Warning: messy feelings

Disclaimer: I don’t own anything.

Summary: One day, 6 year old Midoriya Izuku brings home Chisaki Kai, a 13 teenager with haunted eyes, and they haven’t been separated since.

Alt: “It was as though God put one angel on Earth. ”

Paring: Chisaki Kai/Midoriya Izuku, one-sided Everyone -> Izuku.

A/N: The one where Inko (doesn't) redeem herself in my eyes, adopts all the lost puppos, and everyone is a Midoriya now.

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### Notes

* Midoriya Inko
  + The Other Woman. Izuku is literally the only thing that’s >hers< sorta supported Izuku’s desires, but has a lot of suspicions and shit about the ppl he brought home
  + Wishes that Izuku would be satisfied with what he has and doesn’t go hero
  + Fights with Izuku a lot since, she wants him to be happy and safe without danger
    - Where Izuku saves people to save them, Inko saves them because she’s too scared to say no.
* Midoriya Izuku
  + Has been with Chisaki so long that he doesn’t know if this is love or what, but he likes it
  + A lot more headstrong and confident in himself than in cannon.
  + Also has seen a lot of fucking shit in the world. And still wants to save it.
  + As a hero, he wanna save ppl. And, villains are people too. Really, really lost people.
    - Understands that heroes choose who to save and that those they don't save they are leaving to die. Likewise, villians.
  + AFO’s #1 favorite atm.
* AFO
  + Eyes locked onto Izuku. Wanted to groom the Perfect Hero (ie, his little brother) and reunite their Quirks again or whatever. (i guess he’s tryna eat him)
  + A Very Lonely Man with a lot of power, influence and free time. Because Shimura Nana rubs in his face that his life is incomplete since he doesn’t know what it’s like to raise one of his own. So when All Might gets Izuku -when Izuku gets OFA- he knows and thinks that he sees his brother again
  + Also takes Hisashi and makes him (and possibly that whole family) Nomus.
  + Gets nomus to try and eat Izuku.
* Chisaki Kai -> Midoriya Chisaki
  + Seven years older than Midoriya. He’s a first year in middle school when they first meet (Izuku is in the 1st grade).
  + Was beaten a foot into his life by everyone and everything. (pretty much Kaya (erased))
    - Adopted into yakuza as a ‘trouble kid’ who can’t control his quirk very well
    - Not expected to ever become yakuza, but they do treat him like a punk
  + And finds kindness in the Midoriya family (or at least Izuku)
    - Clean-freak, perfectionist, etc
    - Thinks that a world without quirks would be nice.
    - Is pretty cold and emotionless overall. Very little empathy/sympathy for anyone except Izuku. (and even then, he just wants him to be okay)
    - Pretty much adopted as a Midoriya.
  + Ends the bullying ASAP. Bribes Bakugo with candy to keep an eye on him. The people he’s with understand that Izuku is #1 priority.
  + Knows he’s not good enough to be with Izuku. Wants to build his way up there. Meanwhile, Izuku wishes he’s good enough.
  + Doesn't like anyone but Izuku. He’s usually polite to everyone else, but really, only Izuku matters. Everyone else is less than the scum under his foot.
  + Eventually becomes a pharmasist, where he does a lot of fucking research
* Bakugo Katsuki
  + Wishes he had a big bro as cool as Chisaki
  + Chill with Deku, if a little annoyed. But sees Chisaki (and all his friends) as the Ultimate Goal he needs to overcome, so he really doesn’t care heads or tails and they’re pretty chill
* Eri
  + Ie Midoriya (11yo) dresses up as The Crawler and saves Eri. That entire family is now indebted to him.
  + Eri is now a Midoriya. Inko is so fucking happy until she realizes that Eri doesn’t trust anyone but Izuku. Doesn’t want to be spoiled and fake people and loud frantic people.
* Shiragaki -> Shimura Tenko
  + Falls in love at first sight. It freaks everyone out.
  + Wants Midoriya. When he gets him (momentarily) it turns out to be a sweet thing.
  + Izuku wants to save him. And Shiragaki thinks that if he gets saved, then Izuku won’t <like> him anymore.
  + Gets saved. Becomes a hero like Gran Torino. Pretty much a govt agent.
* Dabi
  + Was getting out of prison at the same time as <Insert Expendable Here> and when Izuku came to pick them up, is asked to come along. And hasn’t left since.
  + Joins the Paranormal Front as spy. Works with Shiragaki under Gran Torino
* Expendables (ready to die for Overhaul + Deku.)
  + High school from Overhauls ‘friend’ group. They’re all troubled kiddos that end up getting taken in by Midoriya’s.
    - Tries to follow societal norms. Eventually does finds things that make them happy and doesn’t feel like they’re living to survive
    - But by far, their leader is Chisaki and their Treasure is Izuku’s smile.
    - Except Chisaki sees them as annoyances that occasionally has their uses and Izuku sees them as <family>
    - Falls hard for Izuku, but is good at keeping it together.
  + Kurono Hari (Chronostasis)- Chronostasis
    - Becomes police. Chisaki’s childhood friend.
  + Irinaka Joi (mimic) - Mimicry (underground tunnel dude)
    - Becomes a writer. Chisaki’s childhood friend.
  + Katsukame Rikiya - vitality stealing
    - High school buddy. Goes into Factory / Truck duty
  + Hojo Yu - Crystallization (bonds!!)
    - High school buddy. Goes into construction
  + Setsuno Toya - Larceny/Thievery (got cheated on)
    - High school buddy. Becomes a car mechanic (and otherwise handyman)
    - Found, ready to jump off a bridge.
  + Tabe Soramitsu - Food
    - High school buddy. Ends up working as a chef at some family restaurant
    - Found in a dumpster.
  + Rappa Kendo - Strongarm (just wanna fight)
    - High school buddy. Ends up as a well-respected Hybrid Martial Arts fighter (focus on boxing, ends up teaching Izuku)
  + Sakaki Deidoro - Sloshed
    - High school buddy. Ends up becoming a bartender.
  + Nemoto Shin - Confession
    - High school buddy. Ends up as a simple businessman.
  + Tengai Hekiji - Barrier
    - College friend. Grew up in a temple. Becomes a florist.

### Vague-Ass Timeline

* 6 izu & 13 kai
* 11 izu & 18 kai
  + Eri enters their home.
* 14 izu & 21 kai
  + Destroys everything AFO ever stood for. Shiragaki & co all get arrested
    - Dabi approaches Shiragaki, who looks broken AF
    - Goes down as All Might’s victory & Bakugo’s involvement is recorded to the masses.
  + Enters UA

### Phoenix Tattoo -

Chisaki’s biggest tattoo, despite the fact that he was barely 14, was a black phoenix. It was devoid of color the same way he should have been devoid of life. He wasn’t supposed to be alive, he was never supposed to be born, but here he was. Like a phoenix.

It also served as a reminder of where he was from, that he would never escape, and he knew this because one of his mom’s boyfriends had a matching one. All in all, it’s every bit terrifying as it is an awed beauty. No one needed to know that he had it before he came to the family. No one asked.

The feathers wrapped around his shoulders, and spanned across his entire back. He would never tell anyone, but Chisaki wanted it that way. It was easier to say that he wanted it than believe that he lost this too. The tail ends of the phoenix curves a little at the base of his spine and ended there. The body of it rests till the bottom of his ribcage.

It’s nine parts terrorizing and one part pitiful. Like this, he was whole.

This was one of the only things his folks, his birth-parents, gave him. Some foolish part of him, the part that truly and honestly believed that parents loved their children and wanted them, thought it was the only representation that he could be loved. He would never forget. And when he was older, he swore to himself that he would get it colored when he went to get it redone. On that day, he would be nothing more than Oyaji’s bullet, to be fired and never return.

