When Midoriya woke up, he still had a raging fever. Through the haze of fever and confusion, he was in more pain than anything else. It was like he was completely submerged underwater, floating along and too tired to even fight it.

But suffering was nothing new to Midoriya, at this point. He sat up. A hand came up to his mouth. The pain wasn't so bad that he was going to throw up, and he knew by now how to make sure he didn't make any sounds. His hand clamped down hard on his mouth as the world spun and his wounds throbbed.

When he thought he stabilized, he removed his hand. He couldn’t tell if his vision was going or if his entire body was trembling hard enough to affect his vision.

If he stayed, he knew that a fate worse than death awaited. A quirkless omega in a den of morally ambiguous alpha? Yeah, right. If he had to stay, if they were going to force him, then he might as well die right now. He'd rather die than go back to that life.

He took a deep breath and froze when he heard voices on the other side of the door. They didn’t know that he was conscious. Now was the time. He grabbed the blanket off the bed, and a glass cup on the table next to him. His brain kicked into high gear, he eyed the other glass cup with three pens on the counter as a plan formed in his head.

His hands trembled, but his weight remained steady. He felt his focus sharpen. The pain subsided like background noise.

This will have to do.

He turned the florescent lights off. Then, he waited for the door to open.

When the door opened a few inches, he lifted his foot to kick it back as hard as he could. He heard Setsuno's sharp cry when the door slammed against his knee and head. Midoriya yanked the door back open. It was Tabe and Setsuno. If it had been Hojo or someone bigger, this would have been tighter.

Lucky him.

He tackled Setsuno as hard as he could, using his head to bury into the man's chest. He gave a sharp, garbled cry as he fell right into Tabe. The man behind him jerked in surprise, and raised his arms up to support Setsuno before his friend fell. Midoriya pushed off on the doorway and sprinted past them.

First obstacle, cleared.

He sprinted down the hallway, ignoring the way his body laced in pain. It was fine as long as his organs remained in his chest.

"Hey, wait, stop!"

Shit. He didn't think that Setsuno would yell.

"Setsuno? I heard you yell-" From the supply closet in the middle of the hallway, Present Mic appeared.

His eyes locked with Midoriya, and the young man frowned. He didn’t slow down.

"W-whoa there, listener-"

The blond reached his hand out, probably to grab Midoriya, but Midoriya wasted no time grabbing his arm, turning around, and throwing the blond over his shoulder. Yamada's air was knocked out of him as his back hit the ground and Midoriya was back to running.

For a second, he felt like his body was going to separate from his mind, but somehow, he managed to keep going.

Obstacle two, cleared.

For him, there was a trick that he learned about running when his chest ached like pinpricks. Take a slow breath and hold it until he's about to lose consciousness. Then, he can take a shallow breath to swallow as much air as possible and repeat until he gets out of the current mess he was in. The adrenaline in his blood pumped him with confidence.

He'll make it out.

Right as he thought that, a rush of feathers and red came up into his vision. Hawks. This was the tough one, and this was his one-trick he had up his sleeve for the man. He threw the blanket wrapped around the cup. Predictably, it opened up, and the cup had enough weight that it flew directly to the center of his chest.

Just as planned, Hawks pulled his hands to cover his face and Midoriya slid down the hallway. The bandages made the slide much easier than he expected. He grabbed the edges of the blanket behind the man and punched a hole through the blankets with his pen while the blond gave some garbled noise of shock. It would stop Hawks for just a moment.

Hawks used to be a Pro. He wouldn’t be stopped with just this. This would be the one and only time Midoriya could pull something like this off on him. Midoriya needed to go.

Still, the third obstacle was cleared.

Getting to the staircase, he ran almost full force into Compress. The man jerked backwards with a yelp, clearly surprised at the sight of him. Midoriya had just enough wits to grab the man by his belt and yank him forward. He went sailing into the wall in front of the staircase. With his groan as his background noise, Midoriya jumped up and over the staircase railings and dropped down.

It was a maneuver he’d done many times before.

Obstacle four, cleared.

He landed a floor and a half beneath where he was, landing between steps. The shock of the drop made his legs creak and something in his side crack. Tingles ran through his entire body, from his toes to his fingertips, and ruined his landing. He rolled over his shoulder painfully, tumbling down the rest of the stairs without any of the elegance he jumped with. Ears ringing, he knew that there was no turning back now. Organs rattling in his chest cavity, Midoriya covered his mouth as the coughs racked his body. Blood spurted out between his fingers, but he got up to his feet.

