### **Notes:**

* AirWhips
* Birds
* JSDF Convoy
* More Survivors (ie Misoro + Co)

I guess in this one:

* The birds
  + “But ur an omega is it really okay to fight like that?”
* Midoriya thaws out b/c they get another unbonded omega and they’re not just chomping in the bits
  + Feels a little bad that this guy is getting all of the “oh poor wooby omega” treatment, but is glad that it’s not him
  + It was like the whole base took a breath of relief. Since this omega was living up to their ideal, they can safely say that Midoriya was the anomaly
* In fact, it’s almost like it didn’t really matter to them to begin with.
* And since the birds, Midoriya gets that he’ll never shake them off. Being free doesn’t really matter to him as much anymore
* And then bakugo shows up and he feels like the whole world took a massive shit on him.

### **saving what you hate - [tamaki]**

"Midoriya! Good morning! Looks like it's going to be another beautiful day!"

Midoriya, pulling at his gloves and doublechecking his sweatbands at his wrists, didn't make any motion to acknowledge Mirio.

"Good morning, everyone else!" Mirio cheered, not even the slightest bit curbed.

Tamaki really envied that kind of boundless energy, in these moments. There was a certain kind of strength in being able to smile so brightly at someone as cold as Midoriya.

"Oi, make sure you properly greet everyone, if you're going to greet anyone at all," Rocklock said, but his lips were stretching into that exasperated smile that adults get when they see something particularly bright.

"M-me too," Tamaki blurted out. He could feel his face ignite brightly, "Everyone, good morning!"

In turn, everyone turned to him, eyes wide in their shock as Tamaki felt the world twist around him, and for a brief moment, he thought he would lose his breakfast all over the ground.

Nejire and Mirio, bless their hearts, broke out of their shock first.

"Good morning, everyone!" Nejire said, her smile bright and shining like the first rays of sunlight after a rainshower.

"Hm? Everyone's so lively today," Hawks said, dropping down. "Morning, everyone. Scouting is over so we can get started, Midoriya. So far, so quiet. Got two stragglers on my way out, but none on my way back."

Midoriya turned to Hawks.

"Good work," he said.

The blond gave a lazy, two fingered salute in response.

Rolling his shoulder, Midoriya took a step off the base, without ever looking back.

But, if Mirio could find a reason to smile bright enough for everyone else, than Tamaki will do so too. Finding the strength to take a step forward, even as people hit their limits, was what that Plus Ultra Spirit was all about. If he could say something that could make them smile, if he could contribute to making this place feel a little more like home, then he would. Just because the world ended and society fell apart, didn't mean that they were suddenly not heroes. It didn't mean that suddenly, he didn't want to be a hero.

-

It never failed to amaze him how quickly things could go south.

Tamaki looked around, lost. The building came down so quickly, and so suddenly, that they barely had a chance to yell out a warning before they ended up in this situation.

Tamaki looked up, to where Midoriya had shouldered the burden of the falling rubble for them. The older man curled up to cover his head, and didn't even realize that Midoriya had sprinted to take the burden of stray debris.

He looked ready to pass out. Dust settled around him, but his eyes felt like they were glowing as his gaze met Tamaki's. Tamaki watched as realization bloomed across his face, "...Amajiki-san."

Tamaki, never once expecting that he would be known or even remembered, flustered. To be spoken so formally to someone that was so much more important than him had his ears burning and stomach churning in a second. At the same time, he felt his eyes burn, because he didn't think that someone as established as Midoriya, who carried the entire weight of their base on his shoulders, would bother to remember his name-especially his family name when no one called him by it.

"...What are you so scared of?"

"Eh?"

Because, if Tamaki had to be honest, everything. The entirety of the upper floor had fallen on them, scattering paper, debris, dust and office supplies with the destroyed plaster and exposed pipelines all around them. Midoriya stepped back, his eyes focused on the man in front of him.

"It's okay," Midoriya said, "Fear is normal. Right now, however," he said, a slow smile on his face, "I'm here."

He turned around, his small back coated in dust-but Tamaki could see the outlines of deep scars that once tried to split the young man open, and he could see how his muscles rippled as he made his way to steady ground. He turned back and lifted his hand, probably so Tamaki could take it and he could help him down.

"I'll protect you."

### **DabDek - old injuries**

On occasion, his arm ached. It was one of the only scars he had left on his body, since it wasn’t something that could be Overhauled and he didn’t trust the Little Time-traveler-chan. It wasn’t awful, and he had learned to get used to it, but it didn’t really get easier.

“Here.”

Dabi’s head shot up to where Midoriya put a hot towel over his sleeve, right where the patch of scars lingered.

“It doesn’t get easier,” he said as he kept his eyes on the wound. “But it’s something you can get used to.”

“Words of experience?”

Midoriya’s lips twitched up.

“Hm, something like that,” he said. “If it’s unbearable, you could probably ask your Beloved Otouto-kun for some pain meds.”

“And have him get clingier?” Dabi could already imagine the look on Natsuo’s face and shuddered, “Nah, it’s not worth it.”

This time, Midoriya chuckled, and Dabi didn’t feel pain in his arm. He heard once that laughter was good medicine, but he didn’t think that it was someone else’s laughter that could do this to him.

Midoriya was in a jacket, zipped halfway up and otherwise revealing that he wasn’t really wearing anything underneath it. He sat next to him and Dabi didn’t bother hiding the fact that he was staring right at him. The sight used to make Dabi salivate, but this time, his eyes fell right down to the mess of scars that decorated him. He was there for some of them, and could clearly remember the way bone crunched and claws pierced. It was, like every memory he had of Midoriya, treasured.

“...What about you?” he asked. “I’ve been bit once, so I don’t know how you deal with this.”

And well, Midoriya wasn’t really one for being vulnerable or really opening up or anything actually. The fact that he was here at all was a shock. Dabi didn’t think that he would notice, or care. He tried to squander the hope in his heart, but he couldn’t help but dream of a world where Midoriya’s smile would be his.

Dreaming was fine, right? He wasn’t even going to reach out for him.

“...I know how bad it is at first. If you don’t want pain meds, this is the next best thing,” he said, looking forward and not at Dabi. “I never wanted someone else to feel… like that, too.”

Perhaps, but this injury was what led Midoriya to him. And this injury was something that the two of them held uniquely in common. He couldn’t even begin to compare how Midoriya must feel some nights, if any of his injuries felt like his arm, but he couldn’t control how he felt. This injury was the irrefutable fact that Midoriya didn’t want him to die. It was stupid and he was probably reading way more into the situation, but he couldn’t help it.

For Dabi, who didn’t even know how to dream about a future with Midoriya, the distant throbbing in his arm was everything to him.

He hoped, somewhere far away in his heart, that this scar would never fully heal.

The two sat together for another moment in silence.

### **SeroDeku - fitting in clothes**

Most were stuck on the fact that there was an omega walking around without a shirt on. With low-hanging cargo pants held up by a belt right at his hip bones, the entirety of his chest and arms were open. He was all bone and lean muscles, for all the power that he could summon.

When he was on base, he usually had a jacket on, but his chest was bare otherwise.

The light would hit his skin, reflecting the uneven layers of scars as they healed.

"Aren't you... cold?" Sero asked.

Even if it was starting to warm up, Sero could still see his breath when he exhaled.

Midoriya shrugged back. "When I use my quirk, it'll all rip off anyways."

The young man tilted his head to the side, no doubt remembering how much damage Midoriya caused just yesterday.

"Yeah, that's fair." He thought a little longer about it, "But you know, we're on base. I'm not saying that there's no chance of it, but you probably won't need to use all your strength. Wearing what you wanna wear is fine, but you don't have to be cold if you don't wanna either."

He gave a bright grin, and Midoriya smiled back.

"Did someone put you up to this?"

"Best Jeanist."

Surprised at the bluntly honest answer, Midoriya broke out in laughter instead. It was a quiet one, like he was aware that too much sound would give away his position even now, but it was a laugh that had Sero laughing at the absurdity of his life. If someone had told him that after the world ended, he would live next-door to Best Jeanist, and would have to help ensure that everyone gets properly fitted clothing.

It was just for a second, but it was like they were a pair of teenagers enjoying their time together.

## Air Whips

### **AirWhips**

The airwhips exploded out.

### **Post-air whips - finding a place to sleep**

But the problem wasn't the fact that Midoriya had to go figure out his new quirk or the fact that his arms felt like they were tearing themselves apart. The problem was, Midoriya thought to himself as he narrowed his eyes at Shigaraki's expactant gaze, the fact that his hiding spot had been carelessly revealed like this.

He rubbed his temples.

Fuck, where the fuck was he going to sleep now?

"Hey, Izuku," Shoji called out to him casually, but from the way he was shifting his weight between his feet, it was clear that he had been waiting here for a while. "Welcome back, we got your things ready-"

"Eh, so this was where you were cribbing?"

Shigaraki came up, slinking an arm around Midoriya's shoulders and acted like it was totally natural when the young man shoved his arm off.

Spinner furrowed his eyebrows because who used 'cribbing' in this day and age?

Midoriya thought really hard about it. Since he left in a rush, he only took the bare essentials. It wasn't like he had many belongings to begin with, but the belongings that he did leave behind wasn't His anymore.

Other people have touched it. Other people have probably scented it.

Entering the room where he used to stay, moving to the back where there was some space behind the bookshelf, he looked up to confirm that the loose ceiling tiles that led to his sleeping quarters had been removed. All the things that used to be up there was now gone.

"We uh, went ahead and cleaned your clothes and blankets."

And he stared for a moment longer before he started to pick them all up.

"Oh, are you uh... considering moving in to where we are?" Shouji asked.

Midoriya, who had focused all of his energy on containing his anger, calmly stuffed all his former belongings into one of his spare bags. At least the books and notebooks weren't really objects that he considered [his] but more that he was borrowing, so he didn't feeling anything for it.

His clothes and blankets, on the other hand, smelled like detergent. It used to smell like acidy vomit smeared by bleach from the countless nights he woke up dying and fell asleep healing. To the touch, they were soft and plush. They probably thought that they were going to help him live in comfort, by changing his sheets into something that smelled clean and civilized.

But it was his.

Of all the things left in the world, it was one of the only things that he could have called his. It was something he took from his old room, and no matter how disgusting and repulsive it was, it was still his. Completely his.

Until now.

Calmly, as though his heart wasn't mourning and every fiber in his being wasn't screaming for blood, he took it all and threw it into the furnace outside.

"W-what?"

"W-wait, Izuku-"

It crackled as it burned. Incinerating away into ash and smoke, Midoriya tried to think of where he was going to sleep.

He closed the furnace gate, and without focusing on anyone in particular, made his way thorugh.

-

Fourteen hours later, Midoriya finally had the opportunity to sit down. As soon as he did, he could feel his legs throb from how much energy he had been using. Willing himself not to fall asleep, he started filling out the reports for his collected observations.

He needed to find a place to catch a few zzz's for two hours, minimun. Or else he was going to make a serious mistake and the others would get even more overbearingly-annoying.

But then six hours passed and on the twentieth hour, Midoriya leaned against the wall and took a deep breath. He was fine. He closed his eyes to concentrate on his breathing when his legs suddenly lost feeling and he had to brace himself in an effort to stay standing.

Okay. Sleep. This was starting to get ridiculous.

...When he returned from patrol, because there was a lot of people running in and out of the base at the moment.

-

Hour 35. Midoriya felt suddenly really alive and aware. He couldn't sleep like this. He had all this energy, so he decided to put it to work instead.

But as soon as he sat down, the world blacked out-and he jolted awake a second later with a killer headache.

In front of him, Aizawa's wide-eyed stare returned his surprised one.

"...Have you been sleeping?"

Midoriya could have sworn that the sun just went down, but it had to be midday if Aizawa was here? Did he just grab a few hours without his own knowledge? If that was the case, lucky him and he wouldn't need to sleep longer. He stuck his hand out for the report, and from the way Aizawa paused, both of them knew that his hands were shaking.

“...The reports.”

“...I’m really not one to say this, but sleep becomes a less of a choice the longer you go,” he said.

Midoriya placed his hand down, because he wasn’t tired enough to pretend he was going to deal with it. He flipped the page in his report, and waited for Aizawa to say his piece and leave.

The older man, more than used to this, scowled and dropped the report onto his desk.

“Your report,” he said. “Excuse me.”

But Midoriya knew he was right. Aizawa wasn’t someone that spoke until there was something worth saying, after all. For all his facade of being distant, he was rather kind. Midoriya knew that and he knew Aizawa was right since, as the man walked out, he was seeing double.

Covering his eyes, he knew that he wasn’t going to last much longer.

-

Hour 48 and Midoriya blacked out.

When he came to, he understood that he must have not been out for long, since the fighting was still occurring very loudly above him. Pushing away from the plaster he was tossed through, he used an airship to yank him up a floor through the opening in the ceiling.

It took him three tries, but he returned to the fight. His head felt like it was going to split open, but his fists never missed.

His vision swam, but he managed to wave at Tamaki at the end of their battle.

“I was so worried when you stopped fighting. Are you okay?” he asked.

Midoriya yawned loudly, felt his shoulders weigh even heavier, and sighed deeply. There was never a shortage of shit to do.

“You don’t look so good,” Tamaki’s voice got even quieter, but he couldn’t tell if it was because the man was shy or Midoriya’s healing was shot.

Well, life was easier when he pretended he couldn’t hear them for a reason.

-

Hour 53.

One of the dogs poked him in the thigh with his nose. The gesture was gentle, but Midoriya nearly toppled over. He caught himself quickly, stared at the dog and leaned down. He ruffled the top of its head, moving his hand to capture as much of its head as possible and making sure to scratch down by its neck.

Normally, the dogs didn’t come close to him when he smelled of gore and ash. It was almost a welcomed surprise, but he could imagine that he must look awful if even the dogs were nudging him this way and that.

Midoriya couldn’t do it anymore. He was falling asleep where he stood.

And so, Midoriya started to sleep in the outside storage shed that they repurposed into a doghouse. He slept in one corner of the room, surrounded by soft dogs, and finally felt peace.

### **Leader in doghouse**

“...Our leader,” Chisaki spoke up, voice and expression filled with disdain, “Is sleeping in the doghouse.”

Yamada laughed, and when he realized that this was Chisaki and Chisaki did not Joke, his smile fell.

“No, you’re kidding me.”

“I would tell you to go check on your own, but it looked like this is the first time in a few days that Midoriya got some rest so I’d advice you to let him do so. But yes, he’s resting and all the dogs are keeping watch.”

It would appear that their leader did not have any wishes to even rest near them. Even if they were ‘used to it’ by now, it didn’t make it any easier when they had held onto the belief that ‘something will change someday.’

It would appear that [someday] was a little further than they hoped.

## [birds]

### **Initial**

Midoriya placed his hand on his side. The pain had subsided enough that it gave a dull pang in time with his heartbeat. Inhaling expanded his chest, and the pain increased momentarily. If he stood up too fast, vertigo hit him hard enough that his entire vision blurred.