It was the only future he thought he was capable of.

So when Inko’s eyes kept trailing and staring at his tattoo over dinner while Izuku animatedly explained the new TV show about All Might to him, he understood that he was naive. Hope wasn’t for people like him. The light that caught in Deku’s eyes wasn’t something he could have ever understood.

He, the naive and foolish boy that deserved every bad thing that happened to him, truly and honestly thought that he could change how he was born.

What a joke.

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“But I don’t want you to die,” he whined, stomping his feet as he tugged on Chisaki’s hand.

He would, to date, be the only person who said something like that to him. The small hand emitted a warmth foreign to Chisaki and his cold hands, and his words did the same to his heart. If Chisaki didn’t know that children typically ran hotter than adults, he would have been concerned that he was sick.

Ignorant to Chisaki’s concerns about his well being, Izuku continued, “And cold milk after a hot bath is the best.”

If it was anyone else, they would have died where they stood. He would have told them that his quirk was Pain and he would have given them a demonstration. But this was Chisaki, with Izuku, so he just heaved a great sigh and folded like a wet napkin.

Something about the way Izuku’s bottom lip trembled made his decision-making capabilities stutter. If he cared about his well-being, it would have worried him.

They had been caught under a rainshower, and despite how hard he tried to argue that he’s fine, that he’ll be okay, that he won’t catch a cold, and even if he did he could just Overhaul it away, Izuku was deadset on making him shower. Why couldn’t he care about their general hygiene more on the days he played in the mud and scraped his knees chasing lost cats through alleyways instead? More importantly, the young man was determined to help him in the bath too.

“...I have a tattoo,” he said, unsure about what he was so hesitant about, but knowing that he’ll never be able to lie to those green eyes, counted his loss. How could he say it so that he understood? “It’s scary,” he continued quietly, unable to raise his eyes to meet that gaze. “I’m not… pretty,” he finished lamely.

Izuku nodded back, “Yeah, you’re not pretty.”

He spoke so frankly that Chisaki felt equal parts surprised and a little hurt. The younger boy wasn’t wrong, but now he had that phrase locked into his head in the voice that he treasured the most.

“You’re more handsome than you are pretty. Pretty is for girls and people who are chubby. But handsome ikemen are guys like you since you keep your mouth shut,” the young man said, as though he was reciting it back from somewhere else. His words trailed though, as he lifted a bar of soap.

It was a brand new bar, and Izuku needed both of his hands to hold it up. He gave a big grin, innocent and bright in a way that made Chisaki’s chest ache.

“And I’m a big boy now, so I can even wash myself!” he explained.

That explains why he was so adamant to wash with him. He just wanted to show off. He wanted to show-off his independence.

Surely, one day, Chisaki will be good at something enough that he would try to show off in front of Izuku too.

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Izuku marvelled quietly, his captivating eyes shining in their awe as his fingertips trailed the pattern on his back.

In the meantime, Chisaki could hardly believe that even his fingertips could be so warm. Could it be that Izuku did have a quirk afterall?

“It’s like this!” he said, and suddenly gave Chisaki a hug. His arms wrapped around his arms, and his hands couldn’t meet each other across Chisaki’s chest. They barely wrapped around his thick arms, but Izuku’s voice rang in his ears. “You got a big hug on your back!”

And if it wasn’t for those thin arms wrapping around him, Chisaki is certain that the pieces of his heart would have fallen apart.

Instead, they took flight.

### Yakuza & Izuku - fearless

“Um,” Izuku looked up nervously, and gathered all his courage in the next breath. “Um! Excuse me! Can Chisaki come out to play today?”

In front of Shie Hassaikai’s gates, Midoriya Izuku is seven years old when he meets the real Yakuza.

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Kurono could count on one hand the amount of times he had ever seen Chisaki give in to his emotions. As children, Chisaki seemed to be unable to emote. In that sense, they got along great because of it. Neither of them fell into their instincts or prey to their emotions like most of the other kids their age.

But Kurono could only dream of having as little emotion as Chisaki did. Chisaki was brought in, just like him, a few years before he was. More importantly, Kurono idolized him. He was like an older brother in every way, even if they were the same age.

It made it easy to follow him. He always had the right answer, several thoughts and cold opinions based on factual evidence and logical deduction. He was smart and intelligent, and had a goal and purpose that he was driving for. It was, especially in a place as violent and uncertain as the one they were a part of, godsend.

Irinaka, even though they didn’t agree on anything else, could agree with him on this. Chisaki Kai was different from everyone else. He stood heads and shoulders over everyone else. His quirk seemed invincible, and it was only going to get better with time. Hell, even the adults around here seemed to give him a wide berth and respect.

After all, he had already gone out and cleaned some of the other yakuza households by the time he was 13, by himself. It was something that most adults couldn’t do, but Chisaki did it all by himself, and even came back without a scratch and was in class early for day-duty like nothing happened.

With the exception of Oyaji, everyone was the same in Chisaki’s eyes.

And then, he saw that calm and emotionless Chisaki Kai drop everything in his hands and sprint for the entrance. His face pale, eyes wide, he abandoned everything to run to the main entrance. Kurono, after a brief moment of shock, quickly recovered enough to follow him.

“Izuku?!” he yelled out.

A young, small boy, who barely seemed to come up to his hip, turned around and threw his hands up in the air. He looked far too joyous for someone at the center of three burly and dangerous looking yakuza men.

“Chisaki!” he cheered.

The older man stared at him before his lips pulled into a scowl. He made a fist and dropped it onto his head as he hissed out, “What are you doing here?!”

“Ow!” Small Izuku rubbed the top of his head and started to pout, like that would work. “I just wanted to see you…”

And oh god, did it work, because Chisaki let out this long-suffering sigh, the same kind Kurono saw a father give his unruly son once when he was leaving the convenience store for smokes. It wasn’t something he associated with Chisaki, the emotionless machine, and judging from the look on the other yakuza men present, this was not a regular occurance.

And just like that, Kurono felt the world become uneasy under his feet.

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“Hari,” Chisaki said as the man approached.

“Hello, Kai,” never let it be said that Kurono didn’t have manners. Still, he had to do his best to keep all the scorn out of his voice as he jutted his chin in the little kid’s direction, “Who is this?” he asked.

Chisaki took a step right in front of the smaller boy, and Kurono felt something tighten in his chest. He didn’t know what it was. He didn’t know why Chisaki was looking at him like that, or even what that expression could be called.

“None of your business-”

“I’m Midoriya Izuku!” the young boy chirped out, cutting Chisaki off like he had a death wish. “Nice to meet you!” Still, Chisaki spun to him so Hari couldn’t see the look of promised agony on his face, but he could see how hard Chisaki clenched his jaw.

“...Nice to meet you,” Kurono lied, a smile on his face, and the dumb boy took it at face value. What was the point of him? Why was Chisaki so attached to him?

Who was this?

“...Hari, go back inside,” Chisaki said. He turned back to the young boy, his body taut with tension, as his voice dropped to a gentle whisper, like how a normal person would coax a scared animal. The child’s bright eyes and beaming smile turned up to him. And Kurono watched Chisaki, the cold and certain boy he grew up watching, relax in a way he’s never seen before. “Izuku, lemme walk you back to the station, okay?”

“Ehhh?” the kid whined back, his silly smile finally slipping off his face to whine at the yakuza’s attack dog, “We’re not going to play today? But you said that we can go to the park and play together today. I… I rode the bus, all by myself today! I learned how to by mom!”