The exit.

He couldn't even take stock of his injuries. He didn't know what was new or old, or what was bleeding and what was broken. He just...

His breathing was harsh, and he was nearly gasping for every breath as he turned the corner. It was in that pitiful position that Tokoyami and Kaminari, holding a gallon of bleach in each hand, met him. Midoriya narrowed his eyes.

He just wanted to be free.

“...Helmet?”

Like getting dunked in cold water, Midoriya felt his pulse stop.

Shit. They knew. They fucking knew.

Knowing that Tokoyami would be harder to defeat than Kaminari, he risked getting electrocuted for this. He rushed for the man, and while Black Shadow was confused about his state of disarray, he jumped above the shadow and did a heel drop right on Tokoyami's shoulder. With a twist that made his ribs scream, he swung his other foot to land right against Kaminari's neck. Their shocked cries accompanied them down.

None of this would have happened if they didn’t underestimate him. He was lucky, in that sense.

Cleared obstacle five.

Midoriya slammed into the wall, nearly spraining his wrists on impact, but he was on the second floor. He knew this building better than anyone else. There was no way he was going to cross the school and down the other set of stairs, so he only had one real option.

It was fine. He was fine. He will be fine.

Midoriya chucked his remaining cup at the window as hard as he could. The window at the end of the hallway shattered, and uncaring of glass or cuts, he jumped through it.

Glass and snow made for an awful bed, but it was better than whatever it was that they would have him do. The snow underneath him dyed a dark red. His body slowly went numb. Good. The pain would only slow him down.

Grabbing a glass shard, he continued to run.

Infirmary: cleared.

His hand came up to his ribs, feeling as though his organs would come spilling out of his side like chunky stew.

No, no, he couldn't think like that. Getting up to his feet was hard, but he was too desperate to give up now. He slid, or maybe his body gave out, but it took a moment too long to get back to his feet.

"Helmet! Wait!"

If Deku thought his ears were ringing before, it was absolutely nothing to the deafening feeling of Yamada's voice echoing through the entire compound. Well, and if that didn’t remind him about what was on the line...

Every breath felt like he was forcing icicles to scrape down his throat. His limbs began to freeze slowly, like a slow acting poison. His throat was too dry to cough, too scratchy to not cough, too irritated by breathing, but he couldn’t stop now.

Once he got past the sidewalk, he was certain that he would be fine. The snow would make for an especially shitty time to travel, and it was starting to get dark. This was a neighborhood that he grew up in and one that he navigated through that blasted helmet. He would be fine. There was a place he didn’t tell anyone else about, he could hole up there until breathing stopped hurting.

Right as he thought that, two people walked around the building he was hobbling past.

However, it was Kirishima who caught his attention. He was holding a thick wooden tray with what looked like a small hot-pot on it.

But more importantly, the shock of seeing Midoriya, fleeing for his life, dying the snow around him in red, had him reeling back in surprise. And Kirishima stepped a little too far to the side, where it was more ice than snow, and slipped.

Even though there was no reason for him to do so, Midoriya jumped to stop his fall. Logically, he knew that Kirishima could activate his quirk in an instant and do more damage to the ground than himself. He knew that, but instinctively, he just saw someone fall and he rushed to help.

Clumsy, since his body was failing him with every lungful of ice, he grabbed the young man by the hands and yanked him towards him. The hot pot crashed and burned him across his chest, and Midoriya collapsed awkwardly onto his knees, skinning both of them and making his entire body ring, but Kirishima was standing.

"H-Helmet-san?!" Kirishima shouted, alerting everyone to where they were.

“Y-You’re bleeding everywhere,” next to Kirishima was Itsuka, who gasped loudly.

Game over.

Midoriya closed his eyes in defeat. In the end, he was the idiot. He could have gotten away, but his body trembled with the effort to stay awake. He watched a feather land to the left of him. Just his rotten luck. He released Kirishima, at least he was okay.

"Hey there, Helmet," Hawks’ voice was honey sweet. He could hardly believe that this was the same man who almost cried when he turned off the lights earlier that year. "You really gave us a scare, you know."

A shudder ran down his spine. The man was beyond pissed, wasn't he?

Midoriya placed his hand to the ground and tried to get a feel for his feet. No good. It was colder than he thought, he was already losing feeling in his limbs. His hazy vision didn't do more than blur the entire world into a mess of white with red streaks. He tried to push up with his arm, and ended up coughing violently instead.