Needless to say, he wasn't going to be going anywhere.

He laid back, and took an impatient sigh.

"You can't be bored. You've been awake for like, six minutes."

The exasperated tone, as Sero pulled a chair up with a stack of books, was ruined by the growing smile on his face.

"Don't worry. I, Sero Hanta, have decided to graciously volunteer my very important and non-refundable time to read you any one of these books," he said. "So no worries and just rest up, Midoriya-san."

Midoriya looked to the side, eyes skimming the titles of the books of standard-isekai titles, and opened his mouth.

"I was in the middle of the Hittie Empire," he said.

Sero grimaced, "I'm not reading that. I don't want to read that," and then, a certain realization must have dawned because his tone changed into something pleading, "Please don't make me read that."

Midoriya snorted, and then grimaced at the sudden onslaught of pain.

"Those better not be comedy," he said, a hand on his ribs as he gave the man next to him a crooked grin, "I might not make it."

Sero chuckled back, shaking his head. "What are you talking about? Laughter is the cure for everything."

"You should let Nine know," Midoriya replied back, "Maybe he'll grow a sense of humor."

Sero's expression soured.

"Ah... Him?" he said. "You uh... really trust him, huh?"

Midoriya paused, a frown already forming on his face, "You don't?"

"It's not like... Uh... It's like complicated, you know? Like, I trust him when you're nearby, but that's it. But like, if you ever told him to kill me, he wouldn't even hesitate."

"I wouldn't," Midoriya said.

"Yeah," Sero nodded, "I trust you. If you wanted me dead, I'd be dead."

"I don't want you dead."

Sero motioned at himself, "Head, attached. Pulse, beating. Sounds about right."

Midoriya rolled his eyes.

"C'mon, if we wanna finish the entire This Won't Even Be The Worst Thing That Happens', we gotta start now if we wanna get halfway by nightfall."

-

Their reading session doesn't get past the second book when a blood-curling scream had both of them on their feet.

"I'll go check it out," Sero said, looking worriedly from Midoriya to the door and back, "You just sit back for the moment."

The look in Midoriya's eyes made it clear that he wasn't going to listen to him.

"I'm begging you, Midoriya. You can't die. Please don't die. Do you know what they'll do to me if you die?"

"...Go check it out, Sero."

Sero straightened up, and gave a curt nod. He looked right about to say one more thing, but hesitatd. With one last look at Midoriya, Sero ran out.

And Midoriya took the chance to go out through the window. He pulled back the curtain by an inch, and peered outside. A dark shadow descended outside, as though the a blanket was pulled over the sun, and his stomach dropped when he realized that those were monsters.

There were so many monsters in the sky that it was starting to block out the sunlight.

Midoriya placed his hand on his ribcage. It had been about four hours since the last group left. All things considered, they majority of them were supposed to keep the base standing for another four hours before the first group returned. It would figure that the day they were spread so sparsely, this would...

No, no, Midoriya thought to himself.

Assume this was planned. Assume this was premediated. That way, he will be able to react accordingly. This might be an ambush, he thought as he pulled open the window, but he won't let it end as a tragedy.

### **Backup arrives**

There, again.

He heard it.

"-dori-"

It was faint.

"Mi----ya-"

Wait, wait, it was familiar. The sound, the word-

"Midoriya?"

His one good eye finally focused on the person in front of him.

"...Miruko," he said quietly, finally recognizing her.

God, she was beautiful.

"Yeah," she nodded back. Her mouth opened, and he's certain that she was speaking, but he couldn't hear her. He blinked (or perhaps, concerning the state of his other eye, he was actually winking) slowly and came to a quick realization.

If Miruko was here, that means her party, the second party that left, had returned. Her hand reached for him, and his hand shot to grab her wrist.

"Ev-everyone-" he rasped out. The words jumbled in his head. Where was everyone else? Was everyone okay? Did they encounter trouble out there, as they did here? Was there any casualties? Did anyone die?

"Midoriya," Miruko replied back, her free hand coming to his shoulder-but he felt his heart sink because if she thought to comfort him, didn't that mean that, "We don't know yet. But everyone has returned so it's just a matter of time. I need to get you out of here."

He shook his head.

"Mido-"

"I can't," he said, blood bubbling out of his mouth, "I-I let seven es-escape. Scent... It stopped working. Sorry."

He let them go. He let them go the same way he couldn't even speak coherently. He couldn't do anything, could he? He had gotten so reliant in thinking that they would always lose themselves in their instinct, and that he would always be able to turn that against them. In reality, he was the one that needed them to to act as alphas should.

"We'll take care of the rest. Take a break."

Could he? It sounded great. It sounded wonderful. He wanted to-

"Hey, who made a mess of our base?!" The voice was loud, booming over the base, and briefly, his breath returned to him.

The sound was a little clearer now. It was like he was finally pulled out of the water. His vision focused on Miruko's determined expression, her firm grip introducing a warmth into his body.

"What do you say? You wanna take a bet on us? We're fresh and ready for a fight."

And exhausted from the fight, Midoriya did something he didn't realize he could do.

He trusted an alpha.

He closed his eyes. If he got betrayed, woke up with some unsavory gifts or forced into a situation where he had to exchange his chasity for food,then it'll be what he deserved. Taking one last look at Miruko, he managed a small smile.

"...Okay," he said, giving a nod. "I don't mind being betrayed by you."

With that, he closed his eyes and plunged into the darkness.

### **Loss Of Arm (and other things)**

Midoriya woke up screaming.

It was alarming, he didn't even realize that he was yelling, so far gone but so desperate because all he remembered was that he didn't finish. There were plenty of people here that he wanted to protect. There were too many people here who have lost enough. He didn’t want to burden them because he could not protect them.

And there were enough monsters that he had to prioritize which people he was going to save and which people he had to trust would save themselves.

Even if his body splintered and tore, and even if there was nothing left, he wanted to protect the people here. It didn't matter if they didn't like him, or if he was sick and tired of them, because he didn't want them to die.

"Midoriya!"

Someone caught him in their arms and cradling his head against their chest like his mom used to do for him, when he came home with scraped knees and smelling of ash. The chest was harder than his mothers, flat and the smell was not soothing-but it was familiar. The heartbeat that he felt against his head pierced through the panic, and revealed truth.

"It's okay, Midoiya. They're dead. The monsters are all dead. You protected the people here."

"No-no, there were seven-seven were- there were seven-"

"Yes. We killed them. Hawks got three. Shigaraki got two. Stain got three. They're all dead. Endeavor burned them all."

"...Burn?"

"Yeah. They're all just ash now."

"T-Then-"

"Everyone is alive. No one died."

Midoriya felt the fight drain out of him. Without the fight, his body collapsed, like a puppet whose strings were cut. His wounds ached.

"Windows," he murmured, closing his eyes even while his mind continued to work. "We have to... clean the windows."

“We can do that,” the voice came back, “You need to rest. You lost a lot of blood and your stitches are going to tear. So you need to...”

The world went dark.

-

The next time Midoriya woke up, it went a little better than before.

“Midoriya, your arm-”

“Don’t worry about it,” Midoriya replied back. “Let’s fix,” he made a motion at the school. “Security is our first priority. Shelter and food is next,” he explained.

Golden eyes narrowed at him.

“...As it stands,” Midoriya sighed deeply, his hand coming to his shoulder where he thought his arm was itchy even though it was no longer there, “It’s not like I can really go out and do anything.” His jaw clenched, like it was physically hurting him to admit it. “So. We can put this off for later.”

He stared at the ground, pretended that he didn’t care.

“Please, take care of the building.”

But they could not waste Overhaul’s energy on anything that wasn’t necessary at the moment. If they were to be attacked, right now, Overhaul would play a huge force in whether or not they survive with everyone alive. They could not make that mistake.

Midoriya, especially Midoriya, carried the weight of everyone’s lives on his shoulders, and he couldn’t even protect them correctly. This incident cemented it. He was weak. Quirk or not, he was as weak as he always had been.

While he wallowed in pain, he’ll reflect. When he healed up, he wouldn't make this mistake again. He would-

“...Midoriya,” Chisaki’s voice pierced through his thoughts. “...I will do as you ask, because I want you to think that I am trustworthy.”

Midoriya’s eyebrows furrowed in his confusion.

“If you didn’t tell me to, I wouldn’t do it. You are my first and only priority.”

“W-What about …”

“Eri?” Chisaki asked, giving a small smile. He shook his head. “If I say that I care about her, would you like me more?”

“...You have a nice face but a rotten personality.”

“That’s fine. I don’t want you to think that I’m a liar.” The man replied, waving his hand in the air. He reached to his side and pulled out one of Midoriya’s notebooks, back to business instantly. “I’ll get started at the bottom and make my way up. I’ll clear out the room, and finish a floor a day. Any amendments you want to make?”

“...Don’t push yourself,” Midoriya replied.

Chisaki clicked his tongue, “Now, is when you ask me to return your arm to you, you know. The only thing that will make me feel safe and secure here is knowing that you’re like this. Even when you’re being considerate, you sound cold.”

“...Get to work.”

The older man sighed back, “Yes sir.”

“...Chisaki, thank you.”

The older man paused as the door. “...I think I already said this, but if you think it’s important, then it’s important to me too. That’s how much I trust you.”

He left, the door closing behind him. Midoriya laid back down and closed his eyes, and waited for sleep to come.

-

Midoriya woke up with a sense of calm.

Which was, he supposed, laughable since everything ached, but his sense of humor was less battered than his body. What calm was there in the world?

He opened his eyes, and then groaned as the light assaulted his eyes. He tried to turn onto his side, and then realized that he was handcuffed to the bedpost. Again. He narrowed his eyes, tugged on it to try and gauge how much distance he had to work with.

A hand came onto his wrist.

And then, as though the world opened up, he realized that someone was talking to him-

"-riya? Can you hear me?"

He opened his mouth, but it was too parched. He couldn't do much more than nod. Aizawa's eyes narrowed, taking his features in carefully. His lips opened to speak slowly.

"...I'm going to get you some water. And uncuff you."

He hesitated, and then ultimately uncuffed Midoriya first, before he reached for the water bottle on the side. Midoriya pushed himself to sit up, groaning softly as he did so. A hand came to his back to help him, and a cup with a straw was gently pushed into his chest.

"...Easy," Aizawa's voice was low, but since he was so close, Midoriya could feel the vibration in his chest. "What's the last thing you remember?"

Good old Aizawa. Doesn't waste time and goes right for what Midoriya would want to know.

"...We got attacked," Midoriya said quietly. "...The things with wings."

"...We killed all of them. You killed the majority of them in the field, and the incoming patrol took care of the ones that were running away. None got away. We burned them on the soccer field."

"Injuries?"

"We had a few casualties. No one's dead. No one's as injured as you."

"...Who else got injured?"

Aizawa stared at him for a moment and sighed, "Your usual. Bumps and bruises. We have a broken arm among some who were trying to run away," he said and then cut himself, "and it's nothing to be ashamed of."

Still, Midoriya kept his eyes forward.

"Izuku-"

"How's construction?" Midoriya asked, "It's quiet."

From the tight expression on Aizawa's face, this wasn't something that he was going to let go. Yet, he took a deep breath and answered the question.

"You were in and out for the last two days. We're done with major repairs and clean-up. The bodies are just ash now."

The tension slowly ebbed from small shoulders. He took a shaky breath. Looking at his hands, the bandaged mess they were, he sighed.

"I got a long way to go-"

This time, Aizawa interrupted him. A hand came to his shoulder, his grip borderlining on painful as his lips twisted into a frown.

"You're not the only one," he said quietly but as fierce like a stoked flame, "that wanted to keep this place safe."

He, as though realizing what he did, yanked his hand away from Midoriya. He pinched the bridge of his nose for a moment before he took a deep breath. Suddenly, Midoriya could see the bags under his bloodshot eyes, the new wrinkles that had formed since the last time he laid eyes on him.

It would appear that two days were much longer than Midoriya thought. Slowly the older man turned back and gave a bow, formal in a way that he didn't associate with this man.

"...Thank you, for working so hard that we'd have something to return to. And for staying alive."

The young man looked back down onto the bedsheets. More importantly, they needed to look forwards. More importantly...

"I want to see for myself," he said.

-

What was he expecting?

Midoriya’s hand came up to his shoulder. His arm was gone. His entire body felt off-weight. He wondered if it was something he could get used to.

He stared at the school. A bit destroyed, but he could still hear laughter resonate in the air. They were more than alive. They were alive in high spirits.

His eyes watered pitifully. His head bowered forward, his hand cae up to his eyes as he tried to stop the crying. His knees buckled under his own weight, and despite how much his body screamed in protest, he fell ungracefully to his knees.

He protected one thing.

### 

### **Outsiders & birds**

Almost all the windows facing the outside on the first and second floor had been shattered. Most of the doors were still functioning, and with the exception of four, the others walls were standing. Some of the walls outside were smeared in blood. All things considered, the rebuilding and patching-up part wasn't something impossible.

By some miracle, they didn't lose any of their storage-spaces, on or off the base. Almost all the monsters were rounded up in the field where they died and were burnt to a crisp. Since the groups came back suddenly and in waves, it effectively cut off all routes for escape for the monsters.

No one died. They had about eight close-calls, including their Base Leader, but no one died. They were all sleeping it off, and they would be making a full or near-full recovery.

Altogether, it was a sound victory. At the conclusion of the damage reports, they came to this conclusion.

"Yes, we were incredibly lucky."

"It could have been much worse."

"Lucky?" Miruko asked. "What was lucky about this?"

"Well, i-it was lucky that our storage didn't get ruined, and that more people didn't get hurt, or godforbid, die-"

And Miruko thought back to Midoriya, fighting with missing fingers and glass in his eye, and was on her feet in a second. Her hands slammed down onto the table, her eyes ablaze and she snapped out.

"You idiots don't understand anything since you've never been out with him! That wasn't luck! That was Midoriya luring all of those damn monsters away!"

Midoriya, who chose to fight aerial units in the courtyard, who chose a place where he was at a disadvantage without any coverfire or backup, where flying-monsters came flocking at him, held out to the bitter end. He, and Miruko was certain because she had followed him through so many battles, chose the option that would result in the least amount of trouble for the others. She thought about it, the Midoriya who apologized for letting some of them escape even though it was a shock that he was even standing, and the anger bubbled out of her.

"So what the hell were you doing?!" she demanded. "While he was out fighting for his life?"

"I-I was helping make sure that everyone had e-evacuated-"

"And while checking for that, did you think that you were lucky that you didn't meet any of the monsters?"

"I-I did, meet one-"

"Yeah?"

"I... Midoriya... took care of it."

"...How lucky," she told them.

And at least this time, they were quiet about it.

-

"Well," Makoto said, "since we have that set as a baseline, we should be discussing our next steps-"

The door to the makedo conference room (one of the classrooms with broken windows to maximize the number of people who could attend) knocked and Setsuno poked his head in.