Chisaki took a deep breath through his nostrils, tipped his head back and exhaled loudly to the skies above him. Kurono didn’t even know that was an expression that he could make.

“It’s fine,” Kurono said, “Why don’t I come and play with you, too?”

And god, Chisaki’s eyes were sharp. He had seen him glare before, of course, but never at him, and it was chilling. If looks could kill, Kurono was dead and eliminated from the cycle of reincarnation. For a moment, it was like they were standing in the frigid winter, but then, little Izuku broke the silence.

“The more the merrier!” he said brightly, clapping his small hands, gleefully in a way only a stupid child could be. “C’mon Chisaki, it’ll be fun!”

Chisaki looked like he was going to murder Kurono in a particularly grueling and agonizing way.

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“You’re Chisaki’s best friend, aren’t you?” Izuku asked him when Chisaki had reluctantly gone to get the younger boy something to drink from the vending machines.

“...Yeah,” Kurono said, “We’ve been together since we were kids.” He beamed back, because this was a point of pride for him.

He doesn’t know what kind of response he wanted from the younger boy, but his happy clapping and bright eyes weren’t it. It was a welcomed surprise, however, and he was glad that the kid knew his place.

“That’s good!” he said, “I’m glad. For a while, I thought he was really lonely and by himself, but I guess I didn’t have to worry about that at all! Because Chisaki has someone here after all!”

“Of course! Everyone likes Chisaki. He’s super smart and super strong! And his quirk is so much cooler than anything else!”

Izuku nodded so hard that his head should have snapped off, “Yeah! He can even heal his own cuts and fix my pencils and notebooks! It’s so cool!”

“Don’t talk about someone like they’re not there,” Chisaki said, appearing with three cans of different drinks. He handed one to Midoriya, “They didn’t have your favorite, but the strawberry pocari is pretty good,” he said.

Strawberry pocari? Since when did Chisaki drink anything other than oolong tea? Did he try strawberry pocari before? When? Without him? He didn’t even know that he liked strawberries, or had any preferences concerning food. Kurono doesn’t know who this is.

“It’s okay,” Izuku said, even though he looked disappointed, but recovered quickly. He was beginning to see a pattern with this boy, and he didn’t know how to feel about it. “Since you got it for me,” he said with a growing smile on his face, “I bet it’s going to be yummy!”

Kurono watched in absolute, godsmacked, disgusted horror as a blush crawled across Chisaki’s cheeks and stained his ears a bright red. He scowled, keeping the other two drinks in his arm as he roughly ruffled Izuku’s hair, ignoring the shriek of joy from the child, he shoved Izuku’s face away from seeing his.

Who was this?

Lost, confused, and a little worried, Kurono learned that the most dangerous thing in the world was not guns or crime, criminals or yakuza, police or heroes, but a little elementary school boy named Midoriya Izuku.

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Eventually, when Izuku gets on the train rather sadly and waves at them from the window until they can’t see him anymore, Chisaki finally speaks up.

“Hari,” he said, “If we die, no one will notice or care. We have nothing to leave behind and no one to leave behind.

Kurono stiffened, and he stared at the other teen. In his features, he couldn’t find a single trace of that warm, almost-human that meticulously rubbed at Izuku’s face to make sure that all traces of their snack was off his face.

The golden eyes turned to him, cold and ruthless, the man in front of him was Chisaki Kai, the Shie Hassakai’s attack dog.

“And as long as we live here, we will be content with that.”

His heart thundering in his chest, Kurono couldn’t find any words to say. He would never forget those words. He would never forget the first time he heard Chisaki lie to him.

After all, Chisaki’s eyes didn’t turn to him until Midoriya was out of sight-the same way Midoriya didn’t stop waving until they couldn’t see him.

### Kurono & Izuku - Weakness

Kurono was absolutely certain that there was nothing weaker than Midoriya. And, if someone as great as Chisaki were to associate with a weakling like Midoriya, then surely, he would infect Chisaki and make him weak. He’s seen it many, many times with some of the older anikis.

Guys who look at someone the way Chisaki looked at Midoriya, always meet a tragic and pitiful end. It happened to his dad, and so Kurono was extra perceptive to these kinds of things. Weak people, or people who seemed weak, were people that ruined others.

Of course, Oyaji was a thousand times cooler than any adult he’s ever met. He’s surrounded by all these strong people, and stands over all of them, after all.

And so, if they grow up one day, Kurono was certain that he would be a strong person working for a stronger person. His daydream fantasies involve him and his boss Chisaki, beating up all the Pro-Heroes and police alike, and standing at the top like strong people should.

Midoriya will ruin that. He’s certain of this.

And so deep and lost in thought, Kurono failed to realize that the group of high school delinquents eyeing him critically.

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Kurono has gotten his ass handed to himself so many times that you would think he would learn from it by now. But there’s not much to learn from the fact that these guys had quirks made to hurt people and they wanted to hurt Kurono.

Kurono’s face hit the concrete, and a foot came down to smother his face against the concrete.

This was his fault. He deserved this. He should have been paying better attention, but was so preoccupied in his thought about what could cause Chisaki’s premature death that he had totally neglected himself.

“Pathetic. Is this really the best you can do?”

Kurono never had much attachment to life, but he did think that it was sad that he wouldn’t be able to see Chisaki rise up to the top. It seemed that loyalty was cheap after all.

“C’mon, go and call your big bro Chisaki.”

Every breath tasted like blood, and there was a rush of pain with every inhale. He must have lost more blood than he thought, as a shiver ran through him. It was a familiar sensation that he wished he didn’t have to feel again, but it was wistful thinking to hope. How stupid.

There was no reason for him to be alive. There was no reason to have been born. A pitiful life laid ahead of him, and a pathetic death will come. Be it in this alley or another, Kurono knew how a life like his would end. For people like him, who had no meaning in their life or beyond it, they held onto frivolous concepts like ‘honor’.

He wouldn’t call Chisaki. Not because he knew the man wouldn’t come, but because that’s what his pride held onto.

Pathetic?

That didn’t even begin to describe it.

“L-Leave him alone!”

The voice that came from the mouth of the alleyway was painfully familiar, and Kurono felt his heart drop to the ground.

Oh no.

No no.

Despite how hard it was to breath just a second ago, Kurono managed to turn his head enough to confirm with his eyes that indeed, Midoriya Izuku was the one who had called out. The kid, who didn’t even come up to his stomach, stood with his fists up like he wanted to take on the group of 8 men who wanted to beat Kurono an inch into his life (and succeeded).

“Haha! What’s wrong with this kid?”

“Get lost, brat!”

“N-Never fear!” the kid cried out, looking about a step from crying as he trembled, “F-for I am here!”

“Kid, fuck off-”

“Wait,” one of them spoke up. “You know this guy?”

The toe in his ribcage pressed against his straining bones and he hissed back. His eyes darted from the man and to Izuku and back, and then realized with a start that he had given himself away when he saw the cruel twist of his lips curl up.

“Huu… The great Kurono wasn’t so alone after all, huh?”

At that moment, Kurono realized one thing.

If they did survive, Chisaki was going to kill him.

“Midoriya-run!” he shouted out, uncaring about how his body protested. He shot up, grabbing one of them by the knees and knocking them down. “Get out of here!”

“N-no!” Midoriya shouted back, “I … I wanted to help!”

He hissed back, and turned around.

Lost in those bright green eyes, he stared at him before a swing came to his head. For the second time that day, his head crashed against the ground and bounced like a deflated basketball. Still, he couldn’t register anything other than the fact that Chisaki’s smile-the man who melted those golden eyes- stood like a frightened rabbit at the mouth of the alleyway.

Please, he tried to say, please run away.