Something warm spewed out of his mouth. Was it his heart? Was it his life? Of course not. Life had never been that easy on him.

This was it. Despite himself, his eyes flitted to the place he was going to run out of. Midoriya lost his golden opportunity to get out. After this, it was going to be a lot harder to try and escape since they knew that he's a flight-risk.

He turned, jaw clenched, and glared right back at the blond. The glass shard in his hand slipped away, as he couldn’t even hold it anymore.

If he wasn't dying where he sat, he would have seen Hawks' expression morph into shock, and then a dawning realization.

"W-Wait, I think there's been a misunderstanding-"

"There is no misunderstanding! There is blood everywhere! Bring him back before he dies!" Natsuo's voice yelled out from further away.

Hawks kneeled down in the bloodstained snow next to him, ignoring everyone around him. He opened his arms to him, eyebrows furrowed as titled his head.

"Hey, we're not going to hurt you... Well, more than you hurt yourself," he said. "I promise I won't let anyone hurt you, alright?"

Bitterly, Midoriya laughed. It led to him coughing, and another wad of blood he had been trying so hard to keep down made its way up. His body convulsed, and unable to stop himself, he threw up the nothing inside of his stomach. Blood and stomach acid came spewing out of his mouth. The heat of the hotpot long faded away into an icy touch.

A hand came to his shoulder and he weakly brought his arm up to stop it. With kitten-like strength, he pawed at the person who grabbed him. He tried to say something but his voice hurt on its way out and he just hissed instead.

"P-please don't die," another voice echoed out.

Don't... die? Who said that? Who said that in such a pathetic voice? How dare they ask him of that? How dare they hurl the worst possible curse onto him.

His lips curled back into a grimace, he didn't even have the strength to cry anymore. He turned his head slightly to the side, just barely able to see the exit once more.

He was so damn close.

-

Before the people at the remains Aldera High School knew Midoriya Izuku, there was just Helmet.

The Guy in a Helmet, and although all his other equipment and clothing changed, always wore a Helmet. Since no one else wore one, someone pinned that name on him, and everyone else clung onto it.

And like a curse, they locked themselves in. Using him as a centerpiece, they found a temporary peace in this fragile place.

It would appear that it had completely come crashing down on him now. He should have died in that fire before anyone realized who he was. It would have been easier than this. They didn’t have to face the facts. That he was quirkless. That he was an omega. That he was a minor. All of these things would have been easier to deal with if he died somewhere, far away where no one knew who he was.

But since he was still alive, Midoriya wanted to live. It must sound contradictory and hypocritical, but he didn’t know what else to do. He didn’t know how to do anything else.

All of Midoriya’s life plans could be summed up in four words.

Struggle uselessly until death.

But these days, he could feel himself getting sick and tired of that.

-

The second time he woke up, he was handcuffed to the bedpost. He tugged on his wrist, ignored the pain coursing through his arm like electricity, and tested the metal biting into him. He took a slow breath, and pulled once more. His fingers nearly went numb, and pinpricks jolted through his fingers.

There were a few inches that he would wiggle around. The handcuffs weren't tight. Okay, he could do this. His wrist would heal.

"If you're planning on breaking your wrist to get out, I really hope you would reconsider."

Slowly, Midoriya opened his eyes. He didn't even realize that there was another person here. His senses were really fraying. Maybe it meant that he'd finally die.

Either he'll be free or he'll die and be free. He wasn’t picky at this point.

Facing away from him and looking out a window (did they move him to a different room? The last one only had a door, but now he had a door and a window), bright red wings were folded against his back. Slowly, Hawks turned so he could look at him. Uncomfortable at the thought that he was on his back, handcuffed to a bed in front of an alpha, Midoriya clenched his jaw tightly. He turned to his side and tried to sit up when Hawks began to talk again.

"Hey, you know, Natsuo was pretty much crying when he saw the state you came back in. And, it hurts, doesn't it? We won't know what you're looking for if you don't tell us, but it must be really important since you bolted for it as soon as you woke up."

He was so good at sounding like he cared. He was so good at sounding like he was trustworthy and honest. Midoriya’s heart ached. He wished he didn’t have to watch his heroes turn into regular people.

A pair of deceivingly warm hands appeared in front of him. One hand slowly inched to grab his shoulder while the other reached for his waist, on the side with less bruising. Midoriya shuddered at the contact, both in pain and in disgust.

To think that, half-dead and mostly broken, a former hero would be the one picking him apart. Well, he lost, so it wasn't like he could complain. He ground his teeth down, determined not to give him anything more.

The body was disposable, but Midoriya's pride wasn't. It was the only thing he had left, at this point.

But to his shock, he was helped up so that his back leaned against the wall. If he wasn’t so shocked, he might have felt more pain instead.

"Sorry, it's uncomfortable, right? Lemme grab some pillows for you," Hawks said, his feathers opening a door in the corner of the room, revealing a closet with plenty of pillows and other bedding items.

...This was new.

This wasn't like any other infirmary room that he saw, and he knew them well. Was this made in secret? Were they already tearing this place apart to do as they pleased? The small mark that he made in the world, this school and the neighboring area, was already being altered and shifted away from him. It made sense, but it left him feeling hollow.

In a few moments, Midoriya was leaning against a pile of pillows, confused as Hawks took a seat on the stool in front of him. His wings tucked behind him, some of his feathers dragged along the ground.

"We handcuffed you because you kept tossing and turning in your sleep. It wasn't good for the stitches or the bruises. Pretty inhumane, right? Sorry about that," the blond said. "It...It was also because we didn't want you to try and run away again while you're still healing."

He pulled a key out of his pocket.

"But I...I'll let you go now. As expected, seeing you locked up like that leaves a really nasty feeling in my mouth."

He moved slowly, much slower than any speed that Midoriya had ever seen him move with. Was he mocking him? The key slid into its slot and he unlocked Midoriya. Despite the pain it caused, Midoriya yanked his hand away from Hawks. Golden eyes stared at him, his smile turning into something ugly as he dropped his hands to his lap.

Hawks worked his jaw, and managed to keep his smile on his face, like he didn’t know how to relax it.

Midoriya eyed the door. He didn't know if it was locked. If it was locked, it'll take an extra second or two to unlock it. Could he afford that? No, not against Hawks. He's seen this guy in action, after all.

Just last week, he thought bitterly, they were fighting back-to-back. Amazing how fast people can become enemies.

Eyes narrowed to glare at the former hero, the blond's smile looked much more muted than anything he had ever seen him wear. They've fought together for a little bit, so it was a little arrogant of himself to think that he knew all of Hawks' expressions or anything, but he didn't even know that the blond could look so resigned. In comparison to the laid-back attitude he had in TV interviews and lazy grins in magazines, he really did look like a fraction of his former self.

"...Are you, uh, hungry?" the blond asked, dropping his eyes. He rubbed the back of his head, "I can get you some soup? Natsuo said that you should avoid solid substances for a couple of days just to be safe with all your uh... bruising..."

His voice trailed as he looked back up, and Midoriya didn't dare relax. He couldn't figure out why Hawks was here. He couldn’t figure out why Hawks was acting like this. No doubt, there was no way he could take him one-on-one like this and get away, but it felt like a waste to use someone as capable as Hawks to guard the prisoner.

More importantly, he couldn't understand why Hawks had that expression on his face.

Where did that eternal confidence, those laid-back shrugs and signature grins, go?

"Is there... anything you want to know? I'll try to answer any questions you have. Like, is the room too cold? You wanna know about how our last patrol went? Do you wanna wander a bit? I can carry you anywhere, you messed up your feet pretty bad and should stay off of them. Just anything, you just gotta say the word..."

There was another, long moment of silence where Hawks' eyes darted between Midoriya and his hands. The oppressive silence between them was suffocating, but if Midoriya was going to die anyways, he was going to face it head-on.

He won't submit. He could die, but he won't lose.

"Okay," Hawks said at last. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees. His head came to rest in one of his hands, as his smile finally slipped off. His gaze a little more sharper as he worked his jaw, he tried one more time. "You know, I won't know anything unless you tell me."

In all honesty, Midoriya wanted to sleep. He wanted to eat something warm. He wanted to lay down and sleep for a year. He wanted to either die or get better so he stopped hurting. He wanted to be left alone if he had to live. He wanted to die if he had to stay with them. He...

"Everyone you uh... ran into when you were trying to leave is fine. No one's really injured. Some bumps and bruises, oh and Kurono's bloody nose, but nothing that'll keep them down. Do you... wanna share why you did that?"

In all honesty, Midoriya felt like, at any moment, he would close his eyes and pass out for a few days. He felt awful, but hearing that they were okay really did lift a burden off his heart. He didn’t intend to hurt anyone, but between hurting them and escaping, he made his choice.

Still, he had no doubts that the people here would take good care of him.

He knew these people. He had seen them falling apart and he saw them pick themselves up. He wished no more harm to them anymore, truly, he doesn't, but he ached. He regretted hurting them, but he didn't regret what he did to try and escape. But Midoriya had his priorities straight. He wasn’t afraid to do whatever means necessary to do so.

He just wanted to be free.

It was a shame that he wouldn't be able to witness it for himself, but Midoriya had his own life to look after.

The initial rush of panic when he saw Hawks was slowly fading, and replacing it was the bone-deep exhaustion. He sighed a little.

"Ah, I'll let you rest. Please don't hurt yourself. I'll leave a bell here," he said, moving a small cowbell to the corner of the mattress. "Just give us a ring. We... We do want you to get better."

Hawks helped him back onto the bed. A surge of rage bubbled inside of him. Somehow, he managed enough strength to slap his hands away. The sound echoed in the room, but Midoriya didn’t register it. The sudden movement made his stomach roll uncomfortably, and his arm trembled from the pain.

“...Okay,” Hawks said. “Okay.”

He left without another word. The door clicked behind him, but didn’t lock, to Midoriya’s shock. The thought that they were ridiculing him arose, but they were right.

Midoriya was in no state to move.

He didn’t know why no one forced a bond on him yet, but he kept it to himself. Struggling to get back down, he curled up into a ball, closed his eyes, and slept.

It wasn’t as restful as it sounded.

-

No one needed to know this, but Midoriya used to puke his guts out at least twice a week.

In between the time where the sunlight stretched across treetops and the world was illuminated in another beautiful day, Midoriya managed to slip away from the overbearingly clingy people on base. It was bad on days he was injured, and even worse when someone thought he was injured. A bad fever, because every injury gave him an awful fever, coupled with being unable to keep anything down spelled for a painful time for Midoriya.

Obviously, it was because he was weak.

The weeks and months of dealing with expired food, rotting corpses, pus-filled injuries, and alpha pheromones had his stomach in such tight knots that he couldn’t stomach anything he hated and ended with him being unable to justify eating.

He didn’t know how alphas could live like this. Perhaps, if he was stronger or whatever, then he would have been fine and it wouldn’t have bothered him either.

But, Midoriya lived in reality.

-

There was suddenly a knock on the door. He wasn’t sure why, he was the only person here. Or, were they doing this for him? Showing that they were considerate? Polite?

Laughable.

“Helmet, are you awake? I’m coming in.”

And in walked was Aizawa.

“I brought you food.”

The quirk-canceler? He blinked as he racked his mind to figure out why this man was here. Who was in charge of guard rotation? It was usually Makoto, last time he checked, when it came to domestic roles. Why would they waste such an important asset to…

No, it couldn’t be.

Did they think that he had a quirk?

Midoriya’s head whirled at the thought. He might have a second chance then. Right when the thought came, however, a wave of dizziness came about him.

Hunger. It was one he was familiar with.

He eyed the soup that Aizawa had brought in. It smelled divine. His mouth was salivating. He hadn’t eaten since before the fight, and he can’t remember the last time he had anything resembling an actual meal. Hot food? Soup? Midoriya was beyond desperate.

But, did he trust it?

Before, he didn’t eat because there was no way he could eat without revealing himself. Now, however, they knew what he was. So, either this was food to remind him of his place, or they spiked it with something to make him obedient. Either way, he didn’t like the outcome.

“And I see that you already ripped your IV out.”

Red eyes narrowed at the bloodied mess that Midoriya yanked out of his arm as soon as he regained mobility. Maybe this time, they’ll understand not to waste supplies on him like this.

“...It’s a drip for antibiotics and painkillers. Given the state you were in, we were going to get some fluids for you as well,” he said monotonously as he stared at the blackening blood. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. “Well, if you’re well enough to pull that you,” he said, turning back and dropping his gaze to the mess of clotted blood and broken skin on Midoriya’s arm, “then I guess you’re well enough to eat.”

He placed the food down on the table, and stepped to the side. Leaning against the wall, out of arms’ reach, he stood quietly without looking at Midoriya.

“It’s a little watery, but it’s not bad. Lunchrush works hard.”

Midoriya’s sharp eyes remained on Aizawa. He was so still, as he tried to wrack his mind for why the man was here.

“What’s wrong?” Aizawa said, “You don’t like soup?”

Red eyes met his, and even though he was older and an alpha, Aizawa dropped his gaze down first.

Midoriya’s eyebrows furrowed, but his curiosity piqued.

Why did he look away first? Weren’t alphas supposed to be all about that aggressive, stare-down energy? Shouldn’t he be posturing uselessly? He had seen the man do it before. Aizawa had bared his teeth at him before, back when they first met too. What was different about this? The young omega couldn’t find an answer, but a pit in his stomach opened up.

Now, more than ever, he knew he couldn’t trust the food here. For all he knew, Aizawa didn’t look at him because he felt guilty. He was honest like that.

“...Can you speak, Helmet?” Aizawa asked at last. “I know you can read and write so I,” he pulled out a memo pad and a pen, “brought these too. In case there was something you wanted to communicate.” He placed it on the table next to the food before moving back out of reach.

Midoriya, for the life of him, could not figure out why.

“The soup will get cold.”

He didn’t move. And with a long-suffered sigh, Aizawa just left the room instead. When he left, the room was plunged into silence, the delicious smell of the soup, and Midoriya’s unending questions.

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The thing about doing the right thing was that it was a painfully biased thing.

For example, theft.

It’s frowned upon, generally. Taking the belonging for another person was never a good thing. One of the first lessons they teach in kindergarten was ‘don’t take what doesn’t belong to you.

And then the world ended.

So Midoriya started to steal. What else do you call it, when you break into someone’s house to take all the food and supplies? Or rather, was it alright because he felt like he was desperate? These excuses didn’t fit Midoriya. He preferred to live in reality.

Everything that he had at the supposed base was stolen. This ‘base’, which once was a public high school and now they used it as their base of operation, was something that he took as well. Everything was taken. The medicine, the clothes, detergents and metals and food and everything.

So surely, they are looking to do the right thing right now. Since they can’t stop killing and they can’t stop stealing, they would take back from what they could do.

Like putting an omega into their place.

It was the right thing to do.

The same bandages that kept his chest from tearing open when he sat up were the same bandages that made breathing a little harder. The restriction was good for him. It would help him heal. The right thing to do was to sit back and let it restrict him. It was normal. It was natural. It was right.

Midoriya was glad that he was told that he would never become a hero before all this went down. It made it easier. Since he couldn’t ever be a hero anyways, it didn’t feel as bad that he wasn’t ‘right’.

-

Frantic tapping could be heard at the window. Midoriya eyed it suspiciously, and slowly got to his feet. It didn’t hurt him as much as he thought it would, all things considered. As he approached the window, he saw Kouta's small hands flailing.

The kid was supporting a few bruises of his own, but he looked fine otherwise. Not many days had passed since that fight, or at least not enough for there to be any visible changes, but the child looked like he was glowing. Even though Midoriya could still feel the sensation of something prying his cuts open to see the muscles underneath, he felt his heart loosen.

He pushed the window open. It was heavier than it looked. The cold air rushed into his face, but it couldn't compete with the warmth in his heart when Kouta's eyes shined at him.

"I uh... Hi!" he said. "You uhm... got really beat up saving me," he continued. "I'm glad you didn't die."

Well, Midoriya thought wryly, that made one of them.

"And uh, my name is Kouta! Izumi Kouta!" he continued. Come to think of it, Midoriya never actually heard his full name. Just what that man called him, before Midoriya put an end to his life. "I wanted you to know the name of the person you saved!"

The part of Midoriya, the part that he thought shriveled up and died after being alone and beaten down so much surged forward.

He saved one person.

"...Do you... have a name?" Kouta asked. "Everyone here said your name is Helmet."

"Midoriya," he said, because there was no point in trying to hide anymore. “Midoriya Izuku.”

And, to deny a child the name of his hero would be a cruel fate.

"M-Midori, Midon, Midorik..." A big frown came on his face and Midoriya chuckled back.

“Izuku is fine,” he said. It had been a long time since someone called him by his name. It would be nice, if someone could say it happily.

“Then, Izuku-nii!” Kouta chirped, "Thank you for saving me! A-And staying alive so that I can tell you that!"

Midoriya, despite his creaking ribs and screaming shoulder, reached out the window to ruffle his hair. Kouta grinned, soaking up the attention like a flower basking out in sunlight. It looked so incredibly delicate and beautiful, even though Midoriya found it after destroying his body in a fight that ended with a building coming down on him.

No wonder heroes loved their jobs.

Being outed sucked, yes, but he's glad that he managed to protect one thing.

### [end]