"Midoriya's awake," he said.

"Shit, already?" Dabi asked.

"Tell him to go back to sleep," Inui snapped back, already getting to his feet.

"He said to fix the windows first."

"Alright," Makoto said, "Guess we found our next steps."

And what was awful was that the tension deflated in an instant. The dependency they had on a young boy was especially apparent.

### **post meeting & theories**

"...I think we had it wrong," Midoriya said quietly, after a few more gulps of water. He closed his eyes tightly, remember their formation, their planned tactics, and closed his eyes. "I think we've just been fighting scouts this whole time."

"

### **CompressMido - assistance**

Midoriya lost his arm.

In all honesty, it was predictable that this would happen, but annoying. And by annoying, he meant that the pain was bearable, but getting used to not having an arm was not.

“Here, allow me.”

And this.

He hated this.

He glared up at Compress, who gave a smile back. He looked down at the notebooks that Midoriya had pulled out and carefully collected them into his arms.

“You may not remember, but I too recall what it was like to be without a limb,” he said as he hefted up the notebooks. “Things that used to be easy were not, and it often felt like I was in the body. My sense of balance and orientation was all over the map, and it was hard to do things that I normally did easily, like holding something in one hand and getting the door with the other.”

Midoriya stared back, his anger ebbing as a wistful expression crossed his face.

“At that time, you found me.” He gave a wide grin, “So, until your arm is repaired by Overhaul-san, I will do this for you.”

### **Fallout**

“All things

“They could live in peace because they lived in ignorance,” he said quietly. He placed his head in his hands, mourning the loss of a fight no one knew he was in, “I wanted to protect that.”

His hand fell from his head, laying across his knee limply as he looked out the window. Maybe everyone was right.

Maybe omegas can’t do it. Maybe it was, from the second he was born, impossible for him to do anything and be anything more than a warm body to be kept in bed.

“You did,” his head snapped up to where Yagi sat.

They stared at each other for a moment, and the young man honestly thought that perhaps he heard wrong. That he was so desperate for a compliment and validation that he was hallucinating. Why else would former Number One Hero ever lie to his face, telling him that he did protect something?

“You did protect it.”

It was not a hallucination.

“Every single person out there is working to keep this place up and functioning,” he said, voice firm as he clasped his hands in front of him, “because you protected them. They have a choice, and they chose to do this, Izuku-shounen.”

Midoriya stared at him. Like he didn’t know who this was and Yagi understood the price that they paid for their blind trust. He understood the bitter resentment on Aizawa’s face whenever they made eye contact a bit better.

“And now, they want to protect what you wanted to protect.”

The young man stared at him.

“What did I want to protect?” he asked.

Yagi blinked, “This place,” he replied back.

The young man stared at him, his lips twisting into something too painful to be called a smile.

### **OverDeku - forgetting**

Midoriya laid on the bed, an arm over his eyes, and for a brief second, Overhaul felt his breath catch. No way, he thought. Was he...

In a second, Overhaul had the iced bowl with a towel to the side and was kneeling over Midoriya's bed. Pushing his arm off his eyes, he stared in shock as clear green eyes stared back, just as surprised.

"...Excuse me," he said as he got off. The heat of Midoriya's arm didn't leave his hand, leaving it tingly. It was a fever. He knew that Midoria had a fever. and still, his pulse raced. "I don't know what came over me. I thought you were..."

He thought he was what? Crying? Midoriya? Overhaul must be more tired than he thought.

"Regardles, how are you feeling?"

The young man tried to push himself up on his arms, before exhaling sharply. He fell back onto the bed, as though to deomnstrate how he was feeling. Overhaul chuckled, a soundless huff without any mirth, before he made his way over.

"Please, allow me," he said, returning to Midoriya's side to help him sit up. Midoriya's jaw clenched hard, a testament to how much pain he was feeling, but as expected, he didn't complain. "Is that better?"

He nodded.

"Let me know if there's something I can do it increase your comfort," he added.

"I've seen your bedside manner," Midoriya replied back, "I don't particularly want to see what your comfort means."

Overhaul blinked, genuinely shocked that he got an answer like that. He stared for a moment longer before a smile curled up on his lips. There was a lapse in his judgement. The heat of Midoriya's body lingered in his. He must have lost his mind for a second. There was no other justification on why else he would have boldly crossed that line.

"I assure you that I cherish what I treasure," he said, going as far to run his knuckles against Midoriya's cheeks.

And moreso than him, Midoriya was probably removed from his own situation. With a fever burning through his head, barely stitched together and plagued by nightmares, Midoriya was definately not in the right state of mind.

Overhaul was an awful person. He was a terrible person. There was nothing about him that was good nor redeeming. He leaned in and tasted Midoriya's lips. He kissed once and realized that it wasn't enough before he parted. He tilted his head, forcing Midoriya's mouth to part a little more. His tongue swept in, greedily pushing his way in like he was sctarved for it. Eventually, Midoriya gave this quiet whimper, and he finally pulled back. He eyed Midoriya's flushed features, greatly enjoying his pleasure-stained expresison, but managed to pull away.

It was embaressing to think that he lost himself so much, but he couldn't find it in himself to regret it.

"...Was that comforting?" he asked. This would be why Midoriya hated him, but that was fine. He would rather be hated for something he did than something he was.

"It's not... It's not enough."

Overhaul's heartbeat seemed to echo in his head.

"I would hate to disappoint you," he said, "So consider this your warning." He slipped his jacket off, and crawled over Midoriya's figure. It wasn't hard, considering how laughably small the young man was, "I am a little out of practice."

"I don't care," Midoriya said, "I just want to forget for a moment."

That, Overhaul could do.

"Then," he cupped Midoriya's face, "please, treat this like a bad dream."

Because Overhaul didn't mind being a bad dream. Reality would be different than this, after all.

Midoriya's hand, and he couldn't imagine how much it must have hurt to move his arm at all, came to his neck.

"You're not a bad dream," Midoriya said. "I'm not so far gone that you're taking advantage of me."

It was probably because Midoriya had no idea what he actually had done. Did he think that taking advantage over a vulnerable omega was the worst thing that he had done? That this would weigh his conscience? That he had a convicence? It was so laughable.

### **Returning his arm**

"Thanks," Midoriya said.

With the return of his arm, it really felt like they had recovered.

## Recovery Mess

### **Fuyumi & Midnight - fallout**

She once heard Midoriya say it.

"They can live in peace because they live in ignorance. I wanted to protect that."

But until the incident where they were attacked at the sc hool base, she didn't really understand that.

-

"Good morning, Fuyumi."

Fuyumi jerked, her head snapping up at the sound of her name, and felt her vision smear around her. Briefly, she felt as though she was being spun about, and that was why her vision was suddenly convinced that the walls were the floors and vice-versa.

A pair of hands came for her arms, steadying her as she stood.

"Whoa… I'm… I'm fine, sorry about that, Nemuri-san."

Midnight pursed her lips, and gently guided her to sit down. She crouched in front of her, while Fuyumi desperately tried to fight off the wave of sleepiness.

"...Fuyumi-chan, have you gotten any sleep this week?"

Fuyumi, who closed his eyes and can see the exact shape and color and size of the claw that came for her, shuddered.

"... Do you want some help?" Midnight asked, her voice as gentle as a lullaby.

It would feel better, safer, but a shudder racked through Fuyumi's body instead. A sob was strangled out of her throat, and she shook her head.

Midnight, having a good understanding of what was going on, wrapped her arms around her. The younger woman buried herself into the embrace, in desperate hopes of finding comfort.

"...Fuyumi, I promise you that we won't let anything happen to you."

Fuyumi shook her head. "That's the point," she said, her voice cracking, "I don't want to be alone like that anymore."

It stung Midnight to hear. As a hero, it was downright insulting to hear. It was expected that a hero would save everyone they could, themselves and the victims and sometimes even the villains.

But even then, there were plenty of heroes who could not live up to those expectations. From then to now, where they have to fight monsters and other hellish creatures on a daily basis, she understood Fuyumi.

The fastest way to dispel this would be to just put her to sleep. Her quirk will at least make sure she doesn't become dependent on sleeping pills or the likes. The second fastest would be to tell her to pull herself together for the children here. However, the children here were tougher than nails, and Midnight felt like she needed her own strength right now.

What would Midoriya do? She couldn't help but wonder about the omega.

"Fuyumi, I can't make promises about tomorrow or next week," she said. "But the better prepared we are, the smoother that transitions will be. The first step is sleep. Then food and water. Start with what you can control."

Would sleep come to her? Midnight would ensure it. Because right now, that was what Midnight could do for her.

### **Kindness - Ura & Stain**

The thing about living through a post-apocalyptic world, Uraraka thought, was that people were incredibly nicer when they knew they were going to die. It seemed to be a constant of some sort, and something that she saw the most probably because she was also a minor.

A lot of people looked at her and thought, even though she (if society never fell) would have been in high school by now, "oh a young child."

It was frustrating.

"...Are you frustrated?"

Her head snapped up to where Stain stood next to her. Hunched over like that, he was still taller than her. Maybe because of the accumulated stress and boiling annoyance at the whold world, she frowned back.

Stain's eyes glanced at her for a brief second before he looked back forward to the other spar.

"Hard work doesn't lie," he told her.

And more than hearing that she just needed to try harder or that she needed to take more breaks or that she should just rest or that she just shouldn't bother or that everything will magically work out in the end, this was what she wanted to hear.

"...Will it ever be enough?"

"No idea," Stain replied, "Does it make a difference?"

She thought about it, the sweet smile on her parents' face when they told her to have a good day. The same sweet smile on her paretns' face when they told her that they weren't tired, and that her grades were so good that she could put in two snacks instead of one. She wondered if they would have been together if they were all miserable instead.

Until the apocalypse, or maybe this was something every growing child learned and now she could say that she was an adult, she never knew that kindness was so damn painful.

### **Uraraka calls him out on that**

"You're not-stop that!"

Midoriya looked surprised, for the briefest moments, as Uraraka's voice broke.

"You're not a bad person!" she shouted. "You're not... You're not anyone or anything other than you, Midoriya Izuku-san!"

She stared at him, wondered how she ever thought she could be a hero when she missed this man the whole time. But she could wallow in her pity-party later. Taking a deep breath, she spoke clearly and prayed that her words would reach him.

"You don't have to do anything other than your best. You don't have to be anyone other than who you want to be. And one day, one day you can look back and see who stayed with you this whole time."

She wanted that to be her. She wanted to be the one that would withstand the test of time with him, for no other reason than that selfish desire to see what Midoriya who was cherished as much as he cherishes looked like. She wanted to be there to see the world that Midoriya did protect, and the world that turned because of his careful certainties. She wanted to live in that world.

"So you don't... You don't have to feel like you're undeserving of your hard work and rewards. Because," she straightened up and gave a smile, looking about ready to cry, "it's the fault of the deceived, right?"

And these days, Midoriya was beginning to think that in exchange for saving them, he took something irreplaceable from them.

"...Isn't that unfilling for you?" he asked quietly.

She shook her head.

"I didn't get to say goodbye to my mom and dad. We had a good relationship, and I loved them as much as they loved me," she said. "And when I get to see them again, I wanna tell them that I was fine. I did great. I lived my whole life, true to myself and all that I want to do." She grinned back, "And that's got nothing to do with you, right?"

Being alone, Midoriya thought, was liberating.

"You're right," he said quietly. A smile slowly made his way onto his face.

The world did not end. The world was not awful.

The world would be what they wanted.

### **shotoDeku - shot of morphine**

"...When I'm with you, I feel invincible," Shouto said, placing his hand over his heart. "Like, there's nothing else in the world but you, and I... I don't know what to call this feeling."

Spinner covered his gaping mouth, his tail wrapping tightly around his waist and he slowly started to blend in with the background. What did he just walk into? Unable to take his eyes off the scene of the youngest Todoroki and their base leader, he missed the equally shocked expression of the second-youngest Todoroki just a few feet away.

It almost sounded like he just walked into a confession of some sort-

"Morphine," Midoriya replied back. He reached over to the cabinent, "That feeling that your describing is morphine."

-oh no.

"Oh, I see," Shoto said softly, understanding.

"No, no, no," Natsuo disagreed as he pushed himself into the center of their discussion. "I can't just sit back and let this happen.I won't let you build a morphine addiction."

And while Spinner didn't think that was the only problem here, he did understand why Natsuo looked so frazzled.

### **Hawks doesn’t want to intrude on that happiness**

Hawks almost broke his neck when he whipped around, as soon as he heard that sound. Rushing at his fastest, he managed to suddenly stopped just in time to feel his heart and body nearly separate. He stared, jaw loosening as the scene opened in front of him. Indeed, there was Midoriya, an easy smile on his face as he leaned back in his chair as he laughed quietly at something Jirou and Kaminari argued about.

It stung. Undoubtedly, he was a little upset, a little sad, that he could only see his smile when he was tucked from around the corner and on the second floor and out of sight. However, this was the first time he had seen Midoriya smile on the schoolgrounds.

He leaned against the wall, the out of their sight. He didn't want to go into that room and get true and actual proof that just his pressence could take that smile away. He closed his eyes and took the moment in. Deep in his heart, he prayed that this would not be the last time he heard Midoriya's laugh.

It was quiet enough that he wanted to silence the others. It was breathless, like he laughed too hard and he couldn't catch his breath. Hawks memorized it, from the sound of his laugh to the way he breathed, and wished that he spent an extra moment to see how his lips stretched, the way his shoulders hunched, everything. A slow breath stretched from between his teeth.

Hawks didn't even realize how greedy he could be until he learned about what he couldn't have.

"Hawks."

His head snapped up. How did he even miss someone coming up to him? He looked up, and saw his face.

"Midoriya," he whispered.

"I thought I saw you here," Midoriya said, "What are you doing?"

"I..." saw you smiling and would die if I was the reason why you stopped "got lost," he decided.

Midoriya arched an eyebrow at him, calling him out on his bullshit in a single move.

"Alright," he said. "Then, I'll be your guide. Where do you want to go?" When Hawks couldn't find his voice, his expression softened up. Briefly, Hawks couldn't help but think that he didn't know who this man was. "...There's a place I want to go, will you come with me?"

This one, Hawks had an answer.

"Yes," he said, not even pausing to think about it. Maybe this was a dream. Maybe none of this was real. Maybe he did die, sometime ago and he was so lost and bitter that he didn't even realize it. "Wherever you wanna go."

But Midoriya smiled again. And Hawks didn't think that he would ever be lost again.

### **Not a Pack**

"It's like we're pack-"

The words sent an electrical shock through Midoriya as he shot to his feet. With an expression that was the closest thing to fear they had ever seen on Midoriya's face, his voice came out sharp and hurt.

"We're not Pack!" he snapped out. "And we will never be Pack!"

Koda, who never spoke louder than a whisper to begin with, flapped his mouth open and closed. Fat tears welled up in his eyes as he dropped his gaze to the ground. His shoulders trembled, the shock of being yelled at transitioning to straight pain at the sharp rejection that rang in the room.

there was a long silence, as though Midoriya finally realized the extent of his action. He took a shaky sigh, like he was the one that had been rejected, and covered his eyes.

Taking a deep breath, he straightened up.

"...It's not an attack on you," he said quietly, "But just because you have no choice in the people you're with doesn't mean that you have to be pack with them."

Koda nodded, but he sniffled loudly.

And figuring that this was the best he could do, Midoriya sighed like it was such a pain to deal with all these emoting children. He gathered the papers back into his notebook and headed out of the room without looking back.

-

"You uh, really hate the idea? Of being a pack?"

"No," Midoriya shook his head, "I just don't want to be in a pack with anyone here."

He knew that it would just be awful. Packmates who lose the person that they bond or imprint on could die from a crippling emptiness. He doesn't wish that on anyone here. Wasn't it bad enough that they were so unevenly distrubited? If they became a pack, he had no doubts that several of them would take the opportunity to permamently imprint on him.

Just let him die, alone and hopelessly lonely, and far away from anyone else here. At this point, it was all that he wished for. He had killed enough people, and he didn't want to take someone down with him. Contrary to popular belief, he didn't actually enjoy hurting people.

But Koda's words scared him.

Somehwhere, far away, he knew that he would be happy with a pack like this, and that scared him.

He didn't want to be happy-he wanted to be free.

But at some point, his desires started to twist about. At some point, he had started to betray himself.

So Midoriya prayed that before it came to light, he would pass on. He'd rather die as a heartless bastard than a lying one.

### **Niichan - dabdek**

"...Touya-niichan!"

There was only one thing that made Dabi lose his smile that fast. There was only one thing, and Midoriya watched with mild amusement as Dabi's expression twisted into a grimace.

"Touya-niichan, they're calling for you."

Dabi pointed at him, "Don't. Start."

But how could be angry, when Midoriya's smile was finally directed at him?

-

Being happy was a strange thing, because for the longest time, Dabi didn't think that it was for him. Being happy just wasn't something that was for him or people like him or really anything. Being content, having peace, it was all things that felt so foreign to him that he occationally felt like it wasn't his. Like, this wasn't his body, and his life. He was just floating along in someone else's dream, distant and not his.

Before, having food, water, and a place to rest his head was a luxury. Reducing people into ash was something he did to pass the time, the same way some people drew or sang or read. And since his life was never supposed to amount to anything, he was fine with it. There was a period of his life where he thought that he wanted to be happy, but that burned to a crisp when he did and then he...

And then he wanted to burn the things that made other people happy.

For a while, it was because he didn't think that it was fair. How come [anyone] could be happy when he doesn't even remember what it felt like? It wasn't fair.

So Dabi brought suffering. He incinerated those happy smiles and victories with a wave of his hand. All their joys and fortune was nothing more than a few pounds of ash by the time he was done. And for a while, that was enough. Days turned into weeks turned into rain and shine and all of it was nothing more than the ash that he brushes off his jacket and there would be nothing. Suffering was as easy as breathing. Living was suffering. And for majority of Dabi's life, he never had a reason to think differently.

Then, the world ended.

"Dabi," he looked up, where Midoriya vaulted over the railing and dropped down right next to him. He stood up, a small smile on his face when he saw Dabi because Dabi brought him joy.

Dabi's fire rought him peace. Dabi brought him joy. The entire thing felt like a contradiction, but Midoriya looked around, looked for him, and Dabi gets this feeling budding in his heart.

He doesn't know what it was. He doesn't know what he could call it. But when Midoriya says-

"We got the plan figured out, come with me."

-it felt like there was no other response he could come up with other than-

"Okay."

-

"Niichan!" Natsuo said, grinning as though they've never spent any time apart and they were still four and running through the forest behind their estate, "We're going to have a waterballoon fight. Let's be on the same team."

Dabi arched an eyebrow at him. "And you think that I'd go because..."

Natsuo arched an eyebrow at him, "Because Dad's going to be one the other team."

Standing around uncomfortably in soggy clothes on this hot summer day, or the opportunity to humiliate Endeavor...

Dabi stood up.

"Lead the way."

-

The number of things that he wanted to protect (and that was a strange thought all on its own) had increased. He didn't even realize it until they were outside, and saw Hakamata's back hit the wall. He was probably thrown into the wall by his strings.

And regardless of the reason, Dabi had already moved to incinerate the lingering monsters that crawled their way over for an easy meal.

"I appreciate the cover!" the man, as polite as always, replied back through labored breaths.

He had to hand it to him, he was already up on his feet and ready to go again.

"Don't mention it," Dabi replied back. He narrowed his eyes as the monsters slowly reformed. "Looks like we got some tough customers."

"Indeed. It would appear that we have our work cut out for us."

Dabi's eyes trailed to the way one of Best Jeanist's hands cradled his ribcage as his breathing steepened. Something tugged inside of him, and he stood in front of the man.

"Go catch your breath," he said. "You're just going to get in the way."

"Thank you for the concern, but I assure you that I am fine, Niichan."

Okay, Dabi thought, scratch that. He didn't care what the fuck happened to Best Jeanist here.

### **Midoriya can’t fucking wait**

"I mean, yeah, he's an omega," they would say, "but he's doing a good job here."

"Our leader really pulls our base together, even though he's an omega. I can't imagine anyone else doing as well as he has."

And one day, those words wouldn't pinch his heart. The things that they say wouldn't be a back-handed compliment. It won't bother him anymore.

Midoriya couldn't wait.

### **Todoroki-kun, the Inconvenience**

The unbridled rage in his heart made everything else fade away. His fire, in response, was outlined in a bright orange with a blue center that painted the entire corridor.

The bastard that made a mess of his people was going to pay.

"Todoroki-!"

The sound was drowned out by the fire crackling, but the feeling of someone running into him, reaching for his arm and shoving it away from the monster. He gave a sharp hiss and Todoroki reeled backwards in betrayed shock because of all the people that would try to interfere with killing a monster, he would never expect it to be Midoriya.

Face twisted in pain, Shouto could only overlap his mother's terrified expression from when he was four, and felt his heart chip away to the sound of sizzling fire.

"...Wh...why...?"

Midoriya wasted no time, even with fresh burns adorning his arm, and grabbed Todoroki by the front. Eyes bright with sharp determination took in his features, as though he was worried about Todoroki being injured when he was the one with second-degree burns. He released him anad turned back to the monster.

All in all, it was a battle that would have ended much sooner if Todoroki had used his fire. Of course, there was a chance that Todoroki's fire might have burnt others, except no one was in the area but himself and Midoriya and the building was clear for fire-use-that's why Todoroki was allowed here in the first place.

"...Todoroki," Midoriya said, summoning all the attention in the room to him in an instant, "You are kind."

Todoroki's shock and frustration turned into confusion.

"What?"

"The way you used to look at the people you hate have turned softer. You're ... getting ready to forgive him, right?"

Heterochromatic eyes stared back in his wide-eyed surprise, but Midoriya continued.

"I know. It's because you're kind. But your kindness scares me." Midoriya admitted. "If it turns out that one day, all the people here could have been saved, I think that kindness will kill you in turn."

Todoroki jerked backwards.

"At that time, the people we call enemies and monsters will become victims. Do you understand that?"

Yes, Todoroki wanted to say. He understood loud and clear, what Midoriya was saying. That Midoriya still viewed them as walking and talking inconveniences that hindered him.

## Autumn

[[Train Station? Ingenium + Vlad King + Dabi + ]]

### **Settled Teams-**

Midoriya cleaned his blade one more time. There was no actual need to do it, since this would be the fourth time he wiped it down, but it helped him think.

### AiDeku - confession

A thud resounded. And then another. It echoed and another slam hit. With every slam, Midoriya felt his head throb, as though they were hammering on his head instead of the door. He spat a mouthful of blood on the ground, coughing miserably as his hand came down to the open wound on his side.

What a mess.

He tried to pull up onto his knees, but he couldn't get his body to listen to him. Wheezing, feeling as though his ribcage was collasping in on itself, he tried to summon the strength to get up. If he could get up, then he could fight. And if he can fight, he would win. He wasn't going to lay here and just accept-

"Izuku!"

Fuck.

His desperate wriggling to survive ramped up a little, even as his energy seeped out like his blood.

"Shit, oh shit, Izuku?"

Aizawa's hand came to his head. He pushed his hair back and leaned in to kiss him fully on the lips. It was chaste, a press of warm lips before he pulled back. His eyebrow smoothed out, a rare look of serenity crossing that dirty face.

"I love you, Izuku," he said, before he punched Midoriya in the stomach, right above where the open wound gushed.

No, no. Midoriya said. Because this always happened.

People who said they loved him always left him.

He didn't want this. He didn't want this. His fuzzy vision darkened further, and if he closed his eyes, the last thing he would see would be that merciful expression from a needlessly vicious man.

Against best judgement, his eyes closed.

-

A metal door came crashing down from the ceiling, landing right over the monster's head like a moment from a silly cartoon. Aizawa's eyes stared, just long enough to register that this monster wasn't going to be an immediate threat, so he turned back to the fight.

When the fight was over, and Aizawa had a new dislocated shoulder and broke his arm in two parts, he turned back to the equally exhausted looking Midoriya.

"You-"

"-What does it mean?" Midoriya cut him off, and wasn't that a first, "to love someone? Is it the person you happen to see right before you die?"

Aizawa stared back.

"It was purely selfish," the older man said, "that's it. I wanted to make one more memory before I died."

The pump of adrenaline slowly died out, and it left behind the staggering weight of his guilt. The word that he held back for so long managed to finally unhinge in his chest and escape his lips.

"And, I wanted you to know that you are loved."

"Is that your love? The willingness to die in a useless and avoidable manner? Then, was I supposed to feel happy that someone who loved me wanted to die?"

"Since I didn't die, and it's all aired out anyways," Aizawa replied back, "I'll prove it to you, bit by bit, everyday that I'm alive."

Aizawa's tired slouch straightened, although he favored one side a little bit, as his earnest gaze met Midoriya's.

"I love you, Izuku. Sorry that this was the circumstances I told you in. Let's talk about this when we get back."

"Don't bother," Midoriya replied back, eyes cold. "Since you didn't die."

-

It didn't feel like their relationship changed. Which didn't say much, because Midoriya rarely spent any time with him to begin with. But there were moments, right when their eyes met, and maybe it was the way the sunset filtered through the windows, it looked like Midoryia blushed.

It made his heart leap into his throat, even if his expression didn't change.

"Izuku, the inventory update," he said, waving the report in his hand.

But today was different.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out another slip of paper and handed it to Midoriya. The young man furrowed his eyebrows, probably wondering what it was. He let him take it, watched eyes skim over it and managed a smile when green eyes landed on him.

"This-"

"Traditionally," Aizawa cut in, "I would give this to your parents and have them agree. And then, I would officially try to court you. Obviously, things are different now, but I understand the thought-process behind such archaic ways. Naturally, I don't need an answer right now." He placed both hands on the desk and leaned in closer to Midoriya's face, just until their noses almost touched. "I want to spend the rest of my life with you," he said, voice quiet like the dying twilight, "And I want you to view me as a suitable mate. Does that make my intention clear?"

He leaned back, breaking the spell that froze their moment. He gave a coy little smile, eyes bright in a way that Midoriya hadn't ever seen before.

"Look forward to it. I'll keep my eye on you."

With a lazy wave over his shoulder, Aizawa walked out with a spring in his step. Left behind, face flushed darker than the amber skies, Midoriya stared at the Letter of Intention left in his hands.

### Autumn Rut Season

And of course, his favorite part of rutting statements. The words of people who knew better than him.

"Well, we wouldn't need to do any of these things if we didn't have an unbonded omega strutting about on base."

"Izuku, you should consider making life easier for everyone and accept a bond."

Which was bullshit, unless they had an omega for ever alpha here. Unless they meant that he would service all these alphas. Actually, they could mean that, given the nature of pushover betas who ganged up on anyone who rocked their shitty boat. Sacrifice one omega to all the rutting alphas, just get all the rut out of those alphas, and the whole rutting season would be over in a week or two. Obviously, the omega would be in less-than-ideal shape, but that wasn't their problem. They wanted to live easy, peaceful and without needing to tread on ice around every growling, territorial, snaring alpha. It was fair. If Deku was in their position, he would probably do the same thing.

He's considered it. Since they had a few healing-quirks and Overhaul, it wasn't like it would be impossible. And no doubt, it was something that would happen to him eventually. Most likely, it would be how he died, fucked out or while during birth. Deku had come to terms with that, and it didn't effect him.

However, the alphas here were tender-hearted. If he showed even the slightest bit of favorable interest, they would hold onto it. They would clutch onto that possibility, and Deku, who had no plans to live past the next ten years, didn't want to condemn them to something so pitiful.

"Are you volunteering?" Deku replied back, a cruel smile on his lips.

"Well, I'm not an omega, so it wouldn't work."

"Oh, you've already tried it?"

The beta's face flushed red, the implications not going unmissed, but Deku thought that it was interesting. It was something worth getting so flustered over, but they could recommend someone else to do it just as easily. This was an old argument, one that they always brought and Deku always replied back in kind. You would think that they would learn by now.

You would think that he would learn by now.

"Everyone knows that only omegas could do something like that," the beta blurted out. "And since you're the leader here, you should be taking care of it."

"I'll take care of it the same way I always have. Not sure how you missed that, since you've lived here a while, but I'm sure we can teach an old dog a few new tricks."

Gnashing teeth, looks of contempt, the whispering behind his back, all of it were things he was used to. All of it were things that he expected. None of it meant anything to him. Back when he was younger and wasn't killing to see another day, he might have bent under their words and destroyed himself in an effort to make the area he was living in easier for everyone else.

Not now. But back then.

He gave a wave as he left, because the world would keep turning regardless of how many times they fought here and now.

### **The subway survivors:**

Midoriya knew, somewhere far away in the back of his mind, that humans were durable at their worst. Looking around the makeshift camp that they made at a train station, he couldn't help but stare in fascination.

"Impressive right? I suppose for an omega, this must look cool. It's a little shabby, but it's home!"

And it was clear that he had spent too long looking around. He could really do without all the extra commentatry. Midoriya kept his mouth shut. He tried not to think about how much the other people were craning their necks to see if he was unbonded. Trying not to look as self-concious as he felt, he focused forward.

"Aw, a shy one, huh?" their guide laughed. "Don't worry, there's a few other omegas here, so I'm sure you'll fit right in."

"How many people are here?" Ingenium asked.

"We just have under forty people. We got a new kid too, haha! Just born last week!"

Midoriya eyed the train station. It was a train station that didn't get any light, and wondered how clean the facilities would be, for a child to be born where it was consummated. Surely, they would have enough decency to-

"Don't worry," the guide continued, a wide grin on his face, "We treat our omegas well. After all, they belong to everyone."

Midoriya felt his skin crawl, but kept his features neutral.

Well, he supposed that of the groups that they did run into, this was a more humane one. It wouldn't surprise him if some of them decided to stay here.

-

"I understand that you don't have any other omegas in your group," he said, probably assuming . "We have plenty of omegas here, so I'm sure that you'll fit right in. I mean, with your group, I suppose that you've had plenty of practice already."

Midoriya imagined a future where the world didn't end and this was the norm. It was world where heroes protected justice and hope while villains embedded despair into people. It was a beautiful world where he had no chance of witnessing for himself, filled with color and life and joy for almost everyone. He was, again, glad that the world ended. He waved at the Dabi, hoping that he doesn't ruin this for them and would just play along instead. Bitterly fighting for every inch of life and every second of temporary peace was more Midoriya's style.

Dabi didn't say anything, but the look in his eyes might set someone on fire. Good thing his quirk didn't activate from staring too hard.

"You're pretty quiet, so I'm sure you won't have any trouble picking up what the others are going to say. Well, go ahead and run along there," their tour guide said ignorant and ignorant could be, motioning to where supposed omega were, "while I discuss some boring stuff with your alphas."

His smile was warm and gentle. Briefly, Midoriya thought that he would be a good father. The type that did his best to make sure his kids could live carefree about the world while he took the brunt of the burden. The kind that could laugh off the world falling apart if it meant that his kid would have another good memory. He would have respected him, in a different time and place.

Well, in Rome, do as Romans do, he supposed.

### **Listening to others - IngeMido**

"I'm more shocked that you listened," Ingenium admitted. "Is... everything okay?"

Midoriya shrugged. Was he cooling off? Was he an adult now? He often heard that angry teenagers become adults when their hormonal anger faded. He wondered if that's all his anger and frustrations about the world amounted to. Just. Hormones.

"We're the guests here," he said, trying not to think about how the others flawlessly fit in.

Even though, in his heart, he always knew that they would all leave for something better and more familiar, he supposed that he spent too much time with them. If they leave now, he will feel the emptiness. Despite his best efforts, it would appear that he failed in that sense.

He shrugged back.

Let them enjoy this. Then, he should present them a farewell gift, right? Let them leave with a smile on his face and well-wishes for the future. Or whatever.

And, there was something slithering around in the train station. He wasn't sure what this group was trying so hard to hide. It was pretty obvious, and it wasn't like it was going to scare them away.

If they were that scared of monsters, then they wouldn't be traveling like this.

Well, regardless, Midoriya was certain that there were monsters here. He would kill all of them before he moved on. It was a long trek back, but it would be faster if it was just him.

Unlikely, since they would probably return to take their close friends.

Midoriya wondered how different it would look. Or it would be better if he could finally take his leave. The thoughts swirled around in his head. The thought that he would be alone again accompanied him heavier than it used to.

He leaned backwards, his hand coming up to his side. It wasn't bad now. The blood dried and otherwise stopped bleeding. He should be okay.

### **Vlad & Human Company**

One of the men laughed, his face glowing as he approached Vlad King.

"Amazing," he said, "You were well this whole time?"

"...Yes," the former pro-hero said, quiet but certain.

"Wow. And you... you look great!"

He didn't flinch, but the expression on his face was something that Midoriya reconized. Did he still think that it was a bad thing to be alive? Aizawa and the others explained it to him once. The word to describe the feeling of unrepentable guilt when the wrong someone comes back alive. He stared for a moment longer, and for a moment, the figure of Vlad at the amusement park, laughing as he helped family take pictures together, overlapped the uncomfortable-looking man twenty feet away.

Without thinking about it, Midoriya opened his mouth.

"Vlad, make yourself useful," he called out, his voice cutting through their conversation as Vlad spun to him with wide eyes, "go help with the heavy lifting by Compress."

"Understood," Vlad said, breaking out into a jog. "Where?"

"You can't even figure that out?" Midoriya chided, he sighed and motioned to his left, "Go."

As soon as Vlad was out of earshot, the adults around him converge on him.

"Hey! Your rude attitude is unacceptable."

"Kids these days, no sense of respect... Don't you know who that is?! That's Vlad King! He was a Pro-Hero!"

Their mutters and their grumbling sounded no different to the people back at their base or the people that stood back and whispered about his mother and him when they rounded the corner. Was it really a relief that humanity hadn't changed and just adapted to this new life is this was what had survived? Midoriya wouldn't know.

But he did know was that people were fragile. There was only so many burdens they could take before their body buckled under the strain. Since he wasn't going through a lot at the moment, he should relieve them of their burden.

-

"Izuku," Vlad spoke so quietly that Midoriya felt surprised. He didn't think the man could speak so softly, "Do you have a moment?"

Midoriya, who wasn't 'allowed' to be on night-duty since he was an omega, was getting ready to retire into his small tent for the evening. He nodded his head, and motioned for Vlad to follow him into their designated area. In reality, it was unspeakable that he, an alpha, would be entering an unmated omega's sleeping quarters, but safety ranked a little higher than societal comforts.

As soon as the tent fell, and the two were away from prying eyes, Vlad spoke.

"You don't have to look after me," he said. "I am well-prepared and capable of handling a few mean comments."

His leader nodded, "I know."

"I know that I haven't really been living up to... you what?"

"I know. You're strong and capable. You were a hero before, so you know how to handle critisism. I know."

Vlad blinked back. "Oh?"

"I just didn't want to hear it," Midoriya spoke frankly. He moved to sit down on his makeshift cot, some flattened cardboard and Dabi's jacket, and pulled a map out from his bag. "Don't get used to it."

Vlad stared at him for a moment longer.

"If you hate me, act like it. If you don't like any of us, don't do things like this."

The space between midoriya's eyebrows creased when he furrowed his brows, no doubt annoyed at the fact that someone was ordering him about. Before he could open his mouth, however, Vlad was kneeling in front of him, leaning dangerously into his space.

Midoriya, who could stop a train with a punch, didn't give up a single inch of space. Vlad came close enough that he could feel their breath mix, and he felt a surge of desire in his blood.

"Please don't give me hope."

He leaned backwards and stood up.

"Good night, Izuku."

### **Another omega:**

Somewhere, far away in his head, Midoriya had hoped that they would never arrive. That he would remain the only unbonded omega, and the youngest of them. Of course not, since nothing about his life was easy.

"...No one might come for a long time," Midoriya said, stepping out in front of the young child. "So if you're okay with just anyone, why don't you come with me?"

And the child, who smelled like an omega, stared back.

He took Midoriya's hand.

### **Questions on Bonding**

Midoriya tilted his head to the side.

"It'll be easier if you just bond with someone."

Which was the exact opposite of everything that they were expecting to hear from the only other unbonded omega on base.

"There's plenty of alphas here," he continued. "I'm sure one of them would do it."

The omega that they recently found, a lost child who couldn't remember their name so they named him after the place they found him.

Connie, short for Convenience Store.

The kid, because there was nothing else they could call him, slowly opened his mouth.

"...You?"

Midoriya's fingers froze.

"No, it can't," he said, voice cold. "Go find a real alpha."

As though in preparation for that answer, Connie carefully kneeled down in front of him. He pressed his forehead to the ground.

"Please," he begged. "Please don't throw me away,"

And Midoriya stared at little Connie. His expression twisted into something awful, like he had been stabbed, before his features turned into something more neutral.

“Then, you better find yourself an alpha.”

-

“...Hey, you know, that was, uh … pretty cold.”

Midoriya shrugged back. “Are you going to take mercy on him then?”

### **Not the only omega**

“Are you like, jealous that you’re not the only omega here anymore?”

Actually, Midoriya was never the Only Omega here. There were a few others, like four of them total. But of them, three of them were happily bonded with their alpha at the moment.

Was he jealous? Yes, of course he was.

He would love to find peace with himself. And he’d love to be happy. If this growing itch would just stop, and he could sleep at night again.

But, if that meant that someone else had to suffer instead, then it wasn’t worth it.

That’s it.

-

Midoriya looked from Dabi to the book and then back up to Dabi.

“I have received the book,” he said.

“Yeah.”

“But you’re still here…?”

Dabi gave a humorless smile, the corners of his lips twitching up into a frightful image. He tilted his head, “That’s probably the nicest way you’ve told me to fuck off.”

The young man dropped his gaze onto the book.

“...But you look like you want to say something. So I’ll leave once you say it.” With that, Dabi settled into one of the seats. “The second book is the best one of the trilogy,” he said, referring back to the book he gave Midoriya, “Couldn’t find the third one in the library. I’ll keep an eye open for it when we head back out.”

“How come you gave this to me?” he asked.

“...Because we talked about books we like to read?” Dabi retorted back. Inquisitive eyes landed on Midoriya, the confused expression on his face. “Did you think I forgot?”

“...Yes,” the young man nodded, “since,” he made a vague motion to the outside.

Dabi stared for a bit and then looked down at his hands.

‘I know you don’t really like hearing people talk about it, but this is ridiculous.” He stood up. “You. The one I wanna bond with is you.”

He gave a lazy wave over his shoulders.

“And maybe this time, you’ll believe me.”

And whether or not finding and having another unbonded omega was a good thing or not was not nearly as ambiguous as people tried to make it.

### **Holding Back - [stain]**

"Midoriya-"

Stain crouched down next to him. Midoriya scooted away. Stain pretended it didn't bother him, the same way he always did.

"-We're clear on this floor-"

-Are you okay? Are you hurt? Where do you want to go from here? What's your plan? Could I be apart of it?-

"-encountered 14. All of them killed and set in the courtyard to burn," he finished his report without once letting his personal feelings leak.

Midoriya eyed him from the corner of his eye and nodded. Slowly, he stood up. Stain's eyes trailed down his back, and wondered if he should mention that he was fully equipped to help with the wounds on his back.

His mouth watered as he focused on the beads of blood smeared across his back. He closed his eyes, suppressing his needless desire and focusing back on the task on hand.

"Akakuro," Midoriya said, quiet like the breeze between them, "Welcome back."

And Stain would march into the mouth of hell itself if he could hear that again. He dipped his head forward, riding out the swell in his heart.

"Yeah," he said, his voice strangled by an emotion he couldn't place. "I-"

-I'll always return to your side-

"-I'm back."

### **Kirishima almost confesses**

Sunny skies stretched above him. Kirishima took a deep breath, feeling nervous before he even started.

Today was the day. He was going to lay his feelings bare and get rejected and take it like a man.

It was going to be good. It was going to sting like hell, and he might cry really hard about it for the next week and a half, but it'll be fine. He'll get stronger. He'll bounce back.

And more than anything, he didn't want to think that he had to hide this part about him anymore. So he'll do this. Let Midoriya know that he was a very available option, and get rejected. He would reject him harshly (or so he assumed since it sounded like Midoriya was absolutely brutal to all the others that confessed) and Kirishima was going to take it like a man. He was going to be strong. He was going to be fine. This was fine.

He might be smaller and younger than some of the other people that surround Midoriya, and he wasn't nearly as experienced in a fight or really reliable with a gun and stuff. Still, he was getting better. And it wasn't like they were going to get together either, so he wasn't really holding on to the fact that he had to be stronger than Midoriya or anything but really, it would be stranger to find someone stronger than Midoriya-

He bounced on the balls of his feet ten more times, trying to bounce his thoughts away. Calm down, he scolded himself. Deep breath in, deep breath out.

Feeling a little better, he took a step up to the door and lifted his fist to rap his knuckles.

"Excuse me-"

The door swung open, Midoriya sticking his head around Kirishima and he yelled out, "Endeavor!" He waited a full second, and scowled when there was no answer. His sharp eyes turned to Kirishima, "Are you busy?" he asked.

"Uh." Kirishima said.

"Take this to Brava, and if she frowns, then," he walked back inside, and pulled out a post-it note. He scribbled this and that down on it and slapped it on top of the report. "Get this to Yamada."

"Uh."

Midoriya's eyes were sharp as he ran his fingers through his hair. He looked to Kirishima. "...Well?"

"I'm... I'm on it." He said.

Midoriya gave him a smile, but there was no joy in it. He nodded one more time and moved on to the windows. He threw it open and leaned out, "Compress! Find Shouji and suit up!"

If there was an answer, Midoriya didn't wait for it. He turned back to his desk, looking absolutely frazzled and stressed to hell.

And Kirishima swallowed his feelings and ran to get the work done. His feelings could wait. Midoriya was not one to raise his voice and force people to do thing. If he was, then there was something of great importance that needed their direct attention.

And Kirishima felt the distance between them increase. He didn't even know what he was looking for. Certainly, several of the other adults and heroes and people didn't know either but still. It bugged him since someone did know.

Brava made a face as soon as she saw him. And when she read the paper that he gave to her, frowned hard. He got ready to go to Yamada.

"Oh no," she said. "Tell him I'll take care of this," she said, waving the paper in front of him.

Kirishima nodded and ran back.

Yamada took the post-it note and grimaced. "Thanks for delivering this," he said as he rolled on over to broadcast. He took a deep breath and turned it on, "Oh! Good Afternoon everyone! We got a situation at hand! Endeavor-san, Sakamata-san, Tatsuma-san, and Uraraka-san, please suit up and meet Midoriya-san at the gates in the next ten minutes. Iida-san, the eldest, and Sero-san, please report to the announcement room. Back-up team will be formed by the next ten people that come out to the gates. Let's get moving, Listeners! We got a situation on hand and Midoriya got orders for us! Present Mic, out!"

It clicked when he was finished. He looked at the note and then back to Kirishima.

"Good work," he said, a bright grin on his face and Kirishima wished he could feel like that. "You know what's up?" he asked.

The young man shook his head. The blond rubbed the back of his head.

"Then, it must really be an emergency. He's asking for help."

### **alone - eri**

Midoriya created a flower bed. Because he grew up learning that people placed flowers on graves, in order to ease the suffering of the dead with bright vibrant colors. He thought that, even if there were no bodies left, and they didn't know who they didn't find, they could take these flowers as a comfort.

That, and, even he got tired of the smell of bleach and rot after a while.

However, words of, "Oh, Helmet, you really like flowers, huh? This is really pretty, so I like them too" now became, "Of course Midoriya likes flowers. He's an omega."

And bit by bit, all the things that he liked, all the things that he used to enjoy, were slowly being chipped away from his soul. Despite all that he said about being away from people and not caring about what they did or what they said, their continued words were enough that Midoriya was just exhausted now.

He was much weaker than he initially believed himself to be.

"Midoriya-san!"

He sighed deeply. He didn't want to deal with this. He didn't want this. It would have been better to have died. He should have just died back there, when no one knew and no one felt justified in speaking up to him.

But Eri sat next to him.

She stared at him, bright-eyed and he knew it would be so easy to love her. But, he didn't want to love someone that would end up becoming the same kind of trash society churned out on the daily. He kept those feelings to himself, locked away where it would never see the light of day.

"How are you?" she asked, eyes dazzling.

He shrugged back. She curled into his side. He could already hear the words.

("She must feel comfortable since he's an omega-')

And he closed his eyes and honestly considered clawing his ears off. It wouldn't change anything, but he wouldn't be able to hear it anymore, right?

"I saw you here by yourself," she explained. "So I came, too! Because no one wants to be alone," Eri said, full of confidence.

Midoriya knew she meant well. He knew that it was good and it was okay for her to think that. He knew that it was a good thing that she could think like that. It was a relief to know that she could be so confident.

But she was wrong.

Midoriya hated company.

Midoriya fucking hated company.

If he wanted the company of other people, he would have surrendered to the first batch of survivors that he found. If he appreciated the company of other people, he would have never gone out to keep fighting what's outside. If he craved company so damn much, he wouldn't have hid out in his helmet for so damn long.

Company? The only good company was the dead ones. He could pretend that they were good people and never know the truth, and pretend that the world lost something bright and amazing.

Please, he wanted to beg. Please let him be alone.

Next to him, she started to gently run her fingers against the petals of the flowers.

"...Eri," he said quietly and collecting her attention in an instant, "What's your favorite thing to do?"

"I like planting flowers! And making crowns with them!" she replied without missing a beat.

"Yeah? You know, Kouta likes reading and stacking cards into buildings. That's his favorite thing to do."

She grimaced at the mention of Kouta.

"You see? You both like to do different things, right?"

She nodded, still frowning. "And like how Sakamata-san puts apples in his coffee, but Aizawa-san likes them separately?"

He nodded. She understood. She's a smart kid, definitely smarter than him when he was her age. She'll be fine. She's stronger than a lot of adults would like her to think.

"So, why do you think that no one wants to be alone?"

She blinked, but it was enough. The gears were turning in her head. Midoriya slowly looked back forward.

"Eri, the world is a big place," not that she would know since she was always in here, but, "don't box yourself in by thinking like that, okay?"

"...Do you hate me?"

Was that how she interpreted his words?

"No," he said, a smile on his face, "Of course not."

From the smile that bloomed on her face, she misunderstood. He hoped that someday, sometime in the future, where this smile would grow even bigger and brighter and even stronger, someone would be able to explain to her that she didn't need his approval or anyone else's.

But he wasn't mature enough to lie to her and say he liked her, or anyone, either. If he did, he was terrified that he would never be able to live on his own again. He'd fall apart like tissue paper in water, and the people here will become his reason for being. He'd be nothing more than a puppet to their desires, because that would be what makes them happy and he would have no other purpose. He knew that. He could feel it in his bones.

He felt it when he caught Dabi staring at him again. He believed it when Chimera lingered at his side. He knew it when Nighteye brought snacks in with his reports, when Kirishima fell asleep against his door, when Jiro played his favorite songs, when Stain cleaned and polished his blades by his side, when Miruko and Inasa and Fuyumi and...

And that, that scared him.

If his life only had one ending, and if it was decided at birth who he was supposed to be and how he was going to end, then that was fine.

The time in between, he had those few precious seconds to be free. He would treasure those seconds for the rest of his life. Just let him have those seconds. He didn't think he needed anyone's approval or the likes, but he just wanted to be free.

One day, he thought, placing a hand onto Eri's head and gently ruffling it, he'd be shackled, but at the very least, he'd have chosen it. He smiled when she beamed at him, and he felt like he could feel his heart hollowing out.

He missed being alone.

### **OverDeku - Disillusioned**

"I think this is a new record for you," Chisaki said, "64 stitches."

Midoriya arched an eyebrow at him.

"Is that a challenge?"

The older man snorted. "It was not. Please, I'm not made of time."

A quiet huff escaped from between Midoriya's lips, and Chisaki stared at him for a moment longer.

"What happened?" he asked.

Midoriya shrugged back, and Chisaki watched as he didn't flinch even when the motion pulled on his stitches.

"I'm sure you won't listen to me if I tell you to take a break for at least two days," the former yakuza said, eyeing the way Midoriya was strapping his knife to his belt.

"Good, that'll make this faster."

"But I want to elongate every moment that I spend with you."

Midoriya's fingers paused, and he raised his eyes to meet a pair of eyes, warm like dandelions under the spring sun. There was a phrase, a word, to describe the way that Chisaki looked at him, in these moments where Midoriya and he stopped being patient and doctor.

"What should I do to catch your interest? I thought I was smart enough to figure it out," the man said, leaning against the counter. His words formed a spell of loss, but he remained as handsome as he laid waste to his pride, "But I'm at my wits end. If I lay myself bare to you, will you see my earnest plea? Midoriya, I-"

"Don't say it!"

The silence betweenthem was deafening. Like the silence that followed a gunshot, they stood in a petrified kind of silence for a moment.

Chisaki's jaw clenched tightly as the words sank into his heart. The only pair of fangs that would ever pierce his heart would be from the person that made it worth living.

"If you say it, we can't go back," Midoriya spoke quietly. His eyes furrowed as he shook his head. "I won't ask anything of you, so don't say anything you're going to regret."

Which was the exact opposite of what Chisaki wanted to hear.

"Don't run," Chisaki called out, "Don't make a coward of you and me."

"Then what am I supposed to do?"

"Nothing," Chisaki replied. "It's nothing that requires your action. Not like that. You don't owe me an answer. You don't have to do anything to me, or for me. But don't pretend that it didn't happen. Take me seriously. That's all I want."

To exist, Midoriya was smart so he probably could fill in the blanks like that. He knew, everyone knew, that Chisaki didn't come from a beautiful background and a peaceful life. Chisaki fell under the people that had never experienced peace until the world ended. The thing that mattered to Chisaki the most was the proof that he existed.

And he wanted Midoriya to be that proof. So long as Midoriya recognized it, recognized Chisaki, that was enough. That would be proof, for him, that he ever lived.

"That's not fair," Midoriya whispered.

"No," Chisaki shook his head, 'It's not." Still, he was smiling, because Midoriya was as calously kind as he was gently cruel. "Thank you. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to fall in love with you."

Midoriya stared at him, shock and disbelief painting his face before it turned into something painful, as though Midoriya was stabbed instead of being confessed to. Without another word, he rushed out of the room.

Chisaki rubbed his face.

-

When night began to crawl across the skyline, Midoriya came back.

"Chisaki. Come with me."

And when asked so politely, how could Chisaki ever refuse?

Abandoning everything, he followed Midoriya out the makeshift infirmary, and then out of the main school building. When it looked like they were going to leave the school-ground. Chisaki spoke up.

"Not that I wouldn't follow you anywhere, but shouldn't I be equipped."

"Then don't come with me."

His eyebrow twitched, and a little more cautiously of what was around them, followed. If this was Midoriya's way of testing him, of testing his feelings by demanding complete obediance, then Chisaki should meet in full. If Midoriya didn't recognize his feelings, he wouldn't exist, after all.

If Midoriya told him to die, it would be a beautiful death. If Midoriya was the one who killed him, it would be even better.

"...Not at all," he said, "Lead the way."

And Midoriya, who always looked so certain and moved so confidently, hesitated. He turned back to lead them out.

Without knowing where he was going to go, and without being somewhat close to each other, it would be awkward to stand next to him. However, with Midoriya in front of him, his eyes continued to trail and wonder about what wasn't his. Briefly, he was jealous of the patrol group that got to follow Midoriya out. His eyes traced his back muscles, the way they rippled under taut skin, framed by boney structures, and between one second and another, Midoriya stopped.

"Stay back," Midoriya said, "And watch me."

Green eyes, too bright and too vibrant to fit in metal frams and broken drywall, stole Chisaki's breath away.

"Understood."

Midoriya stepped into the broken frame, and launched himself into the street down below. Chisaki watched, as the shadows beneath broke and scurried at the arrival of their resident brawler. Under the moonlight, Chisaki got to watch the bloodbath smear across the the floor and walls of the street. Closer to the back, some monsters were sniped down, and he understood that the regular patrol group had probably caught up by now.

Still, Chisaki's gaze always returned to Midoriya. He watched as Midoriya gave a kick, his shin coming into contact with a head and it exploded out. Using that momentum, he jumped into the air, spinning around to do a backwards roundhouse kick with his other leg. Landing into a puddle of blood, he slipped onto his hands and pushed off into a flip. Landing onto the next victim, his elbow came swinging at a head. The front two inches of it splattered out, and he plunged his fist into the remains of the head. He leaned forward, tipping the weight over, and as soon as he got to his feet, swung the body to hit the other monsters in the vicinity. With a little more than a foot in all directions cleared out, Chisaki could see with glaring clarity how bright his eyes were.

Standing there, for a few moments that stretched into half an hour before it was just Midoriya drenched in blood, standing alone under the moonlight.

He raised his hand at Chisaki, a motion to come down.

Without any hesitation, Chisaki overhaul'd the side of the building to do just that.

-

"Well?"

"Well what?"

"Have you changed your mind?"

Overhaul's eyes narrowed. Did Midoriya really think that he would change his mind that easily? Just for that? Did he think that he was the same as all those righteous people here? The thing about people who lived as bottom-fodders was that they never had a choice from the start. Those who can't make a choice and go through with them wouldn't make it very far.

"I didn't see a reason to."

"Then you're disillusioned. I thought you hated filthy things."

To punctuate his words, he lifted his hand up to Chisaki.

"Yes," Chisaki agreed, "I do." Still, he didn't shy from Midoriya, and instead took a step forward. He hated filthy things, definitely. He understood what Midoriya wanted to do, what he was trying to do. "But in this filthy world," he said, boldly taking Midoriya's bloodstained hands into his. The blood was slick and cold, but Chisaki relished the thought that someone wasn't pulling away from his touch, "I found something truly beautiful."

He pulled Midoriya's hands to his chest, where his pulse thundered in his chest as Midoriya came so close. Blood smeared across his shirt and jacket, the most innocent feeling Chisaki had ever felt bloomed underneath the lunar sky.

"Or rather, you found me."

The shade of green that had completely redefined his life, from the time he woke up to the way he treats the people around him, stared back at him. Clean. Pristine. Beautiful.

He grinned, finally feeling like he understood what Oyaji meant, all those years ago.

-

"What... just happened?" Spinner asked, lowering his gun down.

Chimera narrowed his eyes as them, a furious scowl on his lips as he moved his rifle over his shoulders.

"Romance," he hissed.

### **Deceived by Strangers, Trusted by Allies**

"...Please save me," she mouthed at him.

Midoriya felt his heart sank. That's not fair. She can't look and act and be like that, and make him feel like he's looking at himself-another him if the society had continued and he had done what he was [supposed] to. She can't do that and look at him and not the heroes and the other omegas and betas and anything, and ask to be saved.

Because of course Midoriya would answer that. Of course Midoriya would trash everything that he had planned for their groups.

Of course. Of course. Of course.

Once upon a time, he wanted to be a hero. He wanted to be someone who saved people with a smile on his face so that young omegas everywhere knew that someone noticed.

"...Save yourself," he said, sliding her his gun. "Follow me."

What would the others say? What would the others do? No, none of that mattered. If he went down this path, it was just going to be him and her and her cubs.

He took a deep, slow breath.

What would he have done to save himself? The wounds that will never heal ached. The pain that has no corresponding scars felt like they were being pried open again.

He didn't even know this woman's name. If someone asked him to pick her out from a crowd, he wouldn't be able to describe any of her features to recognize her. There were nothing more than strangers.

And still, he wondered what she would look like when she smiled.

-

"Oh, Ingenium-san!"

Midoriya did a full-body jerk, and rushed in front of the omega. With the helmet on, it was hard to get a read on him, but Midoriya knew Ingenium. He was a good man who did a lot of good things for the world. All of that was a little skewed now, since they commited crimes on the daily in the name of survival. At this moment in time, that was the only part to Midoriya that mattered.

It was a grave crime to take a bonded omega away from their alpha(s). It was an unforgivable sin to trample on that holy union. It was unthinkable and an action punishable by death. It was terrible and it was awful and it was, 10/10 the wrong thing to do, every time.

But Midoriya stood between Ingenium and the omega. Because he's not a good person or a morally correct one or anything really honest and amazing and dazzling like the heroes he used to watch on TV, once upon a time.

"Go left," he told her quietly. "If you hesitate, they'll break your legs and arms so you don't do this again." He never looked away from Ingenium. Could he win this fight? No, no, that didn't matter. He just needed to make a mess of things so that he could buy her time, and she'll get out of here. She would have to figure it out from there-but he'll make sure that she'll leave.

It was selfish, but he hoped that she would find the answer to the question he's always asked.

"Go. Don't turn back."

"B-But you-"

To think about another person at a time like this, was she foolish or kind?

"Go."

"No, wait," Ingenium said, hands on his helmet. Right when it looked like he was going to take it off, Midoriya kicked his leg, flinging his shoe right at the man's head.

"Go!"

Midoriya snapped out.

And with another fearful look, she started to run.

"No!" Ingenium shouted out. "No, I mean, I'm on your side!"

She, gullible, stopped. It must be hard to think that a hero wouldn't be thinking about the best way to help, but Midoriya knew that [the best possible outcome] was not the outcome that they desired. If burning the whole world down was the first step towards their uncertain outcome that they wanted, then Midoriya will light that match.

"What are you fighting for?!" he yelled out.

Her eyes turned from him to Ingenium and then back to him. She turned back to run.

Midoriya, knowing that Ingenium could be faster than him in the long-run, wasted no time flinging himself at him. His feet came to land squarely on either side of Ingenium's head, landing so his heels went to the inside of his shoulders. He pushed off of him just as fast, flipping over and landing on the balls of his feet while Ingenium stumbled backwards.

"No, seriously, Midoriya, I'm not- I'm your ally!"

Midoriya, as though Ingenium didn't speak at all, moved quickly. He wasn't the type to fall for these kinds of tricks. He was sick of being deceived.

"This way!"

The omega's voice was clear and getting louder. Midoriya's head whipped around, eyes wide in his shock and taking a bad hit to his arm.

"Oh shit, that made contact," Ingenium whispered, his helmet somewhere behind him as his eyes narrowed. "Sorry, are you okay?"

And who asked their enemy if they were okay? Who did that? The thought lingered in Midoriya's head, and he quickly buried it. He jumped backwards, giving himself distance (futile for someone as fast as Ingenium, but he just needed a fucking glance to figure out what the fuck was going on) and his eyes flickered to the edge he just sent that Omega to.

And felt the fight drain out of him, quickly replaced by disappointment like a vacuum, as the omega from before returned followed closely behind by Hawks and Best Jeanist.

...He lost this fight. This would be a bitter fight that would end with far more casualties than needed, but he lost this fight. The moment the omega stared at the blond heroes she returned with all dazzled-eyes and awe, they lost this battle.

She, like many others, wanted security over freedom. He took a deep breath, and felt like he was getting further away from his answer.

"He's the one who gave me this gun! He said to run!" she said, her eyes never once coming to Midoriya's figure.

The young man dropped his arms to his side.

He hated being deceived. It felt like, so long as he could hope, he would be decieved.

He looked at Ingenium and nodded. He placed his hands on his head and closed his eyes. He lost this. The least he could do was accept it with some dignity-

"How's your arm?" Ingenium asked, coming up to him.

"...Fine," Midoriya replied, like both of them couldn't see the way it was swelling.

"Okay, that's good," the man nodded, "You mind explaining what happened?"

"...I got ahead of myself," Midoriya said, he looked to the omega and then back to his feet.

"...Well, I wouldn't normally turn down a spar against you," Ingenium said, a smile on his face, "but maybe next time, you can just, say what you want or what your goal is, even if it changes, and we can work towards it together."

"...What?" the man replied back, narrowing his eyes. "...Why?"

"...If you change your mind on what our objective is, that's fine. If you want to do something else than what we have, it's okay. We don't mind, just let us know."

Midoriya squinted at him.

"If you really wanted to win, wanted to escape, wanted to do whatever it was that you thought we were in the way of, you could have killed me," Ingenium said, placing his hand over his heart. "I wanted to return that trust," he eyed the new swelling bruise on Midoriya's arm, "but I suppose I fell flat of that. Sorry, again."

The young man stared at him.

"I wanted to send her away and separate her bond," he said quietly. "Because she..." he hesitated, and before saying the truth, filtered it. "Because it was what I wanted to do." He shrugged back, "That's it."

"...I get that inkling feeling that you're not saying the whole truth," Hawks said, coming up to them. The omega next to Best Jeanist paled, her body beginning to tremble. "But if that's what you want me to believe, then I'll believe it."

She stared, disbelieving at Hawks, and Midoriya understood where she was coming from. It was okay, because she didn't need to believe them. She didn't need to trust them. This, all of them, were lip service.

"...My gun," he said, because there was no point in this lost battle anymore.

When one side didn't want to fight and stopped fighting, there was no battle.

"Here," Hawks said, handing it back to him. "Don't lose it next time, okay?" he smiled sweetly.

It was clear that they all knew exactly what happened.

The young man took his gun back and holstered it on.

"...Let's go."

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“...He didn’t trust us,” Ingenium said quietly.

Hawks nodded. “He doesn’t.”

He swallowed that bitter feeling down and took a deep breath. He gave Ingenium a hearty slap on the back.

“If you two are done wallowing in your self-pity, we got things to do,” Best Jeanist called out. When the two looked at him, defeated grins gracing their features, the blond relented. He nodded, “and someone’s trust to earn.”

Whatever trust they earn, they have earned, is something as thin and as faulty as ice at the top of a lake. Standing on it would make their balance uneven, and at any opportunity, they could fall into cold waters.

### **DabDek - bleeding head**

Midoriya leaned back, eyes closed as he enjoyed the first breaths after a fresh kill. He felt jittery all the way down to his toes. His heartrate began to calm down, and he caught his breath. As the adrenaline wore off and the pain began to settle in, he could feel how the blood was drying on his chest, face, and arms.

He looked down at the monster.

This time, he won. Next time, he won't be this lucky.

"...If I had that guys' kid, I don't think I'd make it past the first one."

A pair of hands grabbed his face, forcing him to look into the summer sky blue eyes.

Whoa, when did Dabi get so close?

"You... you lost a lot of blood," Dabi said, "Don't... Don't think about that and just look at me, okay?"

Midoriya blinked slowly, blood loss? Was this all his blood? He hummed quietly, leaning into the touch of his hands. One of his hands came up, since he couldn't get the right one to twitch, and rested on the outside of Dabi's hand.

"Hm, your hand is so warm," he said, pushing his face against his palm.

"...You're... freaking me out. I'm going to call Hawks."

"Are you leaving?" Midoriya asked quietly, dragging his eyelashes against Dabi's hands as he closed his eyes. "That's good. I think you'll be happier."

He laughed softly. The world blurring around him.

"That sounds really nice. You'll finally be free... Do you think that I could be that free one day? No," he said, a peaceful smile on his face, "No way, right? Guys like me are just waiting to be put back in their place, hm? Freedom's a dream, but it could be your reality. I’m a bit jealous."

### **Dying - ShigaDeku**

Midoriya was fine with it. Dying. He was fine with it. He had always been fine with it, and to some extent, expected it. He knew that there was only one ending to these kinds of stories. He supposed that he should feel grateful or whatever if his life would end before he experienced certain brutalities. Or something.

But the closer he inched to it, to death, old memories played through his head.

Whatever jeering and back-handed compliments he used to hear were replaced with the sounds of joyous laughter, asking if he was going to join in their Ultimate Frisbee contest. The mocking remarks and disappointed gazes faded under live music and bright street lamps. If the world that he saw, right as he took his last breaths, was the world that he lived in, it was beautiful.

“Izuku-”

Midoriya waved a hand and Shigaraki kneeled next to him.

“...Are you dying?” he asked quietly.

The young man shrugged back. His eyes already back to the skies.

It was a beautiful day. Bright blue skies that stretched further than the eyes could see, dotted with the fluffiest looking clouds, milling on by. It looked like it was painted on the world, by a love-struck painter who had stole the breaths of onlookers with every brush stroke. He took a deep breath in, feeling ice cold from his nostrils to his chest.

“What a beautiful day,” he said quietly.

It almost felt like a shame to die.

### **Bedtime story about Apples**

"A story?" Midoriya tilted his head, "I got one."

The night was long, and it wasn't like he was going to sleep. He didn't think that the story was appropriate, but a healthy dose of rage will help with his focus.

Kouta peered up at him, eyes wide, and he hoped that he was never forgiven.

"There was once a kid. Just about your age, actually," he started. "He really, really liked apples."

"Apples?" Kouta frowned, but nodded. "I like apples too."

"Yeah, he liked, loved, apples. Love looking at how autumn colors- the yellow to red gradiant- on an apple, and he loved how they smelled, and he absolutely loved the way that the tasted. The first crunch of an apple," Midoriya said, eyes lighting up, "and the sweet fruit underneath. He absolutely loved it."

From the look on Kouta's face, he could see the gears turning.

"...And then, one day, he and his mom went to the dentist and the dentist told him he couldn't eat apples anymore."

Kouta frowned. "What a quack."

Midoriya's smile turned a little bittersweet.

"Right? But it was because of his jaw," he said, his fingers coming up to his own as though to show and remind Kouta what a jaw was, "It couldn't handle eating anything hard or tough. They would have t be very careful when ever he ate, and make sure that he only at soft food, like soups and some bread, rice, and fried eggs. Couldn't have fried chicken, couldn't eat hard candies, couldn't have apples."

He leaned back onto his hands and tilted his head back, as though trying to remember how the rest of the story went.

"He was so angry that he ran away from home..."

From there, Midoriya went into a slow (and rather dry) explaination of the journey that kid went through. The kid went into a store but he didn't have any money so he was tossed out. He talked about how the kid was scared to get into trouble, so he ran away. In between a dark alleyway, he ended up slipping and ended up in a fantasy world. Around there, he trailed off as Kouta started to nod off.

Midoriya smiled back, and waited for the child to sleep.

"So then what happened?"

Midoriya looked to where Shigaraki was staring at him, a pair of cold ruby eyes through the campfire.

"Nothing special, he goes home," Midoriya said, dropping all the flourishes and extra details. "And his... His mom made him an apple pie. since the apple was boiled, it was soft enough for him to eat. And it tasted just like the apples he loved. That's it."

"...Heartwarming," Shigarki said. "Did it happen to you?"

Yes.

"I read it in a storybook when I was a kid. Didn't think I remembered it that well, but it worked." He motioned to Kouta.

He stared at the fire.

It was just a story.

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It wasn't the same though. It was okay, and it was fine when he was a child, four and small. It was fine because children dreamed and that was okay. And everyone thought that he'd grow out of it.

A yellow so bright it caught his eyes, a red that blew out behind him, a radiant grin that banished despair and a strong fist to protect peace-

And they thought that he would just grow out of it.

The soft apples, baked in a pie and made with love, would be enough to replace that hard crunch and those bright colors.

And the list of things that he couldn't do grew longer and longer-but the apples were the only things that he couldn't forgive.

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"Look, Midoriya!"

Midoriya's eyes looked over to where Kouta lifted a small bag filled with apples.

"I picked all of these!" he said. "Here, you can have one!"

Midoriya leaned over to see the bag of beautiful apples staring back. As though someone splattered golden paint across a red canvas, the apples shined and shimmered while the colors on their skin bled into each other.

"Smells good," he muttered quietly. "Thank you," he said, as he reached into the bag and pulled one out.

Once he did, Kouta reached into the bag to pull one out too. He looked at Midoriya, expectantly, and with a ghost of a smile on his lips, Midoriya took a bite.

The apple was crispy.

"No wonder that kid ran away," Kouta said, biting into the treat. "It's yummy!"

Midoriya nodded back. He was a little surprised that Kouta remembered, since he practically fell asleep. He took another bite of the apple, sucking a little so that the juices didn't spill over his hand and create a sticky mess. He chewed quickly, almost devouring the fruit, as fast as he could.

He hated apples.

### **ShigaDeku - a kiss a day keeps death away**

“If… If I’m going to die,” Shigaraki rasped out, “Give me a kiss.”

"...If you lived an additional day every day I kissed you," Midoriya said, eyes bloodshot from how desperate he was, "I'd kiss you every fucking day."

"You're..." Shigaraki laughed, a mouthful of blood bubbling out of his mouth, but he couldn't quite control the way his heart fluttered, "a fucking romantic, huh?" If their first kiss was here and now, he couldn't help but think that it was rather fitting that it would taste of blood.

Midoriya gave this laugh, like he couldn't believe that he still could, and Shigaraki was okay dying since he got to make Midoriya smile once-even if it was just once.

"I'll hold you to that," he rasped out.

There was probably a word to describe a guy like him, who could only find someone who could hold his hand and cry over his bleeding body in the apocalypse and stuff. There was probably a word, but at the moment, Shigaraki felt a long peace pull up and over his body.

If everyone who died really went and met in the after-life, he'll be sure to agree with Sensei.

He didn't understand how anyone could voluntarily choose to abandon something like this.

### **ShigaDeku - swallowing pride**

If the only way that Midoriya was willing to just stay put was if they all came together. That was fine.

More than his pride and whatever lingering resentment he had, Shigaraki didn't want Midoriya to die.

As long as Midoriya was alive, he was sure that he'll be able to change his preception on him. And eventually, maybe Midoriya would even smile at him. Pathetic as it may sound, Shigaraki wanted nothing more than Midoriya's attention and acknowledgment.

Midoriya was the person who was shaping the future of humanity. His mark on the world will be determined by his mark on Midoriya's. And more than that, the world that Midoriya worked towards was the one he wanted to be a part of.

So, he sucked it up.

"Don't hold me back."

Jirou flinched backwards, clearly uncomfortable with how teams were formed, but that really wasn't Shigaraki's problem. "R-right," she said.

If she became a hero, he knew that she wouldn't have been anything special.

### **Mido - not answering**

Midoriya leaned backwards, eyes shifting down as his hand came back sticky. He dropped his head back against the wall, and took a deep breath.

If he died here, wouldn't that be great?

"Midoriya?!"

He sighed as the call of his name echoed through the perimeter. They should know by now that if they make that much noise, they would become a target.

Or perhaps this was the ploy. They would do something like this, end up in bad shit, and then act all surprised that he came to give them a hand. At the very least, he supposed that the monsters would all be concentrated in one place for him to pick off.

A laugh on his lips, he pushed off the wall. Alright, so be it. He'll play into this. He'll be the jester, all they had to do was point and laugh.

For Midoriya Izuku, who didn't know how to be free, who didn't even understand what that meant, this would be the closest that he would get to that ideal.

He could choose what he died for. He could choose where he'll die.

He could-

"Midoriya!"

### **DabiDeku - confession post-head injury [dabi]**

Dabi knew this green.

He spent a long time burning shit because he wanted to and then spent more time burning shit he didn't want to. His entire life was about burning and burning and burning. It was about ash.

Some nights, he thought and truly believed that if someone were to put him through a blender, shot him full of holes, decapitate him, it would all be the same. Instead of blood, ash would fall out because he was nothing but a dying fire.

A bright fire. A hot fire. Burning and burning and burning.

"Dabi, stay with me."

His eyes dragged to the green above. He knew this green.

It was, of all the things that he burned, the thing that burned the easiest. Without meaning to, this green was always caught in his blue for a split second before becoming nothing more than ash.

A pair of hands came to his head, and he hoped that he would die here.

In a world dyed in this green, he hoped that his fire would finally be smothered away.

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"You don't have to love me. You don’t have to feel anything when you see me," Dabi said, covering his face. "That's fine. I'm okay with that. But I..."

Having someone to come home to, having someone who could make any place be home, having someone make a home where his beating organ should have been, was the worst thing that had ever happened to him.

Where he used to be the Cremator, a fire made to incinerate something into nothing, he was now just a...

What was he to Midoriya? A friend? A stranger? A guy that burns the bodies he made? They've known each other for months and Dabi now knew that his hair curled in every direction. What was that relationship called? There were a thousand things that he wanted to be, but what word could he use to describe what they were?

No, no, he shook his head. It didn’t matter what they were. He needed to look onwards. He wanted to be something, like... useful. He was fine as long as he was useful. If he could be useful, if Midoriya could refer to him as 'useful'...

Dabi would know no higher level.

He could feel himself crack, pieces of himself that he didn't realize that he had, splintered down the middle. Could Midoriya see? Could he tell? He didn’t even realize that there were parts of him that cold still break.

Dabi would set himself on fire, he would break fire-he would find a way to shatter this blue- if it meant that Midoriya would just-just-

A hand came on top of his.

Midoriya was smart. He was clever. He was nifty and he was meticulous. It was annoying how well he tucked himself away, it was annoying how clear it was that he was fine alone. He ran on pure rage and adrenaline, coupled with a strength that could shatter the world and put out his fire.

“Dabi, you don’t owe me anything.”

And if anyone was nifty enough to cage fire, meticulous enough to make sure he never got burned, clever enough to make the fire think that it wanted to be caged, it would be Midoriya. But Midoriya was also smart. He was smart in that dangerous way that required enough anger to splinter the earth, and so instead, he kept the fire free.

Even though Dabi was sick of that burden.

### **Patrol-Small Talk**

"You know, at the end of this, I would love a hot bath," Kaminari called out. "A long, hot bath, late at night."

"That sounds pretty good," Tensei's voice came over the commlink. "Maybe even get some bbq up and going."

Kirishima pitched in, "That spicy sauce that we got out last time."

Then, several voices started to chorus in. "Oh, that was good."

"Damn, I'm getting hungry."

"What about you, bossman? Looking forward to anything?"

Deku paused from where he was shoveling. He looked to where Kirhisma gave him an uncertain smile. He looked down at the hole he was digging. What was he looking forward to? Was he looking forward to anything? He hesitated.

"...I want to change my socks," he decided.

"O-oh? Time for some dry socks, huh?" Kirishima sounded surprised. Was it because Midoriya joined in on the banter? Was it because it was about socks? He shouldn't have done this. He should have just stayed silent. This was a mistake. Midoriya focused on the hole he was digging.

"Can't blame him, we've been wading in this shit for hours," Enji spoke up, sounding about as tired of their recent mission as Midoriya felt. Hopefully, this will end and they could all go home soon.

"Alright then big guy, whatcha looking forward to?"

Enji didn't respond, probably busy scowling, but before he could respond, someone else spoke it.

"Can't wait to get wasted in Mario Kart again, probably," Mineta chipped in.

"I'll waste you if you don't shut your trap."

"Whoa there, big guy, we're all on the same side," Kaminari replied back, laughter in his voice.

And Midoriya was grateful that they moved on so quickly.

-

"So you're uh, socks," Twice said, approaching him later.

Midorya turned, tilting his head to the side as he eyed the man.

"Can I... have them? Like, the ones you're wearing. Right now."

"No," Midoriya said, mainly becuase he didn't have many pairs left.

"Just a sniff. Please."

"No," he repeated, for a different reason.

Twice whined, but thankfully left it at that.

### **HawksDeku - returning**

"...Keigo," Midoriya said, snagging the back of his shirt.

"...Don't call me that when you don't want to," the blond said, his tone more bitter than he'd like.

"...Keigo."

He sighed deeply. Typical Midoriya to just trample over his desires.

The tugging on his shirt was insistent, but he didn't want to turn around when he couldn't smile. He didn't want Midoriya to associate him with anything other than an easy smile. He wanted to be the walking personification of easy-going peace, so that Midoriya would feel refreshed just by his presence.

He-

"Keigo, thank you for returning to my side."

At that, Hawks whipped around, he opened his mouth to say something, anything, but Midoriya's small hand came up to his face. His voice died in his throat when he saw the gentle gaze Midoriya sent him. Once upon a time, he thought that Midoriya would only stare at him in disdain. And to think, he would welcome those days because he looked at him at all.

The blond stared for a long moment before he nodded. He stepped forward, into the touch, and his back hunched. His knees felt weak, but he managed to stay standing as he buried himself into Midoriya's touch. Another hand came up to cup his face, and he was brought closer.

Their foreheads touched, with Hawks bending down and Midoriya on the tips of his toes.

"I'm glad you're okay."

Breaking his composure, breaking his resolute vow to never, ever, touch Midoriya unless the young man was in danger or wanted it, he wrapped his arms around Midoriya's waist and brought him close. His wings closed around them, and he placed his head on the omega's shoulder.

Because no matter how many people he couldn't save and who he ended up killing out of negligence, he was also shamefully happy that he had returned to Midoriya's side.

"I came back," he whispered. "I came back because I wanted to return to your side."

"Yes."

The word sank deep inside of him, and unlocked a very dark and desperate corner of his heart. His arms squeezed just a bit harder, but Midoriya didn't complain. He never did. Hawks knew that and he still didn't let go. The correct thing would be to let go but he couldn't bring himself to do that anymore.

Not a hero. Not really anything, he was ...

"Keigo," one of Midoriya's hands ran through his hair. "Welcome back."

Hawks had come home.

### **Losing someone [nineDeku]:**

None of them were a stranger to loss. Some lost families and loved ones. Others their dreams and aspirations, as well as any means to obtain them. Most, if not all, lost their home, one way or another. Loss is still loss-when all it left was a gaping hole inside of a person and an ache that they can't ever fill. It was called a loss because no matter how well someone might try to patch it up, the trauma wasn't something that could be easily forgotten.

As a result, they were a collection of a bunch of broken pieces. They did their best to try and fit against each other, finding edges that were too sharp and edges that were too round, and this was the best they managed to salvage. While he knew that there was a thousand places more that they needed to be better, moments like this made it far too obvious.

To think that they would lose someone due to another survivor group...

"If I think that it'll be you I lose, I think I get it."

Midorya turned to where Nine stood, leaning against the wall.

"Have I learned how to be a little more human?" Nine asked, "I felt relief for the first time in my life when I realized that you were fine." He pushed off the wall and walked closer to Midoriya. He lifted his hand up to Midoriya's face, but the young man kept his eyes focused on his eyes. Most, especially those that knew what he could do with his hands, tended to keep some distance. He knew Midoriya too well to call him a fool, but in these moments, it resurfaced in his head like a fond memory. "I am constantly torn between fighting you to keep you behind me and fighting for you."

Right before his fingers could touch Midoriya's cheeks, remaining just close enough to feel the warmth radiating from each other, he stopped.

"...My deepest gratitude to you, Midoriya, for returning. My greatest curses for ever making me feel this way."

"My greatest sympathies," Midoriya replied back, eyes sharp and alert and bloodshot, "that you are such a weak man."

Nine have killed men for less. Yet, he couldn't stop the smile from stretching across his face.

"My," he almost purred out, "So you do feel something for me."

Because before, Midoriya didn't even look at him. He was noticed as much as Midoriya noticed his own injuries- only coming into attention when it hindered his abilities, and even then only as something he needed to work-around.

As far as Nine was concerned, this was a huge step up.

### **aideku - injuries**

Aizawa tried to leave then, but his shirt was snagged. He stilled before he slowly turned back. Red eyes found Midoriya's surprised gaze, even though he was the one that was holding onto him.

"...Yes?" he asked, as calmly as he could.

"...Do you have to leave?"

Suddenly, he was acutely aware that the two were alone here. His mouth was parched and his heartbeat pounded so hard in his chest that he could feel it in his fingertips.

"If you tell me to stay," he said slowly, "I will."

Just faintly, Midoriya looked like he was going to tell him to leave. He pulled backwards, Aizawa hyper-focused on each one of his movements, and scooted to one side of the bed. He patted the newly open space next to him and peered up at him.

"Stay."

Before, in a time much different from his current reality, he would have hesitated a little longer and bit down on the inside of his mouth to keep his desires at bay. He would like to think that it was because he saw the world fall apart and barely managed to salvage anything. Instead, as soon as he sat down, he could feel his control slipping. He should have left. He should have disobeyed and he should have left.

"I'm glad you're okay."

And all worldly desires deserted him. He turned, eyes wide as Midoriya's fingers inched closer. His fingers laid across his pinky and ring fingers before green eyes dragged up to meet his. Paralyzed under that gaze, he felt his heart stutter.

He never had any control here, did he? Whatever Midoriya asked in that second, he would have given. He'd live in wallowing in self-pity and regret, but those green eyes have already carved a place in his being.

If Midoriya asked, he'd do anything.

"Thank you for coming back."

Even live.

His arm throbbed, as injuries do, and he's never been prouder.

### **[Mercy] killing a bonded pair (humaMonster)**

Midoriya was ruthless on his good days.

He was ruthless and powerful. Each of his hits killed the monster. Powerful swings accompanied a spray of blood as he marched his way through any number of monsters coming his way.

And then, they ran into a human.

"Wait, wait!" she yelled. "Wait, please!"

Her hair was stringy, and she was dirty. Her clothes were ripped by the joints and fraying from age. Altogether, she looked like she's been surviving in the wirld and had seen better days. Still, she looked relatively sane-and that was enough.

"A-are you here to kill them?" she asked.

Midoriya's hand didn't leave the hatchet he was holding. His eyes flitted to Tatsuma, and then jerked his head towards the survivor's direction. With a curt nod, she stepped forward slowly. Her eyebrows pinched

"Yes. We're here to help you. Are you hurt? We have some first-aid."

"O-Oh, I'm not hurt," she said, her hands coming to her stomach. "I-I just heard." Her eyes started to water, and Tatsuma lifted her hands slowly. Her eyes flitted to her, and then se spoke slowly.

"I'm going to take two steps closer to you," she said, doing just that.

"I-It's okay. I know h-how it looks, but it's okay? S-See?" She turned around in a circle, stumbling a little, "I-I'm fine."

Understanding something, Midoriya's demeanor warped into something a little more hostile.

"He's not bad! Please! He's not- he just looks like that but truly he's kind!"

Midoriya took a step back, and motioned Spinner to come closer. When the man did, he kept his voice low. "Keep an eye on her," he murmured.

Just one then.

He could do that.

"N-no! You don't understand!"

He wasn't sure if he wanted to.

"Please! We don't bother anyone! Please! Just let him go!"

She fell forward, and Tatsuma was at her side. Her expression was pinched, but she wasn't some naive child. Midoriya knew that this was going to be hard for her too, but they came here to do something very specific.

They couldn't afford exceptions.

"Please-please!"

If begging was all someone needed to do to keep another safe, Midoriya thought that they would live in a very different world.

"...Here it comes," he warned.

-

The monster was, overall, extremely underwhelming. Even though Midoriya was prepared for a tediuos battle, it would appear that it unessesary. Chimera and the others caught up, and tackled the monster down without a problem. One hand pinned the monster's face down, his handgun glinting as he yanked it out and aimed it at its head-

"No! No, please!"

"Chimera," Midoriya called out, "It's fine."

All eyes fell on Midoriya, who made his way to the monster.

Chimera slowly got off of it, stealing a wary gaze at Midoriya, who waved him off. The monster scooted backwards before rushing to the survivor. She smiled, her eyes shining as her hands came up to the monster's head. They embraced tightly, looking like they were about to step off a poster for a low-budget dark-fantasy romance film.

Midoriya took a deep breath, and rushed at them. In a blink of an eyes, he smashed the monster's head into hers, sending them both into a pulpy mess on the ground. There was a long silence, and he prayed that they would be together in the next life. Given how had and fast he moved, he hoped that they didn't feel anything but the relief of holding each other.

"Let's keep moving," he said.

His hands didn't stop shaking.

"M-Midoriya," Tatsuma's worried eyes came to him, to his shock.

His methods were crude as they were cruel, but he couldn't think of anything else to do. They came here to kill all the monsters. To him, it was obvious that this woman wouldn't have even tried to survive without her companion. This wasn't the first time he had to encounter this, although it was never about a human who was happily-domesticated with a monster, but it was no different.

When the only reason why you're alive is someone else, he imagined that it was hard to even consider a life without them.

If he ever fell in love, he wondered if he would understand.

He took a deep breath through his nose. Tatsuma was kind, he understood that. But he didn't need kindness right now. Kindness isn't what would feed them or keep them safe at night. Kindness wasn't something that Midoriya had spades of, unlike the others here.

At the very least, he was grateful that their kindness had not run dry. As he told himself this, he moved forward.

This building will not explore itself.

-

"...Midoriya."

Midoriya looked up and met eyes with Enji.

"...I came here to ask how you were doing," he said. "But now that I am here, I realize the futility of that sentiment."

Because Midoriya had saved all of them, at one point or another. To ask him if he was 'okay' after brutally murdering someone wouldn't just be inconsiderate. It would be, plain as day, mean.

Midoriya was the type of person that would save strangers, not knowing if they were volatile, hostile, or cruel. He had saved all of them, in some way, shape, or other. Without ever once trusting them, he never abandoned them. It was contradictory. It was strange. And Enji would have questioned the sanity, the naivety of the person who would do that, except this was Midoriya.

Normal wasn't a word that he would ever use to describe him.

Enji couldn't find any words. To begin with, he wasn't one that spoke in a placating and comforting matter. He really should have sent Hawks or Ingenium, hell, anyone in his family would have been a better option than him. As it was, he just stood there uselessly instead.

"I thought I got stronger," he said quietly. "But I'm still doing the same things I've always done."

Midoriya gave a small smile. Rather than encouraging, it made Enji feel even more worthless. It was clearly a smile for him, so that he could feel better, even though Midoriya's shoulders were slanted like he was the one that lost something.

But he couldn't say anything.

After all this time, Enji thought that he would be strong enough to protect Midoriya from that decision.

### **An untrustworthy person, shiga v kirishima**

"No, no, we can't! We can't kill him!"

Shigaraki scowled as Kirishima stood in front of him. Did the kid think that they needed a hero right now? They don't need heroes at the moment, they needed guardians. Protectors.

And if the kid couldn't kill what was coming to harm them, then he needed to step aside so that someone else could.

"No, but," Kirishima looked hopelessly between him and the guy behind him, "but he made Izuku smile."

And Shigaraki hated how that was enough for him to hesitate.

-

Midoriya came, panting from how hard he had ran. He looked from the man tied up and sitting down between Kirishima and Shigaraki.

"...You didn't kill him?" Midoriya asked, shocked.

"Yeah," Kirishima said, looking up.

Midoriya ran for the man, kneeling down, half a foot from him.

"...Are you alright?"

The light shined over the man's face. He nodded his head, drool and blood spewing out of his mouth and in general making a terrible show of himself. Shigaraki almost regretted not killing him. Midoriya nodded, and reached into the pocket on the side of his leg and pulled out a small, laminated card.

"Do you know what this is?"

The man stared at it, puzzled.

"No," he said.

"...Are you certain? You don't even know this person?"

"N-Never seen it before," he said. "W-Was it important?"

Midoriya gave a kind smile, one that Shigaraki hadn't seen before.

"I see."

He pulled his hands up to the man's face. With a second, he snapped his neck to the side, and the body slumped to the side.

He turned around and left the room, leaving the shell-shocked Shigaraki and Kaminari in his wake.

"W-Wha? You just... You just killed him?!" Shigaraki shouted, shocked and almost appauled.

Midoriya stopped to look back at them, "We're going to get flanked from the left. Go standby," he said to Kirishima and then turned to Shigaraki, "and you head to the roof."

The two stared for a moment longer. Midoriya stared back, just at even, still as certain as ever.

When engaging in a fight, the most important thing to do was not panic. For many people, that meant entrusting someone with blind loyalty. Regardless of the confusion and hysteria that could be building inside of someone, if they could find the one person that they entrusted with [Everything], then they will live to mourn the loss later.

And so.

"Understood."

Both Shigaraki and Kirishima buried their confusion and shock to go do as instructed.

### 

### **Chisaki’s Heartfelt Confession**

“I love you.”

Midoriya didn’t even glance up at him. “Uh-huh.”

“Now that it’s been cleared out, I was hoping-”

“I can’t believe that you managed to get Chisaki’s blood, Toga. Did you think that he had better chances than anyone else?”

Chisaki froze. His head snapped up, eyes wide as Midoriya placed his pen down and stood up.

“What do you want today? A kiss? A hug? A passionate confession? Let’s get this over with so I can get back to work.”

And for the first time in a long time, Chisaki felt flustered.

“Wh-what do you-”

“Izuku! Let’s play!”

Just then, the door slammed open and Toga rushed in. With a wide grin and linked arms with Mina, the two stared at the men in the room.

“...Boo!” Mina shouted, “You’re still working!?”

And Midoriya stared at Toga, squinted, and then looked at Chisaki, as though expecting an explanation. The man arched one eyebrow at him, as though he was the one that deserved one more than Midoriya. The young man gave a deep sigh, squeezing his temples as he tried to will the entire situation away.

### **c**