Please, his heart screamed out, please don’t let Kai’s smile die.

“Because I-I want to save you too, Kurono-san!”

And with that, Midoriya pulled out something from his pocket and a lighter. Kurono, lost in the wave of emotions that he couldn’t describe, blinked in surprise and then horror as he realized that the kid had fireworks.

This kid, this elementary-school brat, had firecrackers. Just. In his pocket. With a lighter.

“D-Detroit Smash!” he screamed out, chucking the firework at them with all his strength.

It barely made it a few feet into the alleyway before it started to hiss and whizz and pop loudly. Almost immediately, a flash of bright lights painted the darkest corners of the alleyway.

The closest guy, who had jerked backwards in an effort to dodge the firecrackers, stepped too far back and tripped over something. He fell backwards and Midoriya took this opportunity. His lips trembling and eyes watery, he lit another firecracker and ran at him. When he was just a few feets away, threw it at his face.

This boy, Kurono thought detachedly, wanted to be a hero? Even though he was throwing firecrackers (that he probably obtained illegally since it was illegal for children to have firecrackers) at other civilians.

“What the fuck!?”

Indeed, Kurono thought, agreeing with the guy behind him.

Still, he didn’t get his ass beaten by his mom and all her boyfriends-of-the-week for nothing, and Kurono punched his way back up. Except, with a new goal that he’s never had in mind, he turned on his heel and sprinted for Midoriya.

Scooping him up was so easy, but his entire body creaked in response. The pain dulled his senses and made his body ache and scream, but he felt his entire body relax against the warm child in his arms.

And then, a few streets down and out of the way, Kurono realized what had happened. He placed Midoriya down.

Or tried too, but the kid was wailing loudly. His tears were running down his face, soaking Kurono’s shirt, and he realized that his body couldn’t move. Even though he could feel Midoriya getting heavy with every passing moment, he couldn’t command his body to let Midoriya go.

This would only be the start to a very, very, very long list of accidents that Kurono would find with Midoriya.

### Bakugo-kun Gets a Wake-Up

They had promised, two pm at the park on Saturday, and since he understood how uncomfortable Mother Midoriya was with his presence, he wanted to keep away. Otherwise, he would have gone and picked Midoriya up himself. She stared at him the same way all civilians looked at him. It didn’t matter who or where they were, as soon as they saw his tattoos or knew about his family, he was given a wide berth.

Even though the Shie Hassakai, like many other Yakuzas, had been drained of all that they used to be, people look at him like he’s a ticking time bomb. Still, he supposes that it’s better to be feared than pitied. And it’s better that he has someone to call a family than be an abandoned child.

“Kai!”

His head snapped up, and felt the entire world fade away at the sight of the young man who came crashing into his life one day. He lifted his hand up, and walked while the young man jogged up to him. They stopped, just a few feet apart, and Chisaki basked in the radiance of his grin.

“Hiya! Did you wait long?” he asked.

“Not at all,” he lied. “I just got here.”

“Really?”

“Yeah,” he said, and quickly decided to move on, “You want ice cream?”

“Yeah! I love ice cream!” the young boy cheered.

He extended his hand out to him, because they would have to leave the park and cross the street to get to the convenience store. He has gotten several lectures from Midoriya, telling him that it’s very, very, very dangerous for people to cross the street without holding someone’s hand. Fuck, he’s seen Midoriya ask to hold other strangers’ hands to make sure that they cross the street safely.

Luckily, no one was here today.

Still, Midoriya’s eyes shined, like this was something he has never offered before, and he eagerly grabbed his hand. Looking at him, Chisaki feels something unlodge in his chest.

If his mother ever looked at his father the way Midoriya Izuku looked at him, and his father looked at her the same way, he wonders if they could have been a happy family. Probably not, concerning how they all ended up.

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Gari-Gari-kun ice cream is something special to Chisaki. Of course, everything he associates with Midoriya is [special] to him, but this was especially so. Midoriya is bouncing on his feet in his excitement, as though there wasn’t enough room in his body to contain his happiness.

He couldn’t believe that ice cream could make someone this happy. It’s bizarre and endearing all at once.

“That good?” he asked, biting into his ice cream. The cold hurt his teeth, and the sugary treat felt sickening. He wanted to eat it as fast as physically possible. This always happens, he always thinks it’ll taste good because Midoriya eats it like it’s the most delicious thing ever, and Chisaki always falls for it. You’d think he’d learn by now.

“Yeah!”

There was no better way for him to spend his allowance.

“There you are, Deku!”

Midoriya stiffened, and turned over his shoulder while Chisaki frowned. Who dared to interrupt this moment? Who dared to chase that smile off his face? He followed Midoriya’s green, almost ashamed eyes, to the ground and then to his next target. His mood shifted.

Calmly, with the precision that everyone has always expected of him, he carefully organized his thoughts.

A young boy, looking to be just about Izuku’s age, has appeared. A blond in a black t-shirt and dirty white shorts. He was just a little bit bigger than Deku, but he had little doubt that he won’t be able to eliminate this boy without trouble. The trouble comes from what’s around.

Three cameras. Two in the convenience store that has access to the street. One at the entrance of the park with some limited sight of the street they were on. There were several blindspots that he could use. Next, were the humans. One store attendant, three people mingling in the store. One person in a car coming towards them. A woman pushing a stroller across the street.

Hm. How to go about this?

“Hiya Kacchan,” Midoriya said, breaking his thoughts with his quiet voice.

Where was that boy who pointed at the colors of shirts of people walking by and eagerly explained which heroes used that color?

Hold on.

Kacchan?

This was Kacchan?

Super cool and amazing Kacchan? The one that Midoriya speaks of like he’s a distant star? The one with a great quirk and an unbeatable personality? That beautiful image of some bright and shining kid seemed to be dashed as the kid pointed at Midoriya and spoke again.

“Hey, Deku! What are you doing here? This is my territory! You can’t be here!”

Midoriya flinched backwards, dropped his beloved Gari-Gari-kun ice cream to the ground and Chisaki felt the world slow down. His eyes turned to the other kid, Kacchan, with every intention of smearing him into nothing. The kid saw him and took half a step back, and brought his hands up. The palms of his hands crackled and popped, and vividly, he was brought to the thoughts of why Midoriya was always covered in soot.

This was Kacchan?

“And who are you? Aren’t you embarrassed to be hanging out with quirkless Deku!? You’re like an adult! Stupid!”

And then, a glimmer appeared in his eyes, one that Chisaki didn’t like, but was familiar with, and he grinned.

“I bet you’re a bad guy! I bet that you’re just here to kidnap Deku! Well, jokes on you, Deku is just a weakling! And a crybaby and stupid and still wears All Might diapers!”

“He’s not a bad guy!”

Chisaki’s head whipped back to where Midoriya stood in front of him. He stared at Midoriya, who was trembling all over like he was borrowing courage on credit. In the receiving end of verbal abuse from a classmate, but he stood stronger and held his ground.

“Kai isn’t a bad guy! He’s just a guy!”

“Haaaah? Shut up, Deku! You’re so stupid that you can’t even tell when you’re being kidnapped!”

“Y…" the words were choking him, or his tears were, "You're wrong, Kacchan!” Midoriya shouted back, his eyes watering like it was physically hurting him to yell at Bakugo.

“Deku, you don’t even know how to spell that word, so be quiet! Okay? I’m trying to save you and your stupid butt!”

“You’re a stupid butt!”

“Deku!”

Several exploding sounds resounded, and attracting a lot of unwanted attention, Chisaki spoke up.

“Izuku, let’s just go-”

“His name is Deku!”

“His name is Izuku,” Chisaki replied back sternly. “And we should leave.”

“But he called you a ‘bad guy’!” Midoriaya said.

Far away, deep inside, Chisaki wondered why Midoriya only found it in himself to fight back when it was for someone else. If the whole world could experience this kindness, he wondered if it would be a safer place to live in.

“It’s fine,” the older man said. His temper was about to blow, and he did not want to show Midoriya that Bakugo was correct.

It would be the one lie he told Midoriya.

He wasn't a bad guy.

He extended his hand towards Midoriya again, “Let’s go get you another ice cream.”

He underestimated the stubbornness of a child, however, because Kacchan followed them. However, they escaped to the parking lot behind the park, where there were no prying eyes, no cameras, and so there was only one thing left to do.

“Izuku, I’m going to talk to him for a bit,” he said, feeling something coil inside him. His eyes focused back on the little boy who was shouting at him that he was stupid and bad and mean and a bunch of other words that he didn’t really listen to. He handed Midoriya his wrapper, where he had already finished the ice cream. “Can you throw this away for me?”

“No.”

He paused and turned to the little boy who barely came to his waist.

“What did you say?”

“No.”

“...Why is that?”

“Because, if I leave, you’ll be alone.”

Chisaki looked confused for a moment, because, yes, that’s what he wanted. Indirectly of course. It was temporary. He would rather be alone so he can prove Kacchan-kun over there right, and then he could go back to being Midoriy's "Kai" and go watch the hero movie as promised.

“Yes?”

“I can’t do that.”

“Huh?”

“You look too sad when you’re alone. So I’m not leaving.”

Chisaki, for a brief moment, thought that he could do it. If it was for Midoriya, he could be a Not Bad Guy. If it was for Izuku, he could just be Kai.

“Deku, stop talking to a Villain!”

“He’s not a villain!” Midoriya called back.

No, no, no, if he wanted to be a [not bad guy], there was something he needed to do first, right?

He pulled off his gloves. There was a use to his wretched quirk. He had value in one way.

He just had to walk over to the small blond and with a single swipe, Kacchan will be nothing. It was something he’s done many times before, and he’s certain that he will do many times more. Because he’s this kind of man. But this was fine. He wasn’t working under orders. This would be his choice. He would make this choice, on his own.

And in Kacchan's absence, the smile would return to Midoriya’s face. He was honored for the opportunity to return that smile himself.

A hand persistently tugged on his. His tightly reigned control didn’t waver, but his heart stuttered as the small hand grabbed his pinky and ring finger. His entire sticky hand could comfortably wrap around just the two of his fingers, but three would be two much. He knows this by heart. There is only one person who would ever grab his hand like this.

It was a sweaty hand, a little sticky from the ice cream, but those green eyes trapped him where he was.

“...Who is lying?”

Me, Chisaki wants to say. I am a bad guy.

“...Right now?”

If he goes and Overhaul Kacchan, he’s right. He was the bad guy.

If he doesn’t, Izuku is right. He wasn’t a bad guy. But Izuku won’t be happy either.

Either way, isn’t he the bad guy? He…

“...I wanna be a hero, Kai,” Izuku said, the same way he always did, determined and certain.

“You can’t be a hero, Deku!” Kacchan yelled out, probably upset that no one was paying attention to him.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” he asked him.

Choice is a foreign thing to Chisaki. The future is an uncertain, foggy thing. If anything, he would daresay that it wasn’t for someone like him. Any piece of trash that gets taken in by the yakuza… all of them share the same fate. A grisly death or a pitiful one. When people like him die in painful and gruesome ways, they wouldn't even make it to the news.

Chisaki’s breath caught, and Midoriya stood in front of him and in front of Kacchan, as though to protect him and shield him from the other elementary school boy. It’s the smallest back, but the most reliable thing he has ever seen.

“Kacchan!” he said loudly, “Do you want to play together?”

“I don’t wanna play with some stupid guy like you!”

“Then go away.”

The blond flinched back at the cold words. And Izuku turned around to beam back at Chisaki.

“You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do,” he said, as they started to walk away. This time, Kacchan didn’t follow them. “Because I won’t let you.”

“...Really?”

“Yeah,” Midoriya nodded, giving him a toothy grin that looked painful from the bruise on his face, “Because I’m a hero!”

Chisaki never had anything good to say about heroes until this moment.

“Hah, you’re right,” he said, smiling because he didn’t know how to cry.

He didn’t know that being saved could be so painful.

### Chisaki & Boss - Hearts

Oyaji once told him that he was strong, but stupid, so it didn’t matter.

As a kid who understood that the only thing he was waiting for was death, he didn’t think anything of it.

“Kai,” Oyaji said, “Are you human?”

Chisaki, who had come in ready to be scolded for having a friend who is so much younger than him and then letting him come to a yakuza headquarters, blinked back. This was not what he was expecting at all.

“...Yes?” Chisaki replied back. As hard as it was to believe, he was human. Still, in all honesty, he didn’t care if he was or wasn’t. As long as he was able to get back to the boy with green eyes, he doesn’t really care what he was.

“Then be wary where your heart is. A human cannot live without it.”

He didn’t get it then.

### Kai & Hari -

“Is Hari going to join us today?”

It was an innocent question, because everything about Izuku was innocent, but Chisaki had never craved to brutally murder someone more than in that instant. How could someone so sweet like Izuku inspire such violent thought from him? He figured it must be because of how he grew up.

“...Hari?” he asked. He knew one Hari. He knew exactly one Hari. Of all the people that he knew Izuku knew, it was the same-

“Hey, there he is! Hari!”

Oh no.

Chisaki turned, and experienced true betrayal for the first time when Kurono Hari, the broken kid that he grew up with and never really thought twice about, came jogging up to him with a smile on his face as he regarded Izuku.

Without thinking about it, Chisaki turned around and broke his nose with his fist.

-

“That was really mean-”

“It’s Hari, it’s how we say ‘Hi’.”

“But still, he blacked out!”

“Then he needs to be stronger.”

“...Are you going to hit me too? I want to be stronger.”

Chisaki stared at Izuku for a moment, like the thought brought him physical pain, and shook his head.

“You’re plenty strong enough.”

Hari, who was coming into consciousness for the tail end of the conversation, thought that it was strange that Chisaki knew and understood compassion after all.

“Hari, are you okay?”

No, he wanted to say. But his eyes caught Izuku’s concerned gaze, and wondered if anyone had ever looked at him like that before. Probably not, concerning where he lived, but it was enough.

“Yeah,” he lied.

“Are you sure?” Izuku asked, tilting his head, “Chisaki used his quirk but-”

“...My name is Kai.”

There was a brief silence and the other two stared at the other teen. Chisaki scoffed, crossed his arms over his chest, and turned away, looking more his age than ever before.

“You called him ‘Hari’,” Chisaki muttered, like that was enough of a reason to pout.

Kurono reeled at the thought that Chisaki, the kid that didn’t blink twice at killing a man begging for his life, was pouting.

“Oh!” Izuku gasped, his cheeks turning bright pink as the words processed in his head. “...Kai used his quirk,” he amended, a soft smile on his face. “But you didn’t wake up.”

But what Kurono really wanted was for Chisaki to not look so smug at being called by his first name.

“It’s because he’s weak,” Chisaki bluntly replied back. Gold eyes narrowed as he stared at Kurono from where he stood. The amount of disdain that his golden eyes held could have drowned someone, “He’s fine now, isn’t he? C’mon, didn’t you say that you wanted the new snack?”

“Oh!” Izuku completely abandoned Kurono’s side, and ran for Chisaki’s. Golden eyes looked at him briefly before he tilted his chin up in triumph. He put his arm around Izuku’s shoulders for good measure. Next to him, the child kept going, “You know the new All Might card is supposed to be in the blue one! And he looks so cool! They gave him a gold border based off his second costume design so there’s going to be an extra collectable emblem and-”

He just kept going, on and on and on, but Kurono could only stare at the way Chisaki’s gaze felt gentle.

…Who?

### Inko- the boy named Kai

“...Izuku, what did you say?”

“Can Kai come over for dinner today?”

Inko actually pulled the phone away from her ear to stare at it and then placed it back against her ear. In her mind, she ran through the entire roster of her child’s class and couldn’t remember any Kai.

“...Who?”

“Oh! Uh, Chisaki-kun! He has a first name! Chisaki is his family name, mom! You write it like ‘revolve’ and ‘curve’ because he’s uh… curvy…?”

Inko felt her heart do that thing again. That thing where it stopped working and dropped into her stomach and before suddenly surging to kick her brain into high-gear. Torn between running out to grab her child or hanging up to call the police instead, she used all of her patience to try as calm as possible. First, she needed information.

“I see, you’ve been calling him by his first name, huh?” her control was impeccable. Her voice didn’t tremble, even if she had to sit down since her legs felt so weak.

“Yeah, since we’re, like, best friends,” he said it, quietly, like it was a grand secret, and Inko felt her eyes water. The last time she heard his voice like that, he was talking about how talking loudly could startle birds, and he just wanted to hear them sing so it was important to be very quiet. Now, her kid was using that same voice to explain to her why he was calling this yakuza boy by the first name. “But can he come over for dinner today?”

She looked warily to the package of hamsteak she was going to make for her son and herself. She could easily go out and make more but…

“I’m sorry Izuku, I don’t think we’ll have enough for dinner,” she ultimately decided.

Small sacrifice, she thought to herself. This would be worth it. A little pain now, a little separation, and it’ll pay off. He’ll grow up. He’ll understand then.

“Oh, that’s okay,” Izuku chirped back. “I’ll be back after dinner then, mom! Enjoy your day off!”

And her son, her precious, beautiful, beloved and only son, hung up on her without even waiting for her response. It wasn’t even like she could call him back, since he called from a payphone. And at that moment, Inko decided that Izuku needed to have a phone. For her sake.

She stood there for a long moment, her mind reeling to figure out what the fuck just happened.

Unable to do anything else, Inko reached far into the fridge where Izuku’s curious eyes couldn’t see and pulled out a bottle of sake. Mitsuki had gotten it for her as a joke, saying that her baby boy was going to drive her up the wall, and she was grateful that she didn’t throw it away.

She needed this. And probably one more.

### Second Grade - the Other Midoriya

These days, there was a middle schooler that was waiting by the Elementary School entrance at the end of every day.

He was tall, with a white surgeon mask over his nose and mouth, and if it wasn’t for the fact that he was in middle school uniform from a school two districts over, no one would assume he was a middle school student. Actually, regardless of the uniform, he looked incredibly suspicious. So suspicious that one of the teacher picked up the phone to call the police at first sight. Most, if not all, the children were scared to go outside until second-grade Midoriya was solemnly walking out of the school building.

One of the teachers, the one trying to call the police, pointed and gave a wordless scream as the other teachers had completely missed Midoriya leaving.

But when Midoriya saw the stranger, there was an unmistakable grin unfolding on his face, filled with unbridled joy, as the small, green-haired boy ran for him.

“Kai!” he cheered, arms extended out, but he stopped just shy of touching him. He gave a big grin to the older boy, who seemed to visibly relax. His mask moved, but he spoke too softly for anyone to hear him.

He tucked his book away into his bag. He looked up at the teachers, gave a small, jerky, not-very-polite bow, and with Midoriya’s little hand in his, made their way down the street. Bizarre even because he took off one of his gloves to hold the younger boy’s hand, and bent down a little to grab it properly.

“...Should we report it?” one of the teacher’s said.

“I mean, Midoriya-kun went really willingly…”

“He did seem to know him…”

And as teachers who felt as though something was amiss, they instead focused on the other students. Hopefully, no other parent caught that, and there would be no emergency PTA meeting.

In fact, they had forgotten about the incident as a whole until they saw Midoriya Izuku-kun in school, on time, uninjured, and a little happier than they’ve ever remembered this quirkless boy being. Once they saw him, they all gave themselves a hearty pat on the back, since they had ultimately made the right decision. Conveniently, they also ignored the way Bakugo could not meet anyone else’s eyes, or what could have been if that stranger had less than amiable intentions.

### Chisaki & Yakuza - gems

Chisaki has done all sorts of questionable stuff by the time he was 13. When most kids were learning about the special changes in their body, he had already lost his virginity to some woman down in the red-light district. He would never tell Izuku, or anyone really, but it didn’t make him feel anything.

He knew that there was something wrong with him. He knew from the way that people avoid looking at him, the way people don’t approach him at school, and the way that they all whisper like he’s deaf. It’s fine.

He knows what his purpose is, right now.

One of the anikis that frequent a special-kind of adult club that students shouldn’t ever enter invited him to come with him. Chisaki would have normally denied it on the pretense of school, but it was in front of many other men in the group. With the way they egged and joined in on the aggressive recruiting, Chisaki was eventually forced to go after Oyaji told them to get out.

But while out, he sat in the corner of the sofa, wishing that the night out end. A hostess suddenly dropped into the seat next to him. He stared at her and nodded, because it was polite to do so, and returned to focus on how wasted his aniki was getting.

Hopefully, he would be blackout drunk soon enough and the rest of them can drag him back to the compound.

And then, Chisaki’s eyes caught on a very specific shade of green in the corner of his eyes. His eyes trailed and ligered, and the hostess to his side talked about her jewelry when she realized that Chisaki couldn’t keep his eyes off of it.

An emerald gem, she explained to him.

The words echoed in his head.

He couldn’t help but think that it wasn’t bright enough, but he couldn’t understand why. When he explained that, she looked off-footed.

“Kid,” she said quietly, “You got someone special, don’t you?”

Special?

Special was a term used for people who could afford to treasure something. For people like Chisaki, it was a word that was used much more frivolously, or a term to describe someone who will eventually become their target. Oyaji used it to describe another boss in Osaka, and they were known not to get along.

Did he have someone like that? Who was it? Who could it be?

So lost in his thoughts, he totally forgot about his aniki until he got back to the compound and someone asked where his aniki was.

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### “Chisaki” vs “Midoriya” - Inko Stresses

“...Kai, do you like your parents?”

Please, Inko begged long and hard in her head, don’t ask yakuza orphans those kinds of questions, Izuku. In her child-care books, she saw that kids ask questions because they feel like it’s safe too. She doesn’t know why her baby boy thought that this was a safe question to ask. Was this something that he was curious about? How did she even begin to describe the fact that some people don’t love their children to a child who couldn’t recognize his father?

It took all of her mental fortitude to keep herself from jumping out of her seat to try and salvage this, but then Chisaki does what he always does. It didn’t matter how many times he did this, it always caught her off-guard.

Anyone else would have hit Midoriya, possibly started yelling. She imagined that many people would have monologued too, or maybe changed the topic and brushed off her son and his way-too-curious for his own good questions. Honestly, who did he take after?

“I don’t really remember,” Chisaki said, brutally honest and straight-faced like always, “But I killed them when my quirk manifested. I’m sure they’re ashamed that I was born as proof of their union.”

Izuku, probably having no idea what he just said, nodded his head anyways. She didn’t know whether to hug him or shake him. This was her child, right? The proof of her … union with Hisashi, as Chiskai had described. Who taught this boy to speak? Why was he like this? Why was Chisaki at her dinner table again? All these questions, but Inko doubted she would ever get an answer.

...But would she rather someone who sounded like yakuza to hang out with Izuku or someone who sounded a little more sophisticated? She honestly didn’t know anymore. She didn’t even know why these were the choices she had to face now either. Was raising a child supposed to be like this?

“I asked how you felt about them,” Izuku said, “Answer my question.”

No seriously, who did Izuku take after?

She and Hisashi were pretty meek and well-mannered, all things considered. Although, she was beginning to think that Izuku didn’t have friends at school for reasons outside of being quirkless, and she didn’t know what to do with this information.

Chisaki hesitated, looking a little lost, but faltered at the sight of Izuku’s earnest stare.

“...I hate them,” he said quietly. “I hate them for being so weak that they could be killed so easily.”

Inko’s heart ached painfully. Half in fear, and the other half for a child who lost something he couldn’t even explain.

“Okay,” Izuku said, nodding like he understood something, “I won’t leave you alone and I’ll become strong. So that means you have to become a Midoriya.”

There was a brief pause.

“...What…?”

Luckily, Chisaki was just as confused as Inko, and she didn’t think they would ever be so united on something before this moment. Little did she know, this was just the start of a long, long list.

“Mom says that the bride takes the groom’s name, but if you don’t like your parents, then you should just become a Midoriya. That means, you have to be my bride,” he explained, like it was something that was obvious.

And Inko knew that she should stop him from saying things like that, but when Chisaki’s entire face lit up like a tomato, she just didn’t have the heart to. It was rare to see expressions and emotions on the teenager, and she wanted to encourage it. Just. Not at her dining table. Or like this.

It wasn’t like she thought that Chisaki was undeserving of a future filled with love and happiness and domestic peace. It wasn’t like that at all. Inko would love that for Chisaki, or any child really, to have a future blessed with joy and love.

Just. Her baby boy? Seriously? He didn't know his multiplication table was but was planning a marriage?

She opened her mouth, ready to say something, to gently dissuade him, but his eyes were so bright.

Izuku once asked her if someone could love a quirkless person. And that if that Someone could love him, like, really, really loved him, he asked her if they would stay and marry him. Like a fool, she had told him << of course >> because she couldn’t fathom the idea that no one would love her son.

Inko felt her eyes water all over again, and hoped (begged and prayed) that he grew out of this.

She didn’t want to welcome a yakuza into the family like this. She didn’t want to think that the only person that could love her son was someone who was yakuza. She didn’t want to deal with anyone else whispering behind her back, about why her husband was never home and why her son was always getting involved with something so dirty. Why why why when the truth was love but all they gave was pity.

But she couldn’t think of anything more precious than the smile on Izuku’s face.

-

“...Inko-sama,” Chisaki said, his voice quiet but there was something to him that made her wish that he didn’t stare after her baby boy. The light in his eyes, that used to be as bright as the gunk stuck in car engines, looked a little brighter.

Like candlelight. Unnoticeable unless all other lights were off, small and insignificant, but one careless action away from burning down a forest.

She didn’t know what to do with that image. How to frame it with the way that Chisaki looked at Izuku.

“...Is… Is it possible for me to receive affection?”

Now, this was it. This was the point where Inko could speak and set Chisaki straight. And use Chisaki to help guide Izuku back to something that was less dangerous than small yakuza children with tattoos on their body like barcodes.

“Kai-kun,” she said to Izuku’s Kai, “You can’t control what other people give you. You can choose to accept them or reject them, but you can’t control people like that. That’s why our memories with people are precious.”

And she wasn’t sure what Chisaki remembered in that moment, but his eyes were too wide and edged towards a revelation.

“I see,” he whispered quietly.

And before she lost him, she told him sternly, “That goes for you too. No one can control you to give something you don’t want,” or don’t have, she didn’t add. “Sometimes, it’s more precious to give something than to receive, too. Because you choose to do it.”

It felt like she could see it. Her words turning cogs in his head and sinking into golden eyes to reveal a brighter image. She could see the exact moment the words enveloped in his heart, and she despaired at his next question.

“...Then, could… people change?”

Somehow, she couldn’t find it in herself to lie. Apologizing to her son, because it felt like she was going to hand him a death sentence because she would rather be a good person than a good mother, she answered Chisaki’s question honestly.

“If they really choose to.”

### Chisaki & Boss - Future

“...Oyaji, is it possible to leave this life?”

“Can you run from your shadow?”

Chisaki thought about it for a second, and upon his answer, grimaced.

“...But that only applies to adults, who are a part of this life,” the Oyaji replied back. He leaned back into his seat, leveling Chisaki a look. “So, Kai, what are you here for?”

“...Oyaji I… What do I need to do to protect someone?”

The boss stared at him for a moment and shook his head.

“You already know the answer to that, Kai. You’re not stupid, so don’t waste my time with this kind of shit. What is it that you really want to say?”

There was a long silence, and right before Oyaji was about the chuck his ashtray at the kid, Chisaki spoke up.

“...I want to be a better person,” he said. “I want to be someone that can walk next to him.”

His face scrunched up, and in comparison to the emotionally devoid child he picked off the streets, looked painfully human.

Oyaji would wait for Chisaki to leave before he sheds a few tears himself, but he really did wish he got a chance to properly thank Midoriya Izuku himself. He was a crime overload to a dying kingdom. All he wanted was the continued joy and success for those that he considers there.

“And?”

“And so, Oyaji. I … Is it okay? If I leave? Can I … Can I do that?”

“...Kai,” the Oyaji spoke sternly, the same way he always did, the same way he always will. But, unable to contain his joy underneath an annoyed expression, his shoulders relaxed. “Take responsibility for yourself. That’s what it means to be strong.”

Chisaki’s eyes shined, and briefly, Oyaji thought that living this long might have just been worth it after all.

“If you don’t know something, you should study. You think I send you to school out of goodwill?”

### Chisaki - A Good Person

“...Oyaji-sama,” Chisaki called out one day, “Is it possible to be a good person?”

“...Hm?”

“Because, even Izuku is selfish and greedy.”

“Kai, have you looked in the mirror recently?” he asked.

Chisaki jerked, but looking at the boss, he shook his head. He only looked in the mirror before he met Midoriya after all, and even then, all his best efforts to look like himself are dashed the moment Izuku takes him by the hand and they play in the mud again.

He took too long to answer though, because the boss gave him an amused look, like he was looking through his daughter’s old photo album again, and he shook his head.

“Kai, if they can make you smile like that, then I think you already have the answer.”

“And me? Is it okay if I’m not… a good person?”

“...Do you want to be a good person?” Oyaji narrowed his eyes at him, a telltale sign that he was going to get his ass handed to him. Oyaji knew him better than he did, and he hated insincere bastards. People who were wishy-washy, hiding behind a facade, or people who were satisfied being nothing

Chisaki stared at the man who took him in. He looked at the ground, and then back up. Why was he hesitating? His whole world was already dyed in one color, wasn’t it? Why did he hesitate? In front of Oyaji, who always saw right through him, it was obvious that there was no point in flowery words and beautiful sayings.

“I want to protect his smile.”

“No, you don’t. You’re too conceited for that.”

Chisaki flinched, feeling like a child, but the cold look on Oyaji’s face told him he had five seconds to cut the bullshit before he got a black eye. He hesitated, feeling like a scumbag (and wasn’t that a joke? He was already at the lowest of the low, and there was no possible way that he could get lower, and yet, he still pretended that he’s anything but. If that isn’t being conceited, he doesn't know what was) but came clean.

“I want to stay by his side!” Chisaki shouted out, his deepest and darkest desire coming forth like a whip and it cracked like thunder in the quiet garden around him. “I don’t want to grow up and be Yakuza. I want to stay with him! I want a future where we will still be in each other’s lives! I want...”

There was a word for it. Something his mom used to say about his dad back when they were happy and it was just the three of them against the world. It was a long time ago, and he can’t believe that he had forgotten after all this time, but he remembered now. He was born into the world as a product of two people held together by more than the dry ink on their marriage papers.

“I want to be his strength.”

His chest heaved with exertion, never having screamed like that before. Somewhere, deep in his heart, he’s certain that he started to believe that it was okay to speak and it was okay to yell. Afterall, if he just screams, surely, a young boy with green eyes will come and save him.

“Then, it’s not a ‘Good Person’ that you need to be, right?”

Being a Good Person made no sense to him. But that was okay, because Chisaki didn’t want to be a Good Person.

"Yes, I need to be a bride."

"That's right, Kai. You need to…You what?"

### Chisaki’s Backstory - Inko

>> i guess kai asked inko to come as his step-in parents, since he’s never had one of those before. She does. Also meets Chisaki’s previous handler.

-

The man that came to meet Inko was one of the unofficial yakuza men (she wasn’t sure what that meant, she didn’t want to know either), who looked prim, proper and professional. He was apparently Chisaki’s current guardian, and had been assigned to him since Chisaki had gotten there.

Apparently, Chisaki was one of the many orphans that they have picked up throughout the years. While more and more orphans are found with every disaster, sometimes, it’s better if the yakuza takes in the kids with harder-to-manage quirks.

A boy with the ability to disassemble and reassemble things with a touch?

Inko repressed a shudder at the implications, but kept it down.

She reminds herself that it’s for Izuku, who has more kindness in his heart than the world could afford to. She doesn't want to stain it. She wants to protect it. She doesn’t want Izuku to grow up thinking that kindness is a weakness, but she doesn't want him to be taken advantage of either. She shook her head of those thoughts and focused back in.

From the sounds of it, Chisaki Kai was one of the wandering orphans. He was around six when they had gotten to him. Too old to forget the sight of watching everything he loved become decimated under the weight of reality, but too young to do anything about it. As a result, he was taken in by a group without the intention to ever make him one of them.

Yet, he already had a long list of misdemeanors and crimes. She is certain that there is much more than what’s listed, but this is what he had been caught for. They didn’t filter out the list that they gave Inko, and Inko prayed that she wasn’t inviting evil into her home. No, that’s a lie, she didn’t care if she was making a deal with the devil itself, but she didn’t want Izuku to get hurt anymore.

But thinking about the way Chisaki stared at Izuku, the patient way he listened to him, and the way that Izuku wasn’t covered in ash and soot every day when he comes home nowadays, Inko knew that she would take the risk.

All the crimes were related to violence relating to his quirk.

In her mind’s eye, she can easily imagine her home splattered in blood. She managed to banish the thought, however, as soon as she reminded herself of her son’s laugh.

The most important thing she could do was to teach Izuku that there was a life outside of quirks. That it was bright and beautiful, and she would start with Chisaki Kai.

One day, when Izuku was older, she would tell him everything about it. She would make Chisaki tell him everything of that nature. They could decide from there. Until then, she would like to give her baby boy some form of happiness, and maybe even show Chisaki that there was a kindness in the world hellbent on destroying him.

### (not) Saved my All Might

“...Aren’t you upset? That All Might never came to save you?” Chisaki asked.

Izuku winced when Chisaki’s hands came to disinfect his newest burns on his hands, and watching the older boy’s hands take his with incredible care, missed the regret flitting across his face.

“Isn’t All Might supposed to come and save people? He’s the Number One Hero. Why doesn’t he save you then? More than anyone else, you should be saved,” he said, his emotions fueling his words as they tumbled out of his mouth with increasing amount of frenzy, “Doesn’t that make you angry? And you can still hang his posters and say that he’s the Number One Hero? That he’s your favorite hero?”

"...Well,” Izuku started quietly, “At first, I thought that too, but… I think it’s a good thing that he doesn’t come and save me.”

Chisaki frowned back, but held his tongue.

“Because, doesn’t that mean that I didn’t need to be saved?” the green-haired male replied a smile on his face as he looked at his hands, “Because that means that All Might was out saving someone who actually needed it. I … I like that kind of All Might. And I wanna be that kind of hero. Yeah, I’ll help anyone, but when it comes down to it, I wanna save everyone, with a smile on my face! Like All Might!”

Gold eyes stared at him for another moment.

“What about me? Does that mean that you don’t think I needed to be saved?”

Izuku stared at him and took his bandaged hands out of Chisaki’s grasp. He pulled his small hands around both of Chisaki’s, barely covering anything aside from the tips of his fingers, and gave a big grin.

“It’s because I’ll come and save you!” he said. “There’s a lot of heroes out there, and each and every single one of them does something different! Maybe they already knew that I would come for you! So don’t worry, Kai, I’ll come and save you!”

Chisaki’s eyes were molten gold. It was one of the most soothing colors that Izuku knew, and often reminded him of the buttercup flowers that grew around the fence at school. They were small and easily ignored, and often got stomped on, but they shined brighter than any other flower he has seen. But Chisaki had a tough time maintaining eye-contact with him, and Izuku hoped that one day, he could stare at those eyes for as long as he wants.

If he shines light onto those eyes, he’s certain that he could live without the sun.

Then, he would even be able to say that he <saved> Chisaki.

### “Aniki”

Today was a normal day for Inko. As normal as it could be. She woke up, her eyes snapping open as every single molecule in her body jerked to life. She slammed the door open and ran out.

“Good morning, Inko-sama,” Chisaki greeted curtly. “It’s a little presumptuous of me but I-”

“Mom! We made breakfast!”

Ah, was that the smell of smoke in her life? Her lips twitched. Her gaze narrowed.

“...What?”

“I wanted to make breakfast since it you’re birthday mom! I’m really glad that you were born!”

She could feel her heart melt, but she also felt like all the blood in her body was ice. Was it possible to feel this warm but this cold at the same time? She didn’t know, but seeing her baby boy with a plate of black… something did it.

“...Izuku, I…”

“Kai helped too!”

She turned to stare at Chisaki, who gave her the most guilty look, as though he stood in front of the judge and jury expecting the death penalty. In that second, she understood that they have spent way too much time together, if she could read his expression with alarming clarity.

He tried. He really, really tried.

Meaning, whatever Izuku wanted to make, this was just a piece of it. This was the best he could do.

She squinted a little harder. At the very least, if Chisaki was here, then the kitchen would be clean. Look clean.She didn’t know. His quirk scared him but helped her in equal measures.

“...Mom?” Izuku asked quietly, eyes wide.

“I love it dear,” she said, kneeling down in front of him. “You must have woken up really early for this, huh?”

That made sense why Izuku was so adamant on why Chisaki spent the night. She had been sick with worry all night but it looked like Chisaki was just as worried. The bags under his eyes, as he eyed Izuku warily was probably reflected in hers too.

Before anything else, however, their doorbell went off. About twenty times. The sound was so sudden that Inko flinched, and so obnoxious that she considered taking a hammer to it.

“Deku!” the voice was unmistakable, a small child was outside her door. “Oi! Deku! Let’s go catch crayfish!”

“Kacchan!” Deku gasped. He looked torn from the door to his mother.

And the doorbell sang again, croaking away like a broken record.

“Kacchan?”

Chisaki, who seemed to emote as much as a rock on a good day, grimaced. He honest-to-god grimaced, looking more like a disgruntