the young man speak. If he was trusted, he would be informed. Still, and he didn't think that he could still feel this way, he couldn't help but feel impatient about it.

"...Does it make that much of a difference?" Midoriya asked. His panting calmed down, but his heaving breaths pronounced his chest and collarbone with every breath.

"If it didn't, I wouldn't have mentioned it. If you really want to get stronger, Midoriya, you need to eat at least three full meals a day. Or five small ones."

Which was incorrect, actually. He needed to eat a lot more because he had been hungry for so long, and needed to eat to grow as well. It was hard to accurately eyeball someone's age, in the age of quirks, but Torino had lived a long time and met a lot of different people from all walks of life.

He was pretty certain that Midoriya was young, far too young to have been this alone for this long.

"If I..." Midoriya hesitated. Torino waited. His patience paid off when he spoke again, "Wouldn't that make me healthier?"

The old man paused, but yes, it would. That was sort of the point.

"Yes," he said, "That's the idea. You can't get stronger if your body is too worried about keeping yourself alive first and foremost."

A thin hand covered the wrist of one of his hands, and Torino had that sinking feeling return when Midoriya confirmed one of his worst suspicions.

"Wouldn't that make it smell more?"

Yes, because an healthy omega would exude a healthier scent more often, as they will be more able-bodied for a mate and pups. Torino rode out a wave of anguish. A child or not, because no one should have to live or think that the only way they could survive was by making these kinds of trade-offs with themselves.

"Midoriya," he said, "I swear to you that I'll won't let anyone get any dumb ideas."

And this time, when Midoriya laughed, it was such a small and mocking thing, like it was a funny joke when he heard it the first time, but it's been said too much for him to put any weight into the words. Torino knew, he could tell, and he didn't want to believe the irrefutable fact facing him.

Midoriya's shitty life habits of keeping himself on the brink of death, was a direct result of the people that he saved. He quietly lived, toeing that line between life and death, so that the people on base had one less thing to worry about.

However, living must have meant a lot to Midoriya. Becoming stronger must have meant something to Midoriya. because he did start to eat more. It was obvious from the way his hands didn't tremble as much after a few strenuous spars.

And Torino truly hated himself for thinking of that as a victory.

### **Lunch - [Lunchrush]**

Sometime after everyone ate lunch and helped with clean-up, Lunchrush returned to the kitchens to check on the dried meats.

He doesn't know how, but no one fucked with the dried meats. Actually, no one really messed around with food. Even though no one ever explicitly said, "don't waste food" or "only eat one bowl of rice at every meal" or any variant of either of them, no one also stole food or made a mess. He always thought that it was because each and every single individual came from a place where rules were rigid and people were desperate to survive. In fact, he's certain that the majority of them still hadn't learned to break previous habits, and still go a little more hungry than they should.

At the top of the list was Midoriya himself.

He made sure to grab every bit of edible consumable. He had a growing garden, and hunted deer and other livestock down. There was a bit of time where they were scared that they would have to choose who goes hungry (this never goes as well as hoped), but Helmet-Midoriya-always pulled through.

And Lunchrush was just glad that people didn't have to starve in front of him anymore.

He was truly thankful for Midoriya for that.

"Hm? Is someone here?"

Standing in the kitchen, looking even more exhausted than he saw him last, Midoriya was grabbing an apple. The young man blinked at him, and then looked down to the apple. His expression tightened, and he placed the apple down on the counter. Slowly, he backed away, and Lunchrush realized that right now, he could say something and completely change their entire relationship.

"I was just thinking of getting an apple myself," he blurted out. "May I join you?"

And that wary look Midoriya gave him turned into confusion. Slowly, he nodded, like he was more curious than he was wary. He wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not.

Well, he wasn't going to sully this chance. He grabbed an apple, passing the one that Midoriya left on the counter back to the man.

Because a few months ago, he didn't know even know that Midoriya was eating. He didn't know if he was eating or what he was eating. He wondered, but ultimately thought that it was fine because Helmet looked fine, or as fine as a guy who never took his helmet off could look. He was one of the most active people on base, and Lunchrush comforted himself because he thought the man was fine.

He figured that Midoriya would be like a regular person. They would have their own supply, and would bring the leftovers for everyone else to use. He had hoped that would be the case.

"You know," he said because a little white lie every once in a while was fine, right? "I'm actually super hungry. Do you want something to eat? I can whip something up, and to be honest, making something for more people is just easier for me at this point."

Green eyes stared at him and slowly, Midoriya nodded.

Lunchrush let out a slow breath.

"Yeah, lemme get on that. Something simple," he said. A simple dish of rice and some of the deer meat. That sounded excellent.

-

"How is it? Want some more salt?"

Midoriya eyes moved from the food to the man, and then back to his food, like he couldn't believe that he was already halfway finished with it.

There's more, Lunchrush wanted to urge. There was more food, plenty if Midoriya wanted seconds, and it was because of his accumulated hard work that they could have seconds.

He kept it to himself.

"It's delicious," he said, "Thank you for the food."

And no one needed to know that Midoriya covered his face and took shaking breaths. No one needed to know that Midoriya was falling apart as he ate something warm. No one needed to fucking know what Lunchrush was feeling, as he watched the man he was most grateful to be completely overwhelmed by a bowl of food.

"It's good," Midoriya repeated. "It's very, very good."

His hands trembled with emotion and exhaustion, and Lunchrush hoped to fill out that body one day.

"Thank you," Midoriya said, like Lunchrush deserved it. "Thank you."

"Midoriya," he said, "I should be the one to say that."

The young man, too busy wiping his eyes and getting his emotions under control, probably didn't hear him.

-

Midoriya sniffled, "Sorry about that," he said quietly.

"Nothing to be sorry about," he replied back quickly. "And uh, Izuku-chan-" he failed to notice how Midoriya's shoulders pulled backwards in how tense they became, "you can eat anytime, as much as you'd like. If I'm here, I'll be happy to whip something up for you. Because I love cooking, so feeding a lot of people like this is really nice for me."

But perhaps he didn't sound sincere enough, the look on Midoriya's face made it clear that he would rather eat horse shit than Lunchrush's food.

And after cleaning up his plate, he placed it back where he found it and left without another word. It would be weeks before Lunchrush heard his voice again, but he supposed he should just be happy with the fact that Midoriya was eating something of often, since he did see him at odd hours here and there.

He just didn't understand how someone so distrusting would be the person who diligently tried to save other people.

### **Facilitating Discussion (about chores) - [Makoto]**

What a dirty tactic.

"No one here wants to take anything from you. We... Or at least, the people here for certain want the world that you want."

Midoriya furrowed his brows, disbelieving. His hand tightened on the bat. If they thought he would hesitate because they thought he wouldn’t destroy furniture, they were in for a reality-check.

"So please, just sit down and put the bat down," Yagi said, bordering on begging. "We will listen, so please, just talk to us."

Compress pulled a chair out, at the head of the table, and bowed gracefully. "I might have mentioned it before, but it's alright. I'll repeat it as many times as I need to. I'll stay by your side, no matter who you were or want to be."

Pretty words, Midoriya thought.

He looked between them, before he made his way to the chair. There was a long, u-shaped table set up with the plastic tables that they've procured over the months. While some were crowded at the table he was at, others were crowded at the windows and many remained loitering against the walls. With all these alpha pheromones in the air, no matter how hard they tried to keep it under wraps, it was telling that an injured omega would be able to maintain eye contact with any of them.

His body was taut, as though he was ready to run at any given opportunity. All the hair on his body was standing. It was probably insulting that he didn't trust them, until he was too injured to have any other choice. But he really didn’t care about their pride.

Why would he care about their pride when it was directly correlated to his freedom? The relationship was perfectly inverse, the more pride they had, the more constricted he’ll be, until the noose closed around his throat and his head felt light. Having some humility won’t kill them. Having some freedom won’t kill him.

-

There was a long silence as Compress made sure that Midoriya was situated comfortably in his head. He gave another bow before stepping backwards and against the wall. They made sure that no one would be out of Midoriya's line-of-sight, and that the windows in the room were open to invite fresh air to circulate the room., and an exit.

Despite the differences that they have, they could all share a collected plea from this.

Please, let this be seen as their heartfelt offering. Please, let Midoriya see them as people that are useful and worthwhile. Please, let this be seen as the proof of their promises.

He looked at the chair the way people eyed rotting trash left to litter the street. He gave a quiet huff, but nodded at Compress before he settled in. His back was ramrod straight, and his eyes were sharp. If it wasn't for the fact that they could see the bandages covering him up and the remaining bruising that decorated the skin that was visible, no one would ever think that he was injured. Instead, he placed his bat across his lap, raised his chin, and stared them down.

For a kid that barely came to most of their chests’, his attitude was magnanimous.

One of his hands, thin and wrapped, held the blanket wrapped around his shoulder just a little tighter. His other arm was in a sling and tucked away, but no one doubted that he would break it again and again if he decided that he needed to escape at any cost. Still, his eyes remained on them, curious enough that he remained sitting, and they never flitted to the exits.

Looking at him, it was clear that he expected to be wrongly accused and punished accordingly. Taking off his helmet, it felt, only revealed that the person that saved them only felt contempt against them.

"Okay, okay," Makoto said, standing up and clapping her hands. "The room is plenty tense, but there is no reason to be. This is going to be a time to facilitate a proper discussion. Alright? I'll be playing the mediator for this session."

Midoriya wasted no time.

"Why was I called?"

She faltered for just a second, before she recovered.

"Well, this is a meeting to talk about what we'll be doing for the next few days," she said. "Since you're the leader, we thought that you would like an update and be a part of the decision-making process. We should tackle our problems together."

Midoriya stood up, his expression dark with indescribably fury. The chair screeched behind him, and several others tensed, as though in preparation to stop him or follow him.

He turned to leave.

"Uhm, what?" Makoto replied back. "W-wait," she tried, but Midoriya was making his way for the door. "I... We want to be apart of the future you want. You don't have to fight alone anymore, that's why we've come together."

He was almost at the door, ready to leave them all behind him. From the looks of it, half the room was about to leave with him. Her words came a little more desperately, because even if Midoriya walked out, there was one thing she wanted him to know.

"You're not the only person that treasures this place!" she yelled out.

For the first time since the helmet came off, the constant look of contempt disappeared off his face and was replaced with confusion. It was as though he had never entertained the notion that the people who made a home here cared about it. He stopped in his steps and turned to give his full attention.

"This is our home too," Makoto said, slow and certain now that she had his focus, "We may not always get along with each other, but we can all agree on this. The place that you created is important to us, too. We don't want to interfere with any plans that you have for the future. We want to join you and help you make that future come true. That's why we're trying so hard to reach out to you."

Midoriya stared at her, the disbelief turning to confusion before it, for a frightening moment, turned to anger. The rage that filled his eyes looked like it would ooze out like magma, and melt them right into the next life. Makoto, so shocked that his gaze was fixed onto her, took a step back as the bloodlust flooded into the room.

She took a deep breath and decided to be brave instead.

"So if you would please sit back down, I think it’ll be great if we could start opening discussion about the chores we have around base."

And then, Midoriya took a deep breath. The rage was gone, replaced by a blank stare.

Slowly, he returned back to his seat and sat down.

"Okay," Makoto said, a smile forming on her face, "Right now, we've been going by volunteers. However, since we keep growing in size, it might be better to start actual rotations. It'll keep in better order as well..."

Step one, complete!

-

Midoriya was silent, but his presence was heavy, like there was a heavy blanket that was brought on top of the entire room. It was hard not to just stare at Midoriya and wait for his input on every item on the menu, but luckily, Makoto ensured that the meeting would continue when a few seconds passed without Midoriya ever saying anything.

She tried to prompt him once or twice, but it never resulted in anything more than a frigid stare and silence.

Instead, they watched as Midoriya leafed through the papers. They watched, and some had the sense to pretend they were watching from the corner of their eyes instead of just staring at him with their jaw agape.

If Midoriya noticed, he didn't say anything. They weren't sure if that was a good thing or not.

However, the meeting proceeded, and no matter how much Makoto trailed off and stared at Midoriya, expecting any form of input, the man kept his eyes to the paper.

In all honesty, it felt like he wasn't even listening.

"Well, uhm, I guess that concludes the chores," she said, barely 15 minutes later. She looked around, eyes landing on her brother, "If anyone wants to add anything...?"

She smiled, but it was sharp. It was a threat on his life. Naomasa closed his eyes.

What was he supposed to say?

"Izuku-chan, is there anything you want to add?"

Midoriya blinked, and then, as though realizing that they were addressing him, looked up and around the room. The silence was stifling.

He just stared at Naomasa, and the older man smiled back at his sister, as though to say, Look, this is the extent of my abilities.

She smiled at brother, as though to reply by saying something along the lines of, This is why I was mom's favorite, worthless brother of mine.

"Well, I guess that's the end of the meeting then," Makoto said, a big sigh on her lips.

“...Wait, I didn’t just sit through this whole annoying thing for nothing,” Shigaraki said, raising his hand. He turned to the young man who stubbornly kept him alive this whole time, “Oi, Izuku,” he called out, “What do you want that you kept all of us alive?”

“Me too,” Natsuo said, shooting a look at Enji before he turned back to Midoriya, “I wanna know that too.”

Green eyes looked from Shigaraki to Natsuo and then back down to the papers in front of him.

“...There’s something that I’m looking for,” Midoriya explained quietly.

There was a long silence.

“Well, what is it?” Midnight asked. “Did you… save people you thought could help you get what you wanted?”

A fierce type of frustration clouded his expression as he stood up. Deciding that his time here was done and over with, the young man walked out.

“...God this was a waste of time,” Shigaraki sighed, making his way to exit through the windows. “What I expected from a bunch of goody-two-shoed heroes. If you want something done…”

“-You should do it yourself!” Toga finished his sentence for him, a dangerous smile stretching her lips.

“Yeah sure, crazy bitch,” the man heaved a great sigh.

“Wait,” Naomasa got up to his feet, “There’s no reason for us to stop working together-”

“Police-san,” Chisaki called out as he got up to his feet, “I understand that you mean well, but that frankly means nothing to us.” He dusted himself off, and adjusted his mask as he stared back at them. “We are all people here who gathered to have that question answered. Since your way didn’t work, we will have to use our own ways now.”

Hearing that from a guy with a repertoire like Chisaki did very bad things to the rest of the people in the room.

“Excuse us then. This has been an… enlightening moment for us.”

“What are you planning?” Aizawa asked, eyes narrowed into slits.

“Peace, Eraserhead, we do not wish to destroy what Izuku has created. I’m sure a hero of your caliber would understand that.”

“If you pull anything funny, I’ll personally come after you,” Takeyama snapped back.

“Charming,” the former yakuza said as he left, sounding as bored as he always did.

“...What now?” Snipe asked. “At the rate things are going, this is going to come crumbling down.”

“Don’t say that. We haven’t even tried anything yet,” Ryuuko said. “We need to first assess the situation to figure this out-”

“...You heard him as clearly as the rest of us did,” Gran Torino spoke up, looking somehow older than he did just a few moments ago. “Midoriya has no intention of sharing anything he doesn’t want to.”

“So we should just wait for this to break?” Yagi asked, his frustrations starting to boil over.

“...Sorry you guys,” Hawks said, speaking up, “But there’s something about this that’s weird. Peace.” And was gone in the same second he spoke.

“What? Hawks?!”

“This is a waste of time,” Enji said, standing up. “If what we know is the same, then nothing has changed. We know the same amount that we knew before. Then, we should continue to function as so.”

“How can you say that!?” Natsuo snapped back. “He isn’t your kid, you can’t just abandon him because he isn’t your brand of problem!”

The silence was deafening, and Fuyumi reached over to gently tug on Natsuo’s sleeve. The young man brought his hand down, but the tension didn’t change.

“...Excuse me then,” Enji said, leaving the room.

“But you know, I don’t think Endeavor is wrong,” Miruko spoke up.

“You want us to abandon him?!” Ryuuko turned, aghast at her old friend.

“Course not,” the rabbit-hero replied back, “But we should just view it as that nothing changed. If he isn’t telling us something because he doesn’t trust us, then now more than ever, we need to work on that. Forcing anything out of him isn’t going to get him to trust us more.”

The words hung over them like thick gray clouds promising a thunderstorm.

Gang Orca scowled. “This is just spinning us in circles.”

“However,” Best Jeanist spoke up, “I don’t think forcing our hand will change anything in our favor.”

“Best Jeanist?”

“If Izuku-chan doesn’t trust us, then it appears that we have our first objective.”

### **Aizawa's Effective Plan to Have Something To Do (ft. Tensei & Stain)**

*He doesn't understand how there could be so much work after the world ended.*

*He supposed that this was only natural since the world ended and keeping properly organized has saved his life (and sanity) many times but...*

*Management was so damn annoying. It was easier when he was alone. It was better when he was alone and all he had to worry about was making sure he had enough supplies to last until he could go back out. Now, this place was crawling with people in all shapes, sizes, and preferences. He didn't even know when they were planning on leaving, but he had no intention of throwing the injured on their back to be easy fodder for the beasts outside.*

*That would only make the monsters he was fighting stronger, after all.*

*Midoriya paused as he opened the door.*

*It would really help if they would also fucking write when they just took supplies, so that he didn't have to manually come in and count everything every goddamn day and re-evaluate what needed to be found and replenished.*

*"Ah, good morning, Helmet."*

*Midoriya took a full step back, his hand flying to the knife strapped to his thigh. When he saw Aizawa, who raised his hands in surrender, he relaxed a little more, but kept away.*

*Being stuck in a room with an alpha, no matter who he used to be, was not ideal. He wasn't too concerned about his smell, since he hadn't showered in a while and his clothes were literally rotting on him, but he had to hand it to Aizawa, the man didn't even flinch at the stench.*

*"We took care of inventory. Here's the report," he said, handing over the clipboard. "I'm not sure what counts as 'running low' right now, but we wrote down all the counts of what we had by container. The second page has the total number based on ounces and weight."*

*Midoriya blinked back, and after a second, took the clipboard back. His eyes glided across the page. It would be a cold day in hell before he trusted a fucking alpha, but he couldn't help the tight feeling of relief in his chest when he saw it.*

*It was... so organized. Beautiful. He was going to cry himself to sleep tonight. This was probably the first good thing that has happened since he's met a survivor.*

*They took advantage of the graph paper, and all the lines were neat. The handwriting was beautiful, legible, and a thousand times better than what Midoriya has scrawled before.*

*His hand trembled, and he faced Aizawa. Alpha or not, this was wonderful. This was well-done. He bowed just a little bit, hopeful that his gratitude would make it to him.*

*"...I'll continue doing this. And I'm sure some of the others will do it too. We were thinking of making a system of things like that. Is that okay?"*

*No, Midoriya couldn't say. It wasn't okay. That sounded almost like they were going to make themselves a job to do here. That sounded like they cared about this place and saw a future here.*

*That sounded like they were going to stay.*

*And Midoriya felt like he was watching his most treasured sanctuary be soiled.*

*Well, what was he going to do? Stop them? Throw them out? Watch them return with revenge and vengeance on their mind instead? Kill them?*

*Perhaps he should prepare himself to leave instead. Maybe he could leave. Abandon his home and start over somewhere else and pretend that he wasn't just some filthy coward that ran at the first sight of trouble.*

*The thought felt so bitter that he just left the room. If he was going to do as he pleased, they should do.*

*When he returned from his walk the following morning, Aizawa was there. Dark bags under his eyes, he took one look at Midoriya and straightened.*

*He gave a curt bow, "Welcome back," he said to the immense shock of Midoriya. "In your office, we put the reports on the inventory on your desk. We'll update it again around lunch when we count in what you have brought in," he said, motioning to the cart that Twice was pulling at the side.*

*"Eeeehhh," Shigaraki drawled out from behind Midoriya, "Guess you guys are really trying to pull your weight now, huh?"*

*"If there's anything else you want us to do, we'll be happy to help," Aizawa added. His posture was exhausted, but his eyes were sharp. Midoriya had no doubt that this was a man who knew how to work completely and thoroughly.*

*If... If he took this helmet off, and Aizawa knew who he really was, he wondered if he would ask for something to do.*

*His stomach knotted. He knew the answer, and just felt stupid for thinking otherwise, even if it was just for a second.*

*Even if they stay now, that doesn't mean he will. This whole thing was temporary, at best.*

*Midoriya nodded his head at Aizawa and left. He'd go check once he cleaned off a little.*

-

"The updates on inventory," Aizawa said, walking in with a folder in his hand.

Midoriya's head snapped up, truly and genuinely surprised. His hand immediately went to the knife on his desk, his hand tense and ready.

"What?" he said, when the words processed in his mind. He must have heard it wrong.

"The... inventory?" Aizawa said slowly. His eyes dragged from his blade to the man at the desk. He waved the folder a little. "It's lunchtime. I have the update."

"I... Yes," he nodded. Midoriya stared at him like he didn't know who he was. Briefly, it was almost like he never took off the helmet.

He just couldn't believe it.

He figured that, as soon as he was revealed, everyone would just stop working. They would expect him to work until there was nothing left of him, and will swoop in at a time most convenient for themselves, where they will boast and remind him that he was nothing and no one. Perhaps they’d stoop to inconveniencing him at every turn and corner, because it was funny to watch an omega struggle, or whatever. He didn’t really get it either, but that's how it has always been. That's just how alphas, and every single last enabling beta, were.

So this was beyond shocking for him.

"...You ... did the inventory?"

"...Yes?" Aizawa cocked an eyebrow at him. "Should... I have not?"

And in his shock, Midoriya blurted out his true thoughts.

"I thought you wouldn't anymore."

The older man almost frowned. The creases were about to form. His control over his expressions and demeanor was powerful, however, so he didn’t.

"...If you don't want me to, you need to tell me clearly or I won't understand," he explained. "Otherwise, I'll keep doing this. Likewise, I'm just going to format it the same way unless you tell me how else you want me to change it."

"And if I just ask you, you'll make the change?" Midoriya asked, disbelief clear.

"Yes," Aizawa replied back. "I will. It's more efficient that way."

And Midoriya didn't know how to trust those words. He hesitated, still recovering from his initial state of shock. The older man relaxed, and waved the folder.

"So, where do you want this?"

"Oh, I'll... I'll just take it," Midoriya said. He extended his hand out to take the folder and Aizawa passed it to him.

"You have any errands you want me to run?"

"Huh?"

"I'm not doing much else, right now. If you have any other errands, I can go ahead and run them."

A mountain of them, actually. He needed to go and double check the state of the walls on the first floor, and how the carpets are going to hold up. He needed to check on the dams and the water levels in the nearby creek, because if it floods, it's going to be a mess. If it looked bad, he was going to spend all tomorrow digging. He needed to check on four of his safe houses, and make sure that their windows hadn’t completely shattered in yet.

But what, this man was going to just do that? For him? For nothing in return? Doubtful.

Midoriya shook his head slowly. Was he going to yell now? Was he going to exert his alpha dominance on him? Was he testing the grounds so that he knew where Midoriya's focus was so he could sabotage that? The faster he answered ‘yes,’ the easier it would be for Midoriya to deal with this.

Aizawa's eyes, red and piercing, stared at him for a moment longer before he nodded.

"Alright. Let me know if that changes."

And he left.

That was it. there was nothing different or special about this moment. Nothing had changed. No one yelled. He gave his report and left. It was... It was almost as though this was a normal conversation and normal interaction between two people of equal worth and value.

And Midoriya couldn't help the pit of dread pool in his stomach, where all his anxiety originated from and threatened to choke him out.

That was it. This whole time, he wanted to be free and fine and he was just treated like it. That was it. That's all someone had to do.

Squeezing his eyes shut, he used all his willpower not to cry.

-

The early rays of dawn were beautiful. Midoriya couldn't help but notice when the sunlight filtered through the trees and leaves above him, and took a moment to appreciate the quiet and peace it brought. The trees rustled gently above him, and birds chirped somewhere above where he couldn’t see.

He wiped at his chin, catching the sweat as he tried to catch his breath. He threw his shovel over the top of the ridge and when he placed his hands on the side to pull himself out, saw a hand extended out to him.

He jerked backwards, dropping back into the pit. Eyes sharp, because he should have heard anything come close, he reached for his knife at his side. Looking up, his eyes met Aizawa's blank expression.

"Need a hand?" Aizawa asked.

Midoriya shook his head, and got out of the ditch on his own.

Aizawa side-eyed him, and then down to the trench he was digging.

"You've been digging this whole time?" he asked.

Midoriya didn't reply, because it was plenty obvious wasn't it? Or did he think that this trench just happened to appear overnight and Midoriya was standing in it with a shovel because he was bored and was posing for Instagram?

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and banished the thought. He was having a great morning. He was having such a great fucking morning.

"If you mentioned something, I could have helped."

"If I didn't mention it, would you think that I didn't want your help?" Midoriya replied, probably a lot more meaner than he would have if he had gotten sleep instead of flood-control.

He closed his eyes, feeling stupid for falling for the bait. He shook his head. He shouldn't have spoken. No point saying anything when no one wanted to hear him. The heavy feeling returned into his chest. He wanted to lay down and sleep, maybe get something for the blisters on top of his blisters.

"I don't know how much clearer I can make myself," Aizawa said, turning around. He crossed his arms over his chest with a frown on his face, "I want to help. I have nothing else to do. I'm dying in my boredom, so I might as well be productive. You clearly have plans, so share them. It’ll be more efficient if we work together."

His words were so blunt. They were to-the-point and frank. They were everything Aizawa always was, with a sprinkle of kindness underlying his intentions. It was almost like Midoriya wasn't Midoriya, and Aizawa really did want to help.

And that scared Midoriya.

The kind intentions contaminated him like an infection, and the toxins bled into his heart with a weight he couldn't describe.

"If you keep ignoring me, I'll keep bothering you. I'm coming back around at noon anyways," Aizawa continued. "So save us both the time and effort."

And Midoriya, because he was still stupid enough to feel enough hope to choke on it, turned back to Aizawa. Their eyes met evenly, and he really thought about it.

He needed to head back so he could change and finish cleaning out the office space down the street. Then, he needed to check the traps and set some chimes. He needed to grab some more wood and take it to his third safe-house, just in case. He was going to start setting up another two safe-houses if he made satisfactory progress. He was going to return to change equipment and check inventory and head back out. He needed to run patrol on southside.

There weren’t enough hours in the day for him to do all of that.

He pulled his eyes from Aizawa. If he started to rely on Aizawa, if he gave even a fraction of himself up, wouldn't he start to look for him? Wouldn't this man become indispensable to him? Wouldn't this man become important and Aizawa instead of a strange man that made a temporary home where he happened to be?

If he asked for help and Aizawa reliably gave it, would he be able to let go of him?

That didn't sound like freedom. It sounded like a bargain. It sounded like an inevitability.

He turned around, unable to let go of the flimsy hope that he could be free one day, and left Aizawa behind him.

Behind him, Aizawa took a long sigh.

-

Which, apparently, meant that Aizawa was going to stalk him all goddamn day.

Midoriya reeled backwards when he saw the man standing outside of his designated office space, one of the classrooms on the second-floor. What was he doing here? If it was an emergency, he would have burst the doors down, and he would have heard the explosions. Concerning how many people lived here, and how loud they got, there was no way he wouldn’t know.

The man looked tired, in that bone-weary, constant way that he associated with this man, but when he found Midoriya straightened. He gave a nod, and Midoriya nodded back.

There was no point in locks here. If someone wanted access to a place, they were going to break the door. In order to keep the least amount of doors broken, he never bothered with locks. Luckily, the others seemed to understand that, because they didn't either.

Well, at least that was the case back when they didn’t know who he was. Now that they knew, it would be different. The quality and integrity of the data will no longer be trustworthy. His journal entries and the collected IDs were probably just some stolen goods. Since there was no way to test if the information was true, and they didn’t want to spare the effort, it would be faster and more efficient to just toss everything out.

Which was fine. Even if he lost all the reports and data in this room, that was fine. He had an extra copy of the really important things tucked away in the headmaster's office. The only thing he would lose is the most current data, which was also fine since he had it written in his planner on his person. It was fine. He figured that the things that he worked hard on and the things he tried so hard to forget would be destroyed and contaminated as soon as people knew it was his.

He turned to leave and within two steps, realized that his footsteps had a pair. He stopped and turned back around.

Aizawa arched an eyebrow at him. "I have nothing to do,” he stressed again.

The horror on his face must have been prevalent, because the older man had the audacity to look smug.

“So unless you’re going to give me something to do…” he trailed off, but the threat was clear.

But what could Aizawa do? Back when he was Helmet and no one knew who he was, Aizawa was much more forward. He did as he pleased, based on the observations that he took of Midoriya. What the fuck was Midoriya supposed to know about him?

He turned back on his heel, determined to leave before he started to hope.

### **Q's About School**

"Question," Aizawa said, "You kept up with regular school chores, right? Why?"

Midoriya looked at the papers in front of him, eyes gliding over impressively neat kanji.

Aizawa closed his eyes and sighed. This was probably the best that they could get. Really, they should have counted the fact that Midoriya didn't leave at all, and stopped there. Next to him, Yamada gave him a stern look. He made sure not to make eye-contact with his long-time friend. He wanted answers damnit.

"I didn't want to disrespect where I was living," Midoriya replied back.

Red eyes jumped to his face.

"Then, was there anyone here before you got here?"

"Hey," Yamada whispered quietly, "Shota..."

He was an opportunist. Sue him.

"There was," Midoriya nodded. He placed the paper down. "I killed them all before I moved in."

In his eyes, it was clear that he was just waiting for their indignant fury. It was clear to anyone that had eyes that Midoriya said this, ready to fight about it. It was clear, and it was so obvious that Aizawa felt certain about it.

Midoriya didn't kill anyone. Or at least, it wasn't in that heartless way that he was phrasing it. He trailed behind him often enough to know how Midoriya treated those that he encountered.

"...I didn't mean anything of it," Aizawa said. He lowered his voice, and hoped that this would come off as sincere as he felt, "I'm sorry if it brought back unwanted memories."

And for a brief moment, Midoriya honestly looked like he was going to cry. It might have been because he was remembering something awful. It might have been because he was honestly shocked that someone apologized for it.

He hesitated. His eyebrows furrowed, as though he was facing the worst internal battle in his life.

Aizawa thought he would say something, but instead, Midoriya shook his head. Clenching his jaw shut, he focused back on the literature textbook he was reading through.

## The Springers

### **Ambushed**

With a new cut tearing open his arm, Midoriya gave a slow breath. Trying not to collapse on the ground, he made it down to his a kneel, keeping his head down lest they were discovered by the curls on his head.

He took ragged breaths, and looked down at the mess he was making on the ground. The cut didn’t break any bones, but his thigh was still bleeding. His eyes fell to Spinner. At the very least, the man looked like he could still run. He looked to Spinner.

“Run.”

“W-What?”

“I can’t protect you and fight them at the same time. I’m not strong enough,” he said, “so you need to run away.”

“I-I still can’t just leave you here.”

Midoriya stared at Spinner for a moment longer, a small smile beginning to form on his face, “Then hurry back. Preferably with some firepower.”

He looked back to where the Springers were prowling. How many were there, four? He could do this.

Ambushed and beaten, he could do this.

He looked and gave a smile to Spinner.

If he died, Spinner would have to carry that burden in his heart for the rest of his life. He couldn’t do that to someone who was so blindingly loyal.

### **First few**

They screeched, probably indignated, probably angry. Well it made no difference to Midoriya, but he did understand their frustration and rage.

After all, they lost and would now die because of a cumrag named Midoriya.

He brought his crowbar down.

### **save the hero [Hakamata & Hawks]**

To their defense, it wasn't like these monsters were blurting out their secret powers and motives like most villains would have. Instead, they went straight for the kill. They screeched and howled without rhyme or rhythm, and it didn’t sound like any language.

Best Jeanist just barely managed to yank Midoriya and Hawks out of the range of those claws. Glass bits clattered to the ground as Midoriya and his plus one crashed to the ground next to him.

It was nearly shameful how out-of-touch he was with his own quirk. Even now, he was trying to recover back the skills he used to have, after nearly eight months of being unable to use it.

Suddenly he was yanked down by his arm, and Midoriya surged up and passed him. Using a glass shard, he stabbed the eyehole of a monster that dropped down from above. He stabbed it in so deeply that Best Jeanist saw it pierce through the back of its skull before it fell back forward.

Midoriya leaned down, snapping its neck for good measure before he turned back down to Hawks.

Best Jeanist looked from the body to Midoriya, trying to contain the contents of his stomach. It was one thing to see dead bodies, it was another thing to see someone die, and it was a whole other thing to watch someone who barely came up to his chest kill someone-saving him in the process. Some of his colleagues had children bigger than him.

"Izu-"

"Hawks," Midoriya said, his voice firm. The young man lifted the head of the former pro-hero.

The man, with blood dribbling down his face, his shirt ripped, and feathers scattered all about, looked strangely peaceful. Amidst a battlefield like this, there was nothing as terrifying as that kind of serenity.

Still, Midoriya carried himself with an equally terrifying amount of calmness. Truly, it was like he was the eye of a hurricane. He pulled one of his sleeves down and took a glove off. With his wrist exposed, he brought it up to Hawks' nose, as his other hand cupped the back of the blond's head.

"Easy there," he said quietly. "Come back to me."

And then, at the center of a battlefield, with a dead body still warm just a few feet away, Best Jeanist smelled something mouthwatering. For a brief second, he felt his entire brain process stop. Something primal that hadn't been tampered with in a long while rose up inside of him. All of his instinct came to a single focal point and he slowly turned to Midoriya.

He knew, everyone knew, that the young man was an omega. But he hadn't smelled him (or anyone, really) like this, so suddenly and strongly, strong enough that he could feel his vision narrow and his fangs sharpen in his mouth.

He watched Hawks' eyes slowly open, pupils like slits in his eyes as his jaw relaxed. His lips dragged across the inside of Midoriya's wrist, inviting Hakamata's rage, because that omega will be his-

And Midoriya brought his hand back and slapped Hawks across his face.

Like a bucket of cold water, he felt himself return. Immediately, he felt shame, and an equal amount of shock. However, Hawks sat up.

"That... was a wake-up call," the blond said, rubbing his cheek as the exhaustion stretched his face.

Midoriya pulled his sleeve down, pulled his glove back on, and with his dirty gloves, smeared dirt and drying blood all over Hawks' face. The older man spluttered, but otherwise didn’t fight the touch. Carefully, small hands moved the man's face left and right, green eyes looking over his features before he pulled back.

"How many?" he asked, lifting up three fingers.

"Three fingers," Hawks said before he worked his jaw. "God, you hit hard."

Midoriya nodded, satisfied and he stood up.

"Get out of here if you're going to get in the way," he said, frigid in his words and expression. The blond winced in return. Green eyes slid to Hakamata, his disgust so apparent that Hakamata flinched.

Without another word, Midoriya stepped back. He leaned down, picking up one of the glass shards.

"The exit is that way," he said, pointing opposite to where he was going.

"What about you?" Hakamata asked, even though it was plenty obvious.

The look Midoriya shot him this look of thinly veiled contempt and exhausted rage like he couldn't believe that Hakamata was still alive. It was, at once, humbling and shameful.

“Someone has to go kill them.”

"You can't go alone," Hawks said, getting up to his feet. "And I won't get in your way again."

Or at least, Hawks would have said when a truly massive monster came sprinting through the wall and furniture. It came and tackled Midoriya through this store and into the next one.

"Izuku-"

Hawks' feathers fluttered as the monster had brought several more for them to deal with.

Out of habit, Hawks reached for his commlink, like this was a mission gone wrong instead of a battlefield that they were ill-prepared for. His fingers came to nothing, since there was no commlink, and there was no backup, and no incoming or outgoing information because they were one of the last people that were alive in this region of Japan.

The two blonds immediately stood back to back.

First thing was to evacuate. Second was to mitigate damage. Third was to win as fast as possible.

Best Jeanist and Hawks were out of practice, but they used to stand at the top of the billboards. There was a reason why.

### **sakamata - not hate**

There will be a time where you cannot avoid getting hit. It was unfortunate. It was unavoidable. It was a possibility that you must be ready to face, and brace for impact accordingly. If all went well, damage will be minimal, and they will be able to finish the fight and make it back home just fine.

It happened. It was normal. It was natural.

What was not normal was Midoriya, who stepped away when someone came close, who slapped their concerned hands, and scowled at their worry. A gaze so cold that it could freeze Endeavor in his place, and a glare that burned so bright that Kamui Woods stepped away, that was Midoriya. That Midoriya, face contorted in pain, jumped into the fight. Four new jagged lines that should have clawed across Sakamata's side because he could not dodge this attack, embedded into Midoriya's back before the two went flying to the side.

Sakamata could hardly believe it. He looked at him, shocked and surprised and Midoriya didn't spare him a second glance. Instead, his eyes flitted to meet his briefly.

"W-Why-"

And Midoriya rushed back into the fight. His tattered sweater flung in the breeze behind him, a bright red blooming across the faded yellow.

And if there was a way to explain the amount of frustration and annoyance that Sakamata felt inside of him, it would be the shape of Midoriya in the shade of Not-Sakamata's-Blood red.

-

Had the news media, and the hero's association been around, they would have all been scorned to hell and probably on probation if their licenses weren't immediately revoked.

There wasn't much of the mall left behind. It was standing, but the center part that used to be all glass was gone, some of it being shaken out of Hawks' wings and some of it being pulled out of Shigaraki. The mall, itself, was burning. The captured monsters screaming and squealing before the crackling fire silenced them all. The fire vortex they managed to pull together burned brightly, probably melting whatever glass and smoking out the rest of the plaster and concrete.

And watching it burn at the front of their group was Midoriya. He stared, expressionless and still as he watched the mall he ignited coat the entire skyline in smog. His sweater was hanging off of his shoulder, backless while the front was missing, and looking ready to just fall apart. A sleeve was torn off and bunched at his wrist, while the other one was fully missing. Between smears of dirt and ash, long cuts and swelling bruises decorated his skin like tattoos and jewelry.

If society was still functional, they would have all been scorned to hell for letting an omega get so battered in battle. They would have been stripped of the licenses or put on probation because no one would ever let them forget that they decimated this entire mall. It would have been the end of many of their careers.

Midoriya turned around, with a painful-looking black eye and his split lip stretched into a grin. His eyes were bright, almost prideful and looked at them without the contempt and disdain for the first time since he opened his eyes.

"Good work," he said.

And, if society was still functional, he would have never learned how bright Midoriya's smile could look.

"Midoriya," Sakamata said, quiet and stern as his eyes darted to his arm, just barely attached my bone and muscle, and then back to his face, "We need to get that looked at."

The older man came closer, and for once, Midoriya didn't move away from another person. His smile remained, just as soft, just as gentle as snowfall, and he chuckled.

"I'm okay," he said quietly.

"No, I really, really think we should make you priority to get back-"

Midoriya gave this soft sigh, but from the look on his face, they realized that he was laughing. Probably. He could be breathing hard and they're all so tired that they are wistfully hoping that he's smiling. More likely than they'd like to admit.

Midoriya's eyes turned back to the mall, eyes taking in the dying inferno in front of them.

Hawks, free from glass bits, stepped towards Midoriya, ready to take this man back to base at his fastest. They could see the intensity of his focus as his eyes trained onto Midoriya and his uneven breaths.

Green eyes slowly locked with his. With a gaze so gentle that it didn't feel like Midoriya was the person in front of him, the blond struggled with himself.

"This time," he said, "We won."

He watched the smoke funnel out. As though listening to something soothing, he closed his eyes.

And then his body gave out.

Hawks caught him before he teetered too far to one side, his expression tight when his arms wrapped around him and he realized how wet and sticky the young man was.

"I'm taking him back," he said before he was gone in a gust of wind.

Sakamata, who had a few new bruises himself, wondered how someone who used to look at him in only contempt, could give him such a tender gaze after saving his life-again and again.

It must be the fever, he told himself. It must be blood loss. The pain, the exhaustion, and the stress of the battle, as well as the relief that it ended in their victory, that's what must have messed up Midoriya's thought process. That made more sense.

But, in the case that it wasn't true, Sakamata began to hope against hope that something would be different when Midoriya woke up. That Midoriya's gentle expression will be commonplace, and his smiles would replace his glares. And Sakamata wanted to live in that world.

-

Sakamata learned that reality can be a bitter thing.

"...I... I just don't understand," Sakamata said. "You look like you hate me. For a long time, I truly struggled with the notion that you regretted saving me, all those months ago."

Midoriya didn't respond, not that Sakamata was expecting him to.

"So I thought that you saved me by mistake. And sometime between then and now, you started to hate me. And right now, you hated me, like you seem to hate every single person here."

Sakamata sighed deeply.

"I can't even begin to imagine why you ran to come and help me."

And Midoriya, who can't lay down on his back because of the jagged claw marks that can't withstand any pressure right now, placed his pen down.

"I don't like you," he said. "You're right, I don't like anyone here."

Sakamata felt a small pinch inside of his heart. He knew, he figured, everyone had, but getting confirmation was painful.

"I thought that I wouldn't care," he continued. "I thought that, if someone got hurt or died, I wouldn't care but I..." A smile, small and a little uncertain, began to stretch across his lips. "But I didn't really think. My body just moved."

He turned to Sakamata, looking so bone-weary tired and defeated as he smiled.

"I don't like you, but that doesn't mean I want you to die."

Sakamata, who had felt though he was being unraveled at the seams from the second the sky shattered, who felt as though he had been marooned in the middle of the ocean with no direction and no light, finally felt as though he found a lighthouse.

"...Gang Orca-san," Midoriya said, "...I'm glad that you came back alive."

Sakamata, for the first time since the world ended, felt like he could breath easy.

"You too," he said. "Midoriya, welcome back."

Midoriya's smile was small, but it was there and that meant more to Sakamata than anything else.

### **reports within 18 hrs**

For a grueling 18 hours, Midoriya slept. The tension on base got progressively thicker, ready to ignite at a second's notice. Chisaki, who was switching off with Natsuo and another doctor, have been snapping at almost every other person on base. In addition to that, patrols rapidly deteriorated, and any form of unification and order that they almost created collapsed in on themselves.

"Well, I must admit that being able to firmly decline a hero's plea is rather flattering," Mr. Compress said, flashing a smile. "But unfortunately, I am actually very busy. And it brings me so much sorrow," he said, absolutely gleeful, "to tell you that I will be unable to answer your desperate favor."

Tsukauchi, who was not a licensed hero, grinded his teeth down, but managed to keep his business polite smile on his face. Right before he could say something, however, the door opened and Midoriya walked right by the window.

Wrapped like a mummy, in a loosely-fitted yukata that was dark green with a navy blue sash, the young man walked by the room.

"Izuku-chan?" Compress said, shocked as he rushed to the window. He pulled the window open and stuck his head out. "Izuku-chan!" he called out.

"...He's been cleared to walk around?" Tsukauchi asked, more to himself, as he rushed to the door.

In that time, he found Chisaki running down the hallway instead.

"Police-san," Chisaki said, and Tsukauchi would never understand how someone could fit so much sarcastic disdain in a title, "...Could I assume that you've seen Midoriya walk by?"

Tsukauchi stared at Chisaki and took a deep, long breath.

"Then, could I assume that he's not supposed to be?"

Even through the mask, Chisaki's wry smile could be felt between the two them.

-

To no one's shock, Chisaki found Midoriya in the archieve's room.

"You, get back onto the bed and sleep for ten more hours," Chisaki announced as he stormed into the room.

Midoriya looked at him, and then turned his attention back to the journal.

"Don't ignore me," Chisaki snapped, "You're dying. I'm trying to stop that. How are you even standing right now?"

Midoriya closed the notebook.

"Are there any reports on the last few days?" he asked.

Chisaki grinded his teeth down, his eyes narrowing, and then sighed.

"It's been... hectic," the man said. "As far for who will be updating the reports, it's either the Whale-Hero or the Bird-Hero."

Midoriya nodded. He placed the notebook back in its place and turned back around.

"I'll find them and send them to you later, but you need to rest right now-"

Midoriya clearly didn't care, as he stepped around him to try and keep going. Face marred with annoyance, Chisaki stepped in front of him, right when he thought about yelling, about commanding, about forcing his will onto Midoriya, the young man met his gaze back just as evenly.

Gone was the gentle gaze and soft tones Midoriya gave him when he came in, bleeding and battered beyond cohesive thought. In its stead, the clear contempt in Midoriya's eyes had returned. With his hand inside of his yukata, Chisaki saw the glimpse of a knife, and had no doubt that if he came any closer, blood would spill.

Of course, there was no way that Chisaki would ever lose to a barely functioning mini-adult like Midoriya.

However, the stark realization that nothing had changed that Midoriya didn't like them and still didn't trust them, was bitter.

As a result, he didn't even try.

He closed his eyes and sighed. Remembering a time, back when society stood and he sat at the bottom rung with the worst shitheads and irredeemable trashbags, where he never worried about earning someone's trust, and wondered why he ever wished to Overhaul the entire world.

He couldn't even earn the trust of a single child.

"Please," he said, not too proud to beg. Everyone could feel the systematic difference of when Midoriya was not out and about.

If this man died, everyone knew that this little pocket of relative peace and quiet would die a revolting death.

"I don't want you to die," he said.

Midoriya stepped backwards, his eyes wary and his hand never leaving his blade.

"Then you have nothing to worry about," he said.

And just like that Midoriya walked out, a different notebook under his arm.

Chisaki could hardly believe it. It was so damn hard to protect and keep one goddamn person alive, but heroes dealt with this constantly?

More than ever, Chisaki found himself actually respecting heroes.

With a big sigh and a growing urge to just overhaul both of Midoriya's legs away so that the man couldn't get away from him, he followed him out. Of course, he would never do it, of course not.

If he's learned anything about Midoriya, it was that the young man would do just about everything to do whatever it was that he wanted. Whatever it took. Overhaul sincerely doubted that losing his legs would do much more than annoy him.

And so, he would just follow him, ready to collect him as soon as he fell.

"Could I carry that for you?" Chisaki's voice floated across the hallway.

It was rare, so rare, to hear the man ask something, that the others in the room paused. Looking over, they saw Midoriya's figure walk by the classroom, pausing just a second to look into the room before he continued walking.

By the second classroom, he looked in and found what he was looking for. Pushing the door open and standing at the doorway, he called out.

"Sasaki-san, do you have the report for the last fight?"

Sasaki, not expecing to be called upon, straightened as he stood up.

"Yes, it's right here. I was going to keep it until it was dinner so I didn't forget anything-"

He extended his hand out, "Could I read it?"

Sasaki grabbed the report off the desk he was working on, and handed it to the young man.

He grabbed it, uncannily focused as he read through the report.

"How many?" he asked suddenly. He read and reread through the report. "This is... 37?"

"...Yes, when we tallied up the kills, this was our total."

Midoriya narrowed his eyes.

"I killed... 17," he said slowly. He paused and then looked back up at the former hero. "How long have I been out?"

"As I've been trying to say," Chisaki spoke up, "A day and a half. You have been asleep for a day and a half and you really should be sitting down instead of pulling on those stiches-"

"54?" Midoriya said, "That sounds wrong."

He covered his mouth, his body leaning to one side, but when Sasaki took a step forward to provide support, Midoriya took a step back. His gaze turned scathing, before he looked down to the report.

"Do you... Do you have a list of what we did kill?"

The older man stared at Midoriya for a moment longer, like he was carefully trying to weigh the scales of his decision. Ultimately, he sighed.

"Here," he said, picking up another piece of paper. "I wanted to compile the list of who fought what before we officialized what we fought."

Midoriya took the paper in his hands. He squinted at the paper.

"Two types?" he parroted. "But the one who spoke. He..."

"Spoke?"

Midoriya opened his mouth, ready to say something, but he stared at Sasaki for a long moment. His mouth clicked shut. His expression cleared out to something neutral, as though understanding something. He returned the reports to the older man.

"Wait, Izuku-chan, if there is another type, please let me know. I would like to add that to the report."

Midoriya stared at him for another moment.

"Please," Sasaki added. "Having incomplete reports will be of no help to anyone."

There was a long silence. The young man dropped his gaze to the papers on the table.

"The one I met was about seven feet tall," he said quietly. "Four limbs, two arms, two legs, but they were thin-like all skin and bone."

Sasaki, understanding quickly, sat down and pulled out a fresh piece of paper to jot down his words.

"And their bodies were disproportionately large and round. Like, a very large yoga-ball. Super bouncy. And when it inhaled, it... it expanded even larger. The ribcage stretched open, the bones look like it’s protruding against the surface of the skin, so that is the best time to hit them."

The older man, who had never seen the monster that Midorya faced, made a mental note to ask Sakamata if he saw any bodies like that.

"It spoke. Distinctly human," he said. "Clear Japanese, like he used to speak the language."

There was a long silence.

"I... I thought it was someone else at first, but it wasn't him. He..." Midoriya clenched his jaw hard. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He looked at the older man. "I killed four of them."

And more importantly, Midoriya probably wanted confirmation that they were dead. That whatever had the voice of someone he remembered, it was dead. The former hero felt his heart pang in his chest, but kept his professionalism.

He pushed his glasses up and began. "Shortly before you passed out, we evacuated when we lost control over the fire. I believe that Stain, Snipe, and Gang Orca checked to make sure nothing else escaped. And we haven't had the chance to return to the facility since then. However, there were no other records of someone seeing anything like you mentioned. It's likely that you faced them all and killed them before they could reach anyone else."

Midoriya stared at him, his eyes widening and his jaw loosening.

"...You believe me?" he asked, breathless in his disbelief.

Sasaki arched an eyebrow, "Were you lying?"

He shook his head.

The former hero pushed his glasses back, "I didn't think so."

And Midoriya gave him a peculiar look, answering a question that Sasaki didn't know if he wanted answered.

"Now then, is there anything else you wished to know?"

The young man hesitated for a second, and then shook his head.

"No," he said, stepping back. As though suddenly remembering the state of his body, his hand came up to his side. "Excuse me," he said.

Exasperated, annoyed, but strangely not forcing Midoriya over his shoulder and to the infirmary, Chisaki trailed behind him.

### **Wish**

“Shounen,” Yagi said, “Forgive me, but my curiosity has gotten to me. What… what are you working towards?”

Midoriya was silent, and for a moment, Yagi wondered if that time when he gave his quirk was the only time he would really hear his voice. It was a shame, but Yagi supposed that he shouldn’t be treated differently just because he gave him a quirk. It was only the quirk of the Number One Hero after all…

As it turned out, it was harder to not be bitter than he thought.

“I wanted to be free,” Midoriya suddenly spoke up, surprising the blond, “More than anything else, I wanted to be free.”

“...I see.”

“Yagi-san, do you have any idea what that could entail?”

The blond stared at him for a moment, somber and solemn and shook his head. Giving any form of half-baked answers would ultimately ruin their relationship, the tentative thing it was.

“I’m afraid I don’t have the answer to that.”

Midoriya nodded back, “Yeah, I’ve been trying to read up on anything that could give me an answer but…” he made a vague motion to the area around them, “this took all my attention,” he said wryly.

“Not a problem,” Yagi replied back, shaking his head. “Sometimes, it’s better to work together.”

Hands trembling, Midoriya wondered about that.

### **command**

To Todoroki Enji's defense, for a long time, he never had to control his instincts like that. It was just normal for him. Since he was young, they said that he was rough and tough, even for an alpha. Which was fine, because Enji learned how to channel that energy and make something of himself.

And it was also why he married an alpha who could match him in each and every sense of the way.

So, when the whole family (blessed as they were) came back together through miracle, luck, and Helmet's bullheaded attitude, they did lapse back into some bad habits.

Mainly, they were a family of alphas. It was only a matter of time before they snarled and hissed at each other, especially since that was what they used to do as a family.

"And I'm telling you that you're not going to join patrol!" Enji shouted back, losing his cool.

"Why not?!" Shouto snapped back, just as heated. "It's not age since Togato-san is just a year older than me!"

"Because-" and there were a hundred things he could have said, he could have said that it was because Shouto would be on his own, and that Enji wouldn't be able to protect him, or he could have said that it was because Shouto was weak, but instead, Father-Of-The-Year Todoroki Enji bellowed out, "-I said so!"

In the corner of the room, Yamada rubbed the bridge of his nose and Aizawa shook his head.

This was an ongoing fight that was slowly gaining more and more traction. In all honesty, most of the adults were just tired of the fighting. However, many of the teens, especially the ones right around Midoriya's age, have been getting vocal about being involved in anything and everything possible, including patrols and the likes.

"That doesn't mean shit!" Shouto snapped back, "Your words don't mean shit!"

And in his pitch of rage, Enji shouted out, a Command in his voice, "Helmet! Tell him that he can't come onto patrol-"

A water bottle smashed into Enji's face. It was one of the cheap, plastic water bottles that were always sold in bulk, and something that wasn’t normally used. It crumpled against Enji's cheekbone and nose, and splattered all over his chest and the floor. Then, it clattered to the ground, a crumbled and mostly empty piece of plastic.

In the deafening silence that resulted, all eyes swiveled to the person who threw it.

Midoriya.

Eyes blazing, he clenched his jaw hard. The tense moment, as Enji slowly turned to stare back at the Omega who responded to his Command (however unintentional) by throwing a water bottle at him. Their eyes locked and Midoriya straightened. The issue of a challenge stood firm, and for a moment, they all thought that Enji was going to take him up on the offer.

Undoubtedly, everyone in the room was mentally figuring out if they would be jumping into the fight or trying to stop it.

But the former Number Two wasn't made of pure instinct. His previous frustrations and anger had completely been replaced, and staring at Midoriya for a long moment, he bowed his head and shoulders.

An apology.

Midoriya scowled, a flash of his teeth as he took a step back from the table.

"Don't bring other people into your fight," he said, voice low. The hush whispered washed over everyone in the room like a cold front. His eyes turned to Shouto, "And don't get in the way."

With that, he turned around and left. His footsteps were quiet and calm, like this was a common occurance and nothing to take particular note of (it wasn't).

Enji and Shouto looked at each other for a brief second before looking at the mess on the ground.

"I...I'll get a towel," Shouto said, quietly.

Enji, numbly, nodded.

"And I'm joining patrol," he added, like they didn't just fight about this.

Enji heaved a great big sigh. The hit must have still stung, since the area on his face was still red.

"...Just be careful," he said, bending down to pick up the water bottle.

This, for them, cemented two things. One, Midoriya didn't care who came onto patrol with him. And two, the Command does not work on Midoriya.

It was equal parts humbling as it was concerning.

## Recuperating (sorta)

### Going back onto patrol

Midoriya grabbed his supplies, walked through the room, ignored Aizawa, got to one of the storages closest to find his hatchet, and then made his way off the grounds. He was going to finish out the office building today. His backpack straps were a little looser than he thought, but he figured he would ditch it in a corner the second he needed to.

As he exited the building and began to make his way out, he suddenly realized that there were more footsteps accompanying him. God, why was this his life?

"So, where to, today?"

He bit back a quip, and kept his eyes forward. Unlike before, however, they could see his face, see how his eyes flitted from person to person and then back in front of him, and probably understood that he was ignoring them. He missed his helmet. Even if he got a new one, it wouldn’t be the same. Still, the faster he got a replacement, the better it would be for him.

In front of him, Twice flailed his arms a little and tried to step in front of him. When Midoriya tried to side-step him, Dabi appeared on one side and Tensei on the other. While Tensei had a sunny disposition, Dabi looked smug, and while Twice's face may be covered, he was bouncing on his heels.

Midoriya, out of habit, adjusted his hold on his hatchet.

"Easy, we just wanted to know where you're going," Dabi said, raising his hands up in mock-surrender.

"Since we're just lazy bums that have nothing else to do!" Twice cheered. "//I don't wanna be a house-husband! I don't have an apron!"

Midoriya looked down. He didn’t want to waste time. He didn’t want his injuries to suddenly flare up because he worked too hard so he swallowed the bitter taste of defeat and opened his mouth to say, "Office space."

He clenched his jaw tightly, and tried to step around them. Was that it? Should he also let them attach some strings onto his joints so he can play their pretty puppet? What’s next?

"Then, it's fine if we tag along, right?"

Even if he didn't want them (and he really, really didn't want them), what was he going to do? Break their arms and legs and tie them up somewhere? That sounded like a waste of time and effort. Neither of which he was fond of wasting. He wasn’t actually up to full health yet, but no one needed to know that.

If they get in trouble, they'll get themselves out. Or keep themselves alive long enough for Midoriya to come and kill their trouble. Nothing had to change.

This time, they didn't try to road-block him and he made his way out.

What a waste of time.

-

The office space was exactly as he left it. The stench was just as putrid. Walls with claw marks and dried blood welcomed him in. Rotting plaster, caked in gore, beckoned him in. Midoriya took his backpack off, leaving it at the door as he stepped up to the door. The scent of death, the bottomless pit of despair, the inkling fear that lurked around every corner...

Midoriya almost felt as though he came home. A place where he could relax, where what was expected of him was the same as what he expected of himself, a place where he could let loose and be himself.

The closest thing he had gotten to that ideal of [freedom].

"Ah, do you wanna uh... say anything?" Tensei asked.

Midoriya's steps stopped momentarily. Were they always this annoying? He couldn't remember anymore. He never said anything before-they never tried to bar him like this so that they would squeeze an answer or another out of him, so why start now? He wanted to say that yes, nothing was different and everything was the same even though they knew who he was now. But at the same time, he couldn't shake the feeling that something was different.

But what was he supposed to say? Good luck? Have fun? We have no back-up so if you end up in a hotplate you're on your own? If you're going to die, at least kill whatever was killing you and go die quietly in a corner somewhere?

None of those sounded good in his head, why would he say them aloud? And, he was standing right in front of the goddamn doors. He wanted to just get this over with.

Eyes on his goal, he walked into the office building.

"That's fine, too, I guess," he heard Tensei sigh behind him.

Why couldn't they just let him be? They were better about it before. Was he just hearing it now? Or what, did they think that they could complain loudly now because they knew what he was? So fine. They were people that could only bitch and moan because they thought they were better than him. If they hated working so much, then why did they come? Did they only have the energy to grumble and whine when there was an omega nearby or something?

They must have had a terribly hard life before.

Three steps in, he heard something scurry to the left. The hunt was on.

He rushed forward, a foreign power shimmering under his skin. If he had never felt like this before, he would say that it was his new quirk, but he knew better than that.

Since the world ended, he felt like he could finally breathe. Or perhaps, it was more because he was alone. And fighting, he was alone.

And being alone was the closest thing to happiness he'll ever get.

-

Midoriya rummaged through the desk drawers, pulling drawers open when he was finished looking through it, but closing all of them before moving to the next desk.

"What are you looking for?" Stain asked, putting his blade in its scheathe as he stepped up next to him. "Let me help you find it."

Green eyes flitted across the table and he shook his head.

"If you're looking for it, it's important," Stain said, standing at another desk. "What is it? Supplies? Unused paper? Pens?"

Midoriya looked a little hesitant, but Stain was making a neat stack of useable office supplies on the desk. Another moment passed, and Stain resigned himself to the fact that he couldn't be trusted to find...whatever it was that Midoriya was looking for.

“...It might not mean anything to you, but I wish to help you. I want to be of use to you. For me, the only thing has changed is the fact that I know you can hear me now. If it’s easier, don’t think of me as a person, but a tool,” he said. “And you use tools to be efficient. Let’s get this over with.”

There was another moment of silence. Stain waited for another moment before he closed his eyes. Right when he was about to leave instead, something unpredictably happened.

"Anything written. Like, journal entries," Midoriya said. "...If anyone wrote anything about the things that they saw here."

Stain froze. His head snapped up to the young man, who continued to look.

"...Understood," he said, before he started to search in earnest.

-

"Eh? What are those for?"

...It was a trick question, right?

Midoriya collected all the papers that he and Stain (and apparently the others), and gently stuffed them into a folder from his backpack. Slinging the bag over his shoulder, he stood up.

Did he have to answer? Were they going to force him to answer? Can't he just do shit without it being needled at and prodded? Should he explain it them that they should collect canned goods that haven’t been tampered with because it was important to eat food? Was it because they knew who, what, he was now and didn't trust anything he did?

If he had been born a different person, would they still question him like so? Since he faced a life where he wasn't bothered as much, back when his face was covered and his scents were blocked, he couldn't help the thoughts. They burrowed deeply in his heart, festering in wounds that he thought were finally closed.

"...I... You don't have to answer if you don't want to," Tensei back-tracked quickly. "You uh... I didn't think that it was something you wanted to keep private. Sorry about that." He gave a hesitant smile and nod, hunching in a little on himself and looking a fraction of what Ingenium used to be. It killed something in Midoriya, who grew up idolizing that man.

Guilt seeped into his heart, like someone had placed a towel over his open wounds and it was soaking in it.

He looked back down. Weighed his options. Weighed his choices.

"...Sometimes, they have records about monsters. It helps me narrow down what has and hasn't been killed," he explained quietly.

He knew it was stupid. He knew that. Of course he did. He sat, his jaw clenched tightly as he waited for the judgement.

"Oh," Tensei said, because he was kind enough to keep his disappointment on the inside. As expected of a former pro.

Was that enough? Would they leave him alone now?

"Then, do you want me to go grab some of their footage? We should be able to run it and check on the cameras outside about what walked around here."

Midoriya whipped around, so shocked that he opened his mouth to blurt out his thoughts.

"What?"

-

Midoriya's eyes shined as he pulled the boxes out. He couldn't believe that there were some companies that used actual VCR tapes for the security cameras, but here they were. The ones that had dates on them were all dated to a time before this entire thing began but there were a few that didn't. It was probably from when it first fell apart, but Midoriya found a few tapes with dried blood on them.

For some reason, he had a good feeling about those.

"I'll go ahead and watch them. We're looking for any information on monsters and the likes, right? I'll make sure to document the weather and if we see any survivors too. If we link the general dates with the weather records back, we should be able to paint a good timeline," Tensei said with a box of his own. "Don't worry, back when I was Ingenium and stuff, I spent a lot of time watching security footage and stuff. I promise I’m qualified for this."

But, Midoriya thought to himself, there were probably a few days worth of fast-forwarding through tapes to go through. It would mean a hunched back, and strained eyes to stare at a screen for long periods of time. In all honesty, Midoriya was dreading doing it, but that was precisely why he didn't want to hand it off to someone else.

When Midoriya took one look at Tensei's face, bright and hopeful and a little shy, the words deserted him. The part of him, who used to idolize heroes, never wanted this. He, truly and honestly, hoped and prayed that everyone else could be happy somewhere far, far, far away from him and his small bubble where he could delude himself into thinking that he was free and alone.

He handed the box of tapes to Tensei, watching how the small gesture brought a shine to his eyes, the same shine his gear and helmet used to have.

Excitedly, Tensei left, a skip in his step and humming with his two boxes of tapes as he made for the A/V room.

On certain occasions, Midoriya wondered if his [temporary freedom] was worth the confidence these people used to have. Those thoughts seeped back into his head, and he wanted to hit himself.

He was a selfish and awful person. He was greedy and rotten to the core. He had to be.

Even if the entire world fell apart and rotted in their eternal cycle of despair, he would never trade his opportunity to find out what freedom was.

### **Unrelenting Fury - [Shigaraki]**

But the thing was that Midoriya looked at all of them the same way. That same, unbridled anger that saturated green eyes was the same that Shigaraki felt inside of him.

Ironic. They hated the same, but they were totally and completely different. But that ignitable anger was unmistakable. For a long time, Shigaraki lived with that same kind of rage, boiling inside of him.

But Midoriya was different. That anger was refined into a sharp blade called sheer determination.

However, Shigaraki could clearly point at heroes and the disgusting hero-society and say that this was the crux of all that he hated. Easy. At no point could he look at Midoriya and do the same. Midoriya hated and hated.

It felt too personal, too raw, for him to chalk it up to something hormonal (though it was a compelling argument). After all, if he was ruled by his anger, then Midoriya should lash out more, because it was hormonal and that was hard to control. Instead, Midoriya hated from every fiber of his being, from the way that he glared to the way that he avoided.

It could be the whole omega/alpha thing, but Midoriya also steered clear of betas and other omegas too. The young man didn’t even seem to be partial to children. If someone was sleeping on the couch, he didn’t get them a blanket or anything, he just left.

The theory that it was because they were useless and worthless was tossed neatly out the window. If Midoriya cared about his supplies and resources, he wouldn’t have ever saved them to begin with.

“...You, why are you so angry?” Shigaraki asked.

Midoriya could look angry even while looking at the clouds. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, but the anger in his eyes didn’t diminish in the slightest. As always, he remained silent.

Shigaraki tilted his head.

“If you’re that angry, then it’s not like you care about what we think, right? Then just say it, regardless if it makes someone angry.” Shigaraki grabbed the seat in front of Midoriya and sat down in front of him. He leaned his chest against the back of the chair, crossing his arms across the top part as he bore his eyes into the man in front of him. He was an omega right? He honestly couldn’t tell.

Midoriya smelled as he always did, of dried blood and disinfectant. More chemical than blood, since it wasn’t like he had been on patrol recently. The smell burned Shigaraki’s nose, and he had no idea how Midoriya could be fine sitting like that. He sighed deeply.

“Then, if I guess it right, would you tell me?” he asked.

Again, no answer. He sighed, and scratched his head. It was funny when Midoriya did this to the heroes and stuff, but not as much when he was on the receiving end of it. Some part of him was ecstatic to know that there was someone that treated the damn pro-heroes the same as everyone else. That part of him got infinitely small in these moments, when he finally got Midoriya alone and he still couldn’t pry an answer. Some part of him, who always thought that someone who could glare at heroes with as much disdain as he did, probably wanted to be ‘special’ to this person.

“...What’s so nice about being quiet anyways? You get some satisfaction out of being quiet and watching those guys run around like headless chickens? Is that what we are to you, some form of entertainment?”

Nothing, Midoriya flipped a page in his book. He scowled, feeling a fire inside of him getting stoked.

“Then what’s got your panties in a bunch? Are you waiting for something? An alpha to come back here and you’re upset that we’re scenting you and your nest in return? Who cares about that anyways? Whatever you’re waiting for is probably dead by now. No hope. No chance. So, why don’t you just focus on the right now?”

Midoriya’s lips twitched, his shoulders tensed, but he didn’t say anything. He sat and shimmered and wallowed in his anger and Shigaraki couldn’t figure out why. Why didn’t he just expend that energy? Why didn’t he get angry?

“Then, what? What are you trying to do? It’s not like you can’t speak so why can’t you just fucking speak up?”

“If I say something,” Midoriya said suddenly, his voice hoarse like he’s never used it before and Shigaraki’s eyes got caught in that emerald blaze, “but no one hears anything, what was the point?”

And while Shigaraki could have been happy that Midoriya said something and opened up and a thousand other things, he instead drowned in a quiet rage that swallowed his heart like a small boat sailing into a tsunami.

Why the fuck would Midoriya’s words never be heard? It was inconceivable for him, and he wouldn’t know why for a very long time.

As it was, Midoriya sighed, and stood up.

“I heard you,” Shigaraki said, boldly. “I heard you.”

“This time,” Midoriya replied back, before stepping through the doors.

Red eyes trailed up to the ceiling. He would have never thought that he would have to reassure someone else. The concept was as strange as it was foreign. Could he reach his hand out to someone when he’s never had anyone do the same for him? Above, the clouds moved quickly as though to remind him that time passed quicker than he anticipated, and he wondered what the clouds Midoriya looked at went. The anger didn’t fade away. He clenched his jaw and stood up. Rushing out the door, uncaring about anything and everyone else, his steps chased after Midoriya’s.

“There might not be a next time,” Shigaraki yelled out, “And if I don’t hear you next time, then scream it out next time!”

Midoriya’s gaze caught his, wide-eyed in his shock.

“If there isn’t a next time,” Shigaraki continued, possessed by an anger that he couldn’t name, a frustration he never had before, and a desperation he didn’t think was possible finished out, “then the world’s deaf!”

He marched forward, until there was less than a few feet between them. Midoriya tensed, but he didn’t run. He stood there, to listen to Shigaraki even though he was convinced that no one would hear him. Shigaraki’s lips curled into a scowl.

“I want to hear you so if there isn’t a next time, it’s not because I didn’t want to hear you.”

The look of anger finally disappeared. For that moment, Midoriya just looked confused, like Shigaraki just told him that he was an alien or something.

That fucking hero-society, Shigaki cursed out in his head, failed to protect the one person that mattered the most. Strangely enough, it brought no glee in his heart to know that.

“You don’t have to believe me right now,” he said. “Because trust doesn’t work like that, right?”

The guy who nursed him back to health every single time he got sick or too injured to take care of himself was a kid that barely came up to his chest. That guy stood in front of him, perfectly content to never being credited for saving his life. His actions and being was everything that ran opposite of Shigaraki. If their positions had been reversed, he would have never done what Midoriya did. He would have lived and died thinking that the only feelings he could feel were ‘rage’ and ‘disgust’.

But he didn’t. He met Midoriya. He learned that the world was a bit bigger. He learned that there was something in this world that he wanted to see tomorrow. He learned that he could look forward to tomorrow. He learned all of that, and if at all possible, he would like for Midoriya to learn that too.

His quirk returned to him only after they had met. He knew there was a reason for that.

And Midoriya…

From the moment when he woke up to now, Shigaraki had never seen him like this. He didn’t look angry. And it wasn’t that unending spiral of hate in his eyes either. Green eyes dropped to the ground, looking almost defeated, and Shigaraki wanted to scream. That was the exact opposite of what he needed.

“...I’ll be around,” he said, and despite everything that pulled him close he took a step back. Turning on his heel, he left.

### **Blood after patrol**

On occasion, Midoriya felt a dizzying amount of disappointment at the end of a battle. Standing as his heart rate finally started to calm, his hand came up to the new cut across his chest.

Shame, if it had been a few inches deeper, he might have been happier.

“Izuku!”

It was just a brief thought, a fleeting idea. His dreams were like the stars, burning brightly in a distant land so far away he wouldn’t know when they burned out.

He wiped at the sweat on his face, feeling the world swivel around him in his bloodlost. His hand came to his chest, where the blood was slowly starting to stop.

“Hey, lay down, we’ll take-”

Midoriya wondered how he must have looked to Spinner, so that the man was this frazzled. Pushing past him, he made his way out of the building and into the street. Looking left and right, there was nothing but bodies littering the ground.

Clean-up will take a while today.

He headed back in to drag the corpse back out. At the very least, as the blood caked and dried, it would overpower the smell of omega-whatevers.

“I-Izuku, I really think that you should go get that uh… checked out,” Spinner said, his voice trailing as his eyes wandered onto the smear of an injury. He wasn’t sure what he was staring at, but a bright blush crossed his face as he tried to take his jacket off, “uhm, here-”

Midoriya brushed past him, as though he wasn’t injured at all. If it wasn’t enough to kill him, then it wasn’t enough for him to lean against an alpha and be coddled. His vision was starting to haze, but as soon as he smelled the stench off of Spinner, his focus sharpened.

In that case, he should be grateful for Spinner.

If it wasn’t for that, he might have thought that he was safe and that he could let his guard down because the monsters were dead.

### **Natsuo's Point of Contact**

"Midoriya, please," Natsuo pleaded, praying and begging all in one as he kneeled down in front of Midoriya and the bed. "It doesn't have to be me or Overhaul or, or, any one of them, but just someone. Please. Just have someone that I can give all the medical information to so that you can get proper medical attention. Please."

The young man stared at him for a moment longer.

"Isn't it better like this?" he asked.

"What?" Natsuo lifted his head up.

"...If I just end up in a ditch and die. Isn't that better? Like... death to the disobedient and all that."

Natsuo opened his mouth and then closed it. For a brief second, his pupils turned into slits, a slice of black streaking down summer blue eyes. His temper flared for a brief moment, the scent of rage whipping out, and Midoriya's hand gripped his blanket tightly. His eyes darted for the door and then the window. Both were a bit far, but it would be better-

Just as fast, the scent was reeled in.

"Sorry, I'm sorry. I ... I lost myself for a moment. I just.." he took a deep breath. He dipped his head down low. "No, those are all excuses. Please forgive me. I will work harder not to lose myself like that."

Staring at the top of his head, Midoriya sighed back.

"...If I forgive you, will you answer my question?"

"Even if you didn't forgive me, I'll answer any of your questions."

What made you lose control? "...The guy you mentioned before. My... point of contact?"

"Yes?"

Green eyes stared into blue eyes, watching as it returned back to human characteristics.

"Can it be you?"

"I... You'd trust me?" Natsuo spluttered out. He covered his mouth, "But... but I just lost control? Aren't you... Why would you trust me?"

"You apologized sincerely. It made me reflect." Midoriya replied back, he dipped his head, as best he could with the mess of bruises lining his chest. "I... When you lost control, I realized that I couldn't kill you. I wanted to escape without hurting you. In that second, you could have done whatever you wanted to me, and I don't think I would have even tried to fight you.”

Natsuo's face crumpled as Midoriya gave him a lop-sided smile. It would figure that the only smile Natsuo had ever seen on Midoriya would look so bitter and defeated.

"I think that means I do trust you. So it's fine."

"No, that really doesn't make me happy," Natsuo said, shaking his head. "I... But I won't let you down. And next time, I'll make you smile because you feel happy."

"...I'll leave myself in your care then."

And somehow, receiving his approval left a bitter taste in his mouth.

"...I won't let you down."

### **A prayer to the dead**

"It's probably going to be cold and dark," Midoriya whispered quietly, "So we'll send you away with this final farewell. May you find peace in the next world."

The fire that engulfed the corpses, both monsters and humans alike, smelled putrid. It looked awful, like someone had sculpted a nightmare. The resulting smoke stained cerulean like someone spilled a murky dark-gray across a blue canvas.

And for a long time, Midoriya thought that this was the best he could do for the people who passed on.

-

“...What are you thinking about?”

His eyes flitted to the side where Gang Orca came next to him.

Midoriya’s eyes wandered back to the bodies in front of him. Of the people here, he wondered how many of them wanted to survive or to be saved by a hero. Or anyone.

Instead, this was the best they could for them.

He turned to the older man, and waited for him to get to what he wanted to talk about.

“...No answer is an answer too,” the older man sighed back, sounding exhausted. Midoriya figured it was probably because he was standing too close to the fire, and he was in danger of drying out. “I heard you,” he said.

The young man clenched his jaw.

“... I wanted to pass my selfish wish onto you,” he said quietly, “When I die, I hope that you’ll send me off with those gentle words as well.”

Green eyes widened, and he whipped around to Gang Orca.

The older man stared back.

“I understand that I am in no place to ask anything of you,” he said, dipping his head forward in a shallow bow, “but I think that I could rest easy knowing that you will be able to send me away so kindly.” He turned to leave, “Excuse me.”

And watching his receding figure, Midoriya wondered if that was something that could be faked.

### Returning back out - 1st severe injury

Shattered mirrors framed the ground, decorating the ground in shards like snowfall. He raised his arm to wipe at his forehead, but stopped when he realized how much blood was dripping down his arm. The ugly gash on his forearm didn't reveal any bone, so he supposed that they weren't that deep at all. His other arm was still trembling from excertion.

Figures that the room he crashed into was housing all these mirrors. At the very least, nothing escaped and the piles of limbs soaking in ponds of blood were proof that they would never get up again. All that was left was burning them all.

Barefoot on broken shards, Midoriya took a deep breath to calm his heartbeat. Come to think of it, he totally lost his commlink. It shattered in his ear from a stray shot and he all but tore out the rest. He could already imagine what kind of lecture he would get from this again.

When he turned to leave, the world spun around him. Maybe he lost more blood than he thought. He took a deep breath, trying to stabilize himself.

The crunching of glass sounded, and his hand flexed into a fist. There was no way that something lived through him tearing their body apart, so a new enemy must have arrived.

"Izuku-"

The halting tone, laced with conern and near panic, made something coil inside of Midoriya. Was someone hurt? Did they lose someone? While he was killing everything in here, was there a bigger fight somewhere else? Irritation filled his bloodstream before concern could. Why couldn't all the damn monsters just congregated into one place so that he could just get rid of them all in one go. It would certainly make his life easier than having to run around to chase them down.

"-hear me?"

His head was still swimming, if he could see four blurry Mirios instead of one, but his arm stopped shaking now, so it didn't really matter. He could fight. He could still fight.

"No, no, no fights," Mirio said, and Midoriya squinted at him. Why was it so hard to hear him?

Mirio's face (faces?) twisted into something packed with remorse. Why? Midoriya wanted to demand. Did he lose something? Did he break something? Was he hurt? Was someone else hurt?

The questions clogged his throat, packing on too fast for him to get any of them out in a coherent way.

Mirio reached for him, eye wide and Midoriya took a step back to avoid his touch. At once, he felt threatened. His focus sharpened incredibly.

The blond stared at him, his hand dropping to his side.

"...We should get you looked at. It looks... It looks really bad."

"...I haven't checked the third floor," Midoriya said.

Mirio's jaw tightened and Midoriya narrowed his eyes.

"Best Jeanist and Miruko already headed up," he explained, "We can take a moment before joining up with them."

But why? Why was Mirio so desperate to get him away from here? Was there something here? Or better yet, was there something at the supposed 'breakplace' that he was advocating for? Midoriya couldn't get an answer.

However, he did know that he hadn't gone through the upper floors.

"I haven't checked the third floor," he repeated himself, firmer this time. A part of him was grateful for Mirio, he felt like he returned to the edge of the rooftop. The fear of tipping over will keep his wits about him. He walked by the blond, and out the door with only his thoughts.

-

Midoriya leaned his back against the wall and took a deep breath. In through his nose, exhale out through his mouth. He tried to move his fingers. Looking down at his hands, he tried again.

### Dr. Natsuo, the Simp

He always thought it, but Midoriya is much smaller than he thought. His foot length was shorter than the length of his hand, from palm to tip. His pinky and thumb could meet with ease, wrapping around the thickest part of his foot.

Natsuo kneeled in front of him, determined to wrap this awful scratch injury from when Midoriya admitted to getting his leg caught on something. It didn't look like it needed stitches, but it was violent and ugly. He cleaned it with precision and professionalism, but he could smell it.

Midoriya had done his absolute best to muddle his scent. Now more than ever, Natsuo understood why he caked himself in disinfectant, cleaning supplies, blood, and rot.

However, he could feel his control fraying. He wanted to sink his teeth in the scarred flesh of his calf. He wanted to lick a line from his ankle to his knee. He wanted to suck on his thigh and tattoo the scars on Midoriya's body on his tongue.

A hand came down to cup his chin. Natsuo's eyes flew to meet Midoriya's cold gaze.

"Are you done?"

Shame flooded his features, but when Midoriya pulled his warm hands away, he felt all the blood in his body replaced with fear.

He was going to be thrown away. He had disappointed Midoriya.

"I uh," he gulped, and dropped his gaze. "Yes. Sorry about taking your time."

Midoriya spoke, returning breath to his lungs. "Excuse me, then."

No, no, please don't leave, Natsuo wanted to plead. He clenched his jaw instead and nodded. Midoriya got to his feet. He moved from foot to foot, as though testing his weight against the fresh wraps.

However, before his instincts to coddle Midoriya or scent him, something else slipped out of his mouth. "Please be careful," he managed to say, but when he realized what he said, backed away. He didn't want to do something he would regret.

"...I'll try," Midoriya replied back, green eyes staring at him curiously. He turned to the door before he hesitated. He looked back, and Natsuo straightened in anticipation.

A soft blush crossed the young man's cheeks, dusting them in a delicious way that made his mouth dry.

"Thank you, it feels better."

With that, Midoriya hurried out of the room, leaving Natsuo behind to deal with his heart palpitations.

### **listening**

Midoriya stared for a long moment, before he took a deep breath. He had this idea, it was absolutely crazy and had no weight in truth, but with how things have been recently, it had been lingering over his head like a cloud.

It was like they could hear him.

And well, he supposed that there was only one way to really check.

Be brave, he told himself. Be certain. At worst, you're wrong and well, it was better that this was nipped in the bud. For now, he needed to just try and then he could go from there.

And if he's wrong, that would be the end of that. And if he's right...

No, no use thinking about things like that just yet.

He took a deep breath and walked into the room. He ignored how silent it became, he ignored the way those eyes made him feel, he ignored their heavy gazes and made his way straight to Ectoplasm.

He took a deep breath.

"Ectoplasm-san."

"Y-yes?" the man sounded surprised. Was this a bad time?

No, no, be certain Izuku.

"...You were a math teacher?" he asked, quietly, cautiously.

"Yes, I was. I taught at UA."

Oh good, then Midoriya did come to the right person. Midoriya extended his hand, where a book was in his hand.

"...Can you explain it?"

"Why, uh, yes, I can... I can do that," Ectoplasm said. He sat up, coughed into his hand, "Uh, why don't you pull up a chair?"

And Midoriya learned something that day. Not only was he just awful at keeping track of differential formulas, but asking for advice worked.

-

"Todoroki-san," Midoriya called out.

Aside from the fact that four people looked over, he made a beeline to Shouto, the youngest of the Todorokis. The young man blinked back.

"Yes?" he asked. but his gaze was curious.

"Could I have some ice?" he asked, lifting up a bag.

"Of course," Shouto placed his hand into the bag and created some ice. "What for?" he asked.

Midoriya debated not answering. He didn't have a particular reason for why he needed this ice (especially while it was so cold outside) but he just wanted to see if the young man would do it. He did, filling the bag up quickly. From his understanding, Shouto was one of the Todoroki’s who were least likely to listen to him, but here they were.

"Do you want help carrying it?" he asked.

Midoriya ignored that question, because he didn't and he supposed that this was what was expected of him now. Did they ever ask him if he needed help lifting things while he was Helmet? He didn’t even remember anymore. He took the bag.

"Thank you," he remembered to say, though the words felt bitter in his mouth.

Well, the second part of his experiment was correct. He wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not. Quirk requests were taken well, though he was starting to get questioned.

-

"Tsukauchi-san," Midoriya said as he walked up to the man.

The man, holding an open notebook in his hand, turned around and when his eyes met Midoriya, his jaw went slack.

"Izuku-chan," he nodded back, ignorant to the way Midoriya's stomach churned at the name. "What can I do for you?"

Cute question, but it was time to see if it had any weight.

"I want the reports for the last four days."

Worded so that it was a little more demanding, Midoriya kept his focus on the former-police officer. He was considerably quieter than the people that he knew, and he was certain that he probably had Opinions about Midoriya's status, but he hadn't said anything yet. Tight now, he was going to test this theory.

Would Tsukauchi answer a demand?

"No problem. Everything or just the patrols?"

Midoriya's eyes widened. He couldn't believe it, he would do it? No questions asked? No snide remark? Was it because the request was too simple? He was going to stop, in the middle of his own work, to answer Midoriya's selfish demand?

"...Aren't you in the middle of something?" he asked, too shocked and confused to stop the question from bubbling out.

"Eh?" Tsukauchi looked to the reports, "I was rereading some of the older reports, and I lost track of time. Nothing that important. Besides, if you're asking, I'm sure it's for something important."

It wasn't.

Midoriya was asking because he wanted to see what the patrol routes were for the last few days. Well, no matter, nothing he said could be considered important to begin with, and he wasn't disillusioned to think otherwise.

Tsukauchi returned with the reports.

"Here," he said, "There's not much to begin with. So here's everything."

He grinned at him, like Midoriya was a normal kid and he was a normal man and the world wasn’t overrun by monsters on the outside.

"Let me know if you need help with anything, so we can figure it out together."

With the reports in his hands, he hesitated still.

The results of his experiments had gone far more strangely than he had been expecting.

-

Next on the list was to check favor. People who said lofty things like promises and favors, and now he was going to cash-one in.

He found Stain by one of the science rooms, back when school was a thing and it was in session, holding a small spray bottle in his hand.

"That favor of yours, is it valid?" Midoriya asked, skipping pleasantries.

Stain stared at him for just a moment. His eyes flitted from Midoriya's face to the bandages on his neck and then back up.

"We can go after lunch," Stain replied back. "When were you thinking?"

Be outrageous. Be demanding. This experiment needs some more variety.

"I want to go now."

The older man stared for a moment longer. He straightened up and nodded.

"Then we'll go now. Let me grab my weapons and Spinner. We'll leave in about ten minutes."

The young man stared, eyes wide, because he really didn't think that anyone as picky detail-orientated as Stain would bend so easily.

"Don't look at me like that. Or did you not want to go?"

Midoriya shook his head, because he wanted to go. There was something that he wanted to check, but he didn't think that anyone would care-or blindly listen.

The feeling inside of him, was it relief or was it a rush of power?

-

The group that appeared was much bigger than Midoriya expected. From the sour expression on Stain's face, the older man thought the same.

"If you can't keep up, we're leaving you behind," he called out. He turned to Midoriya and motioned down the street, "This way."

And then, to his shock, continued.

"We go down this way for a mile and a half. There's a house with a red roof and tacky golden gates. We make a left at them and go another mile. At the end of residential roads, we pass the small shopping center, and make a right. There's this parking lot, and right next to it, is where you were." He stared at Midoriya, "We'll take a break at the shopping center. And then finish it off. If you... If you feel strange, you have to say something."

Briefly, Midoriya wondered if it was just Stain. Maybe it was just this man who was like this. And the others before him were just a fluke, because he managed to pry into kind people and prey on their kindness. Maybe he was in the wrong, this whole time. Maybe there was a reason why omegas were treated the way that they were and Midoriya hadn't found it yet, and he was going to find out very soon.

Maybe, maybe, maybe.

But if he did know something, it was that Stain heard him. Stain heard him and told him before he even said it himself. What kind of crazy alpha would explain the plain so explicitly, and then trust the omega to just keep up with them?

Perhaps, instead, Stain was also one of the people who didn't fit into society's neat box.

It was such a fickle hope, like a candle lit flame in the middle of a blizzard. It went out as fast as he felt it.

Of course Stain wasn't different. None of them were. Society was made up of people who tried to classify their instincts.

This was just because he was injured. Nothing had changed. The experiment was wrong, because if he did the same experiment in six months, it would have been all failures like he and then and everyone he had ever met before had expected, all the way down.

His heart ached, and he kept marching on. At this point, it felt like it was the only thing he could do.

## Spring

### **Learning about a delicious smell**

This was fucking ridiculous, Midoriya thought to himself. He tore off the remains of his shirt, using it as a bandage around his forehead. It didn't need to stop the bleeding or whatever, he just needed it out of his eyes. Not being able to see when he's trying to fight for his life was a major annoyance.

He spat a mouthful, and two teeth, he noted, before he stretched his neck.

He stood up, felt the world teeter, and squatted back down.

God, he felt like shit. He felt his organs rattle against his ribcage like he was a human maraca. Taking a deep breath though his nose, he found that needless call inside of him (he didn’t need to look too far), the itch to murder and maim those who have come into his territory, and he stood up.

In comparison to this constant rage and bloodlust, there was no amount of pain that could make him stop.

On his feet and out the broken mess of a wall, Midoriya ignored how there was sweat (or maybe it was blood, he couldn't really tell) dribbling down his back and sides and made his way for the next batch of monsters crawling around his streets.

He had an idea.

Scents worked simply. The same way someone could smell a batch of freshly baked cookies and suddenly feel hungry.

Undoubtedly, he must have smelled like a lovely treat. In the area, he was one of the only omegas that were still unbonded. Since he’s adjusted his diet and started to sleep like a person, he was starting to be in his own weight-class again. He was almost healthy again. Could they smell his age? Could they smell that he's never had a litter before?

Whatever, he hoped that he smelled delicious. He hoped that they never found anything more delectable than him. Throwing the bloodied remains of his shirt down, his chest heaving, he made his way down the street, where the monsters pounced on him. Good, if they're focused on him, then this made it easier. He hoped that they thought he was an easy prey, simple target, and came for him because it was easier than him trying to hunt them down.

His fist went through the first one, a bracelet of gore warming his arm, and he kicked it into the second. He jumped backwards to avoid a strike and caught the second blow. He swung his arm to it, snapping it off in an instant. It screamed, and Midoriya stuffed it's mouth with it's unattached arm. With a swift roundhouse kick, the head detached from the neck and went sailing into the next monster where it splattered like a tomato.

None of this was new, except for that liberating feeling without his helmet. Unafraid and with nothing to lose, the blood in his mouth tasted like freedom.

-

Midoriya took a deep breath in. The stench of the slaughter flooded his nostrils, and he could almost taste it in his mouth. His heart calmed, and for the moment, he felt peace.

He rubbed the back of his neck, smearing the blood over his scent glands out of habit. It'll dampen his scent, just a little bit. And then, he got to work. Dragging bodies and their parts into a single pile, he looked up to the stretch of blue over his head. It would be a shame to coat the sky in ash, but he supposed that it was all the same in the end.

"Midoriya!"

Enji dropped down next to him, his eyes bright, summer sky blue like the ones above. He turned over his shoulder, where he was trying to start a fire, and wondered if the older man was mocking him in his head. He wouldn’t blame him, of course. If their situations had been flipped, Midoriya had no doubts that he would be jeering loudly and viciously.

All this time, he wondered if he had been. Probably, since he was just some worthless kid, a pitiful omega, who couldn't even burn a few bodies without substantial help.

If he wasn't a joke, what was he? Stupid? Defective? Well, compared to people who were double his size, weight, age, and expertise, he supposed that made sense.

His blue eyes were bright, and for a moment, Midoriya thought that he was still looking at the sky. His eyes narrowed before he gave a curt nod.

"I'll take care of it," he said.

Midoriya could feel the blood drying on his skin. He gave a curt nod, and stood up. The world spun around him, but he focused on the string of gray streaking across the blue that led to the pile of bodies in front of him.

"We're starting the fire. Flyers and snipers stay clear," Enji announced into the walkie.

Within the next ten seconds, there was a thick plume of smoke coming off of it. The bodies crumbled and dried, the fire cracked as it consumed. Enji and Midoriya watched as the others began to join up with them.

-

Tatsuma hesitated for another second before she boldly walked up to Midoriya.

“Midoriya, it’s cold enough that it’s snowing,” she said, “Please, take my jacket. I don’t want you catching a cold.”

Midoriya exhaled slowly, or maybe he sighed, and his breath clouded right in front of him before disappearing up. The stench that clung to him made her want to gag, and she wasn’t sure how long Midoriya had done this, if he didn’t even look uncomfortable standing next to a pit of burning bodies.

Still, seeing him stand there, his lips slowly turning blue, was not something she would stand for.

“Please,” she said, handing it to him. The cold wouldn’t seep into her like it did him, and unlike him, she was wearing a few layers. She could afford to give up her sweater.

Midoriya’s eyes came to her, looking every bit scornful as he narrowed his eyes and his lips pulled back into an annoyed sigh. He turned back to the fire, the blank expression on his face replaced with his vexed expression instead.

When she took a step closer, ready to put him in the sweater come hell or high water, he took a step back. One hand fell to his knife, and this time, he eyed her carefully.

She understood. He was going to fight her until he was black and blue or dead.

“I...I don’t understand,” she said, “Isn’t it cold? I don’t mean anything of it, just trying to help you to retain some heat until we return.” She clutched her jacket to her chest, her hands bunching the fabric in her fists as she tried to make sense of the situation. “What is… I don’t understand. Please explain this to me.”

Instead of words, however, Midoriya rolled his eyes. He dropped his hand from his knife and stood back up to keep his eyes on the fire.

What she didn’t know was that just about everyone else tried (and failed), just as she did.

### **Deku Gets Confirmation on Breeds**

Midoriya had wondered where all the omegas were. From what he remembered, omegas were expected to be tucked away at home. When his mom was a kid, it was a huge deal with an omega to go out and shop, so the changing-field was slow like molasses. There was nothing to prohibit them, of course, but it was frowned upon and gossipped about.

Still, omegas that were around his mom's age weren't seen.

That meant that, when the violence took to the streets and the monsters soiled their peace, they were powerless and weak and sitting at home like the rest of them. Still, the base at school was overflowing with alphas.

He really didn't want to think it was because they were omegas and omegas were weaker or whatever. It didn’t add up.

In reality, people as a whole were weak.

He had an inkling feeling, but he really didn't want to know for certain. However, right in front of him, spelled out a certain reality to him. Several omegas littered the ground, their bodies exhausted and depleted of life and joy. Their sunken faces and defeated expressions retold a narrative that ended in a tragedy. Looking at them, the words of a ‘happy future for an omega’ replayed again.

He would put them all out of their misery later. Before that, he needed to make sure that there were no monsters-

A hand grabbed his pants pocket, and if it wasn't for the fact that it was a firm grip from a trembling hand that he associated with the children on base, he would have cut the appendage off.

He looked down.

"Kill... all of them... All... Monsters..."

Her eyes were bright with a desperate kind of vengeance that Midoriya felt to the core of his body. He kneeled down next to her, and took off his helmet. Her eyes widened as she took in his features, and he was glad a part of her was conscious, even if it was just so she knew that someone just like her would exact revenge. He took her hands into his and brought them to his forehead.

"Understood," he said.

The stench of sex and blood was revolting. It carried out to him, and he could almost taste the fear that bonded it all together. With every step closer, a cold fear embedded inside of him. His bat in hand, he hoped that these monsters would know that the one that will bring them ruin was an omega much like the ones that they ruined.

-

Midoriya spat a mouthful of blood out. Given the number of omegas that were littered on the ground, he was a little surprised that there were only twenty monsters here. Hopefully, this was the end of it.

It wasn't much, but this ended here.

He leaned against the wall. He'll take this second to catch his breath. When he was a little calmer and didn't feel like he was about to break down into tears, he'll head back.

His work wasn't finished.

With one more lungful of bloody air, he pushed off and made for the back. Strange as it was, he almost missed the group that he had gotten used to traveling with. Well, he should cut off those feelings sooner rather than later. This was a good reminder of who he was and what he fought for.

What used to be an underground concert area underneath an office space had been converted into a nursery from hell. A mess of blankets and pillows, caked in sex and vomit encased the room. A pile of dead bodies rotted in one corner of the room, and some of the blankets shifted around.

He used his bat to rip the maggot-infested blanket off, and was rewarded to the sight of a smaller version of the monsters he just killed. It was chewing on the open chest cavity of the omega's body. The porcupine-like hair was matted down by drying blood. From the state of the omega's body, the dried tears staining his face as he laid on his side, he died in pain and in suffering.

The monster young turned to him, claws outstretched like it wanted to be picked up and carried like a human child. And Midoriya felt it. Deep in his soul, his body craved to hold a child against his chest, and he wanted to swear up and down that he would protect this budding future-

He swung his hand, powered by nine generations of guardians before him, and splattered the monster child into nothing.

In the worst way possible, he received the confirmation he didn't want. It would appear that omegas can carry monsters in their womb. Where had all the omegas gone? Indeed, it would have been better if that had stayed as a question. It was clear what was happening. The monsters wanted to populate. They found omegas. Simple math.

His stomach churned. His eyes burned. Was he disgusted by the gore? Was he disgusted by the monsters? Did he fear children? Did he fear the life that was forced onto these omegas?

It didn't matter. None of that mattered.

The only thing that would come out of here alive was him.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Eating alphas for power, mating omegas for young, and then using betas as toys. Absolutely revolting.

They operated the exact same way society has always worked, even before all the monsters fell.

In that sense, he supposed he should be thankful that he got to extinguish this life himself.

...Had society never collapsed, he wondered if he would have become a villain. Or rather, a criminal or terrorist. Well, he supposed that a quirkless omega like him needed to be recognized as a threat first. Unlikely. He would have just been another ‘disgruntled’ omega that just needed to ‘meet the right alpha’ and would be beaten into submission. Much like the omegas here.

Focus, Izuku, he scolded himself. He needed to burn this whole damn thing down. He'll mourn for them when he's alone. He'll mourn for each and every single one that he had to kill, and he'll mourn for each and every single one that was born with hopes only to die like this.

He'll mourn, because no one else will.

(Briefly, the thought ran through his mind. When he died, no one will mourn for him. The thought brought a strange sense of peace into his heart.)

-

When he returned to base, when he returned to the place that was smeared with the scent of human alphas, he would pretend that it didn't bother him. The gentle smell of his home had long been replaced. When he died, there would be no one left to remember what this place used to be.

"Yagi-san," Midoriya called out, "Do you have a moment?"

The older man blinked, surprised, and nodded. A smile began to wiggle onto his face, like he was trying to stop it but it was failing miserably.

"Why, yes, I do. Is everything alright?"

Midoriya motioned for him to come closer, "There's something I'd like to talk to you about."

Behind him, Twice whined and groaned, loudly wondering why he wouldn't want someone as young and strong as him instead of Yagi. He ignored it.

"Ah, yes, lead the way."

As soon as the door to the meeting room closed behind him, Midoriya got to the point.

"I'm leaving my hair with you," he said. "Should something happen to me, please make sure it gets to the next person that can use it."

"I... What?"

"...OFA?" Midoriya tried to clarify. "In the event that I am unable to pass the quirk down, I think this will be our next best bet. Concerning who I think is the best fit, Uraraka-san is my pick. If that changes, I will let you know."

"I... Are you making plans in case of your death?"

"Shouldn't I?" Midoriya asked, furrowing his brows. It was stupid that they didn’t do this from the beginning. "There's no guarantee that I will come back. If I get eaten, it'll be two bites. If I'm taken, I won't be much use since I'll be popping kids out."

"P-popping-" Yagi spluttered.

"...Can I leave this to you?"

Midoriya handed him a small package.

"It's my nail and a few strands of my hair. Please don't let anyone know you have this, or else it's going to get really annoying on my end."

"Uh."

"Excuse me then," Midoriya said, bowing politely before heading to the door.

"That's it?" Yagi said quietly as he door shut behind Midoriya, leaving him to stand by himself in the room.

The honeymoon phase for having a quirk was over. He needed to work with reality in mind. It wasn’t like, just because he had a quirk or anything, anything changed for him.

It was sobering.

### **Caring - StainDeku**

“I don’t understand,” Stain said quietly, “...Why did he jump in front of me?”

Midoriya looked at the man next to him. He used to look so tall and mysterious, as though he was just a little bit longer than the shadows that crept in alleyways. Next to him, under the fluorescent light in front of their infirmary, he looked like a shadow of a man.

Under different circumstances, Midoriya might have felt pity for him. At the very least, Stain and Spinner were both alive.

“...Because he found something worth risking his life over,” Midriya replied back, tone cold and crisp. “So, with the life that he risked to protect, what are you going to do with it?”

Stain looked at his hands.

“...What I’ve always done,” he said, getting up. “Pay back my dues and,” he turned to face Midoriya with a crooked grin, “fight for what I think is right. So, where to?”

Midoriya almost smiled back, but it looked too bitter.

### **Caring - DabiDeku**

"I don't know!" Dabi snapped out, his voice ripping through the air as he flung his hand out. "I don't-I never wanted to care about someone!"

He looked at his hands, stained with the blood of the people he wanted to protect.

"And now I got so many things that I don't want to lose- I don't even know who I am anymore! What did I used to fight for? Why did I become ‘Dabi’?!"

For someone who had only ever used his fire for himself, this must have been hard. To add someone, anyone, to his tiny world must have been unfathomable. To have forgotten what it was like to be alone must be unbearable.

"Why do I have to have something important to me now that the world is ending?"

Midoriya wouldn't understand though.

For Midoriya, life didn't start until the world ended.

### **Fashion Statement**

Midoriya ran his hand through his hair. In reality, this was more practical.

It was going to rip into shreds anyways. It was going to tear if he used his quirk or got caught in someone's mouth. It was rubbing against the wounds that were healing, making it itchy and unpleasant. It was annoying as a whole. He needed a tan.

And he was certain now that the smell would drag out many more monsters than he could looking for them.

If this causes anyone to lose their shit, he had no doubt that he could take just about anyone on. He had to. If he wanted to live the way he wanted to, he needed to be prepared to fight to the bitter end and then some. That was fine. He could work with that.

He stepped out.

-

"Oh, morning, Mido..."

Don't think about it. Don't think about it. Just keep moving and then leave. That's it. That's all he had to fucking do.

"So uh... new fashion? // I hate it!"

He paused briefly, eyes coming up to Twice's face. His teeth hurt from how hard he was gritting them. His fingers tingle from the lack of blood flow because of how hard he clenched them into fists. He needed to not think and not answer and just move the fuck on.

And since his brain was all sorts of mess, what came out of his mouth was, "Move the fuck on."

The blond's eyebrows shot up, and Midoriya turned away. Fuck, fuck, fuck, he just cursed at him. Which was totally not the intention and he was just going to leave now.

Hopefully, he was wrong.

-

He was not wrong.

-

"Damn, there were so many today," Kirishima said, dropping to the ground when they returned to the schoolgrounds. He was exhausted, and caked in blood.

"Yeah, no kidding," Sero collapsed right next to him, just barely making sure that his gun rested across his lap, ready to be used at a moment's notice.

Walking right by them, Midoriya's sweet smell could be found underneath a layer of rot, blood and puss. They gagged at the smell, but also couldn't stop looking for it.

In the meantime, Midoriya made his way to wipe down just enough so that he wouldn't get any pieces of gore, and catch the parts that were still dripping. He made sure his hands were scrubbed raw and clean, grabbed his bag, and made his way to the receptionist office. He wrote something down on the map, and slowly sank into the seat opposite of it.

He sat there, gazing at that map for a few hours, ignorant to everyone else. His notebook was open to a blank page in front of him.

He was fucking right. The smell of an omega could bait monsters.

### **clothes make the man...?**

"He needs to wear something," Yamada said, "He looks cold!"

"If he doesn't want to wear something, are you going to force it on him?" Nemuri, who spent her entire life dealing with people who didn't like her hero outfit, deadpanned.

"Let him be," Aizawa agreed with her.

"But there are plenty of people here that might... try to take advantage of that kind of thing," Snipe replied.

"That's why we are here," Shigaraki called out from behind them. "To make sure you grubby heroes get used to the fact that you can't just have everything you want when you want them."

Yamada opened his mouth, and then closed it. He thought about it, and tilted his head.

"Weren’t you a villain?"

“Yeah,” Shigaraki snorted, “We’re upfront with our shitty ways.”

### **Spring Rutting Season -**

Fuck Spring. Fuck Fall. Just fuck everyday, but those two seasons in particular.

These thoughts repeated in Midoriya's head as he pulled his bloodied elbow from Twice's face. Stepping back as the blond dropped to the ground, he grimaced when he saw that Twice's pants were still tented.

"You with me now?"

"...Mate..." Twice whispered quietly. It would be pathetic, if Midoriya could muster the strength to feel pity for the blond. For good measure, he kicked him in the side.

Normally, he would take the blond to Chisaki personally, but during these times, it was better to keep some distance. He didn't know if it was better that everyone's rut was hitting the same time, or if it would be better to time them out so he could just throw them into a room, a week or two at a time.

Blackwhip formed at his arm as he heard the footsteps approach. The smell was putrid. Midoriya needed to get to his helmet fast.

The door slid open, and there was Nighteye.

"Izuku, rut season..." the older man trailed off, no doubt taking in the sight of Twice groaning on the ground.

"Take him to Chisaki," Midoriya said. He hated it, but they smelled good. His mouth felt unnaturally parched, and he just knew that his features were probably flushed. Covering his mouth and nose with his hand, as though that would help at all, he took a step back.

"Understood," Nighteye said. Midoriya had a lot of respect for the man. If he was even half as affected as Twice was, he had remarkable self-control and restraint over himself. It was impressive. "Be safe."

"Nothing new," Midoriya replied back, opening a window. It would be the wrong room, because the incoming breeze carried his scent straight to Nighteye. He watched as the man's eyes turned to slits and the fangs start to elongate. His eyes darted from Midoriya to Twice and then back, but by then, Midoriya was already out the window. He had no desire to make them suffer for no reason.

-Getting to his helmet was easy. At the very least, the dogs weren't too bothered by this whole mess. They had their own shit to worry about, and no one was going to bother them. He grabbed his helmet, clipped it on, and grabbed his dented bat and his knives.

Time for patrol. It wasn't like monsters let them be just because they were a little more horny than before.

"Izuku, are you on your way out?"

Midoriya waved as Hawks dropped down next to him. Either Hawks had impeccable control over his pheromones, or Midoriya's helmet was really clamping down on the scent. And then, Hawks stepped back by a foot.

Heat weeks were awful. Midoriya thought, but they were getting much better at dealing with them. Well, if they didn't want to deal with additional injuries, they would have to. Midoriya didn't shy from brutal reactions. If people couldn't handle it, then they shouldn't have come for him.

-

### **Spring Rutting Season - End of a Shitty Week**

"This is insane!" one of the betas, because it was always a beta, an older gentleman that took command over the other quiet and very opinionated betas on base. "You broke his all of his fingers!" he shouted.

Midoriya, who was getting his arm stitched up by something else

### **Enter Chimera**

With Spring, however, came this man. This Chimera.

And by that, Enji meant that he was having a hard time trying to make sense of the situation. How was it that Midoriya could go out to pick apples and bring back someone so dangerous? It didn’t make sense to him.

“...Who is this?” Enji stressed, feeling the lines on his face deepen as he tried to deal with Midoriya and everything that Midoriya was.

It shouldn’t be this hard to keep an eye on their leader. It really shouldn’t be. But alas, Enji lost track of Midoriya for three hours. Now that they were reunited, he grimaced at the stench of iron that wafted off of him. He didn’t look injured, and more concerning was the man behind him.

Chimera.

He’s seen this man on paper before. A whisper of danger between high-ranking officials. Someone that he was warned to be wary of, because villains were not the worst things that slinked in the world. And, if someone could look the same from before to after the apocalypse, Enji had reason to be suspicious of them altogether.

Midoriya didn’t pay him any mind, moving straight for the cart they were pulling with a truck.

“Easy, Number Two,” Chimera said, a wide grin on his face as he swaggered over, “I’m a friendly.” His voice was low, as though it was coming from the earth itself. He tilted his head, “He saved my life, so I’m just trying to return the favor.”

The scowl that Endeavor gave would have given a child nightmares.

“Oh, Izuku-san, welcome back!” Tokoyami called, “We are ready to go when you are…” he trailed off when he saw Chimera.

Chimera’s grin looked even more ferocious, until Midoriya finished rummaging through the cart to grab a small parcel, and threw it at the man. He took it easily, whistling at the sight of deer jerky.

“You really know how to win someone over, Izuku-san,” he said.

“If you’re looking to do the same with me, stop picking fights.”

His eyes widened minutely before he dipped his head forward in a bow.

“Ah, so sorry, old habits die hard. I guess I got anxious,” he said lightly, sounding not at all anxious or uncomfortable with the turn of events. “Please forgive me.”

Midoriya waved him off and turned to Enji. “There’s a hoard that way,” he said, pointing it out. “Take everyone here and go to the orchids to get started. I’ll handle them.”

The older man scowled back instead. “If there’s a hoard, at the very least, we should go together-”

“That’s what I’m for, Endeavor-san,” Chimera said, cutting into the conversation. “Since he needs someone reliable to go with him.”

But how could Midoriya decide the reliability of someone that he just met? Frankly, it just sounded like a load of bullshit, but before Enji could snap that back, Midoriya threw a pebble at Chimera. It made a popping sound as it splintered and shattered against the man’s chest.

“...That hurt,” Chimera said, not once losing the amused gleam in his eye.

Ignoring him, Midoriya turned to Shoji and motioned to the bike. The taller man understood his unspoken request, but hesitated. Regardless, the younger man turned back towards where the supposed hoard was going to be.

Enji, who had seen Midoriya come out of worse fights, had no real reason to doubt Midoriya this time. No, that was a lie.

Enji, who wanted to be trusted by Midoriya, was a simple man who was raised on a simple belief.

“...Please return to us safely.”

Midoriya stared at him, eyes wide and looking so young that Enji felt his heart dip deeper into sin.

“...Stay on your guard,” the young man said, his eyes turning gentle, “If there are hoards here, a monster will not be far off.”

And he left.

-

Midoriya returned, a little out of breath and slathered in dried blood. Chimera was barely a step behind him, reeking of smoke and ash.

Flesh and fire. What a pair they made.

-

"You talked more when we were alone," Chimera mentioned.

"Eh? Really? I can’t imagine that. Izuku-san doesn't like speaking," Compress commented.

The wolf's head tilted to the side. He stared at Midoriya, who silently continued to walk next to him and then back to the former thief.

"...Then you're even more stupid than I thought," he said. "Sounds more like you don't listen."

He looked back, and the open shock on Midoriya's face would have been funny if Chimera didn't feel so victorious.

“Ara?” he chuckled. “If you look at me like that, I’ll begin to think that I’m special.”

Midoriya’s expression regressed back into one of indifference, and Chimera laughed harder.

### The Reason To Keep Fighting

Running his hands down his face, Midoriya rolled his shoulders as he tried to reorient himself. He felt so tired that he felt that he would blink and be asleep. The fatigue was running on the edge of his vision, threatening to black him out at any moment.

In these moments, Midoriya found the push to keep going.

He looked down at the map, and then back to the recent sighting reports. He was missing something, he knew he was, and as soon as he found it, he could go and hunt it down.

"Midoriya? You're still up?"

God fuck, what would it goddamn take for people to just leave him the fuck alone? At the very least, the sudden, nearly boiling amount of rage made him that much more alert. Should he be thankful?

He pinched the bridge of his nose, and directed his rage to the maps in front of him.

"...I know I'm not one to speak, but you should really consider getting some shut eye," he said, walking over. "Or, if it's that important, let me help you."

Midoriya frowned at the thought. But he was even more tired than he thought, and the sudden jolt of rage wasn't actually helping him stay more alert. His hands came down to the desk, because he didn't want distractions, and he definately didn't want fucking help from some alpha.

Aizawa raised his hands, eyes widening by a fraction and he took a step back.

"...I didn't mean to upset you," he said. "My apologies."

But Midoriya didn't want an apology. He wanted change. He wanted to be free. He wanted a whole lot more things that he didn't even know how to obtain or what the world would be like if he got it. He was sick of these apologies, meaningless and worthless, just like him and everything he did and all that he stood for.

"I just want you to trust me-"

And Midoriya felt his blood run cold. He felt something, the part of him that was carefully tucked away so that no one would know until these moments where he felt himself unraveling and splitting apart into nothing. Then, it all came bubbling out, and he proved the whole world correct.

He was just as useless as he was when this whole thing started, as when he was in middle school holding a piece of paper that told him who he would be, as when he was a child being told that he was quirkless, as he was when he was born.

"And then what?" Midoriya asked, demanding, suddenly. He looked up at him, his eyes bright with disdain. "You all say the same thing-that you wish for trust. That you want to be trusted. Why? What achievement does having my trust award you? How much will it stroke your ego, if it's something that you would repeat like that, over and over again? So tell me, then. When you have my trust, what will you do then?"

"I want to help alleviate the burden on you," Aizawa replied back flatly. "At the very least, so you don't have to look like that anymore. If I..." he hesitated, but forged on, "When I earn your trust, it would be when you don't think like that anymore."

It was possible that Aizawa meant his words as he said them and just that. It was very possible, and if Midoriya knew Aizawa, he would know that. But Midoriya didn't know Aizawa beyond their limited encounters on base, and sure as hell wouldn't trust him.

As such, Midoriya interpreted his words differently.

A sardonic smile twisted onto his face, bitter as his eyes filled with contempt, because with how Aizawa worded it, it almost sounded like he would be waiting until Midoriya turned obedient, dropped the facade, grew up from his childish and came to an understand of his real place in the world-regardless if society was standing or not.

"Is it even worth it?" he asked. "To wait that long." Normally, he didn't care, but it was so constant across so many people that he couldn't help but ask. He didn't care. He didn't want to care. At the same time, that corner of his brain, that sick curiosity in him, wanted to know.

"It's not about the wait," Aizawa replied back, meeting his gaze evenly but not asserting himself. "If I deserve your trust, I will get it. There's nothing that you or I have to do on either end. It's a natural thing. If it takes a week or a month or seven years, it doesn't matter."

And when Aizawa said it like that, it sounded so simple and so easy. Midoriya was the foolish one for overthinking it. Midoriya was the one that was stupid for extrapolating the situation so much.

But all it took was one mistake.

"I can't," Midoriya said, his voice breaking. Aizawa's expression shifted into shock, and he wanted to scream. He didn't because he was too tired, he was too exhausted, he was sick and tired of crying over the same shit. He was tired of fighting. He was tired of looking. He was sick and tired of being tired. "I can't do it."

Midoriya, feeling the fight drain out and his entire being filled with exhaustion instead, grabbed the map and left the room to work somewhere else.

-

Midoriya took two steps before he realized how stupid he was. He knew where the nest was.

He looked down at the map, and took a deep breath. It would take him, if he sprinted at his fastest and didn't stop for anything, two hours. He tilted his head to the side and thought a little harder.

His hand came down to his side, pressing against the bruise on his ribs. No good, it hurt as much as it did just an hour ago. Hopefully, the pain will keep him alert, but he supposed that he passed that point, and it was just going to continue dulling his senses instead.

Should he really be running in this state? Could he fight off an entire nest like this?

He walked by one of the rooms, and heard Eri's loud gasp. He peaked into the window, watching Togato and Kirishima do a dramatic re-enactment of the storybook on the ground, and watched as Eri excitedly clapped along when they broke out into a musical number.

They looked happy.

Yes, Midoriya realized. He could do anything.

At once, he found peace with himself. It's okay, he thought to himself, if they don't trust him or like him. It's okay, the same way he cannot trust them or like them. It was fine. There was nothing wrong with that. He will do as he pleased- and so will they. If they came to kill him, if they came to hurt him, if he came to save them, if he came to help them, it would all be the same thing.

It was all the same damn thing.

### Chimera vs Aizawa

"I ought to thank you for treating him so poorly," Chimera said, his teeth glistening in the light as he grinned. "Due to your efforts, it'll be even easier for me."

Aizawa narrowed his eyes.

### [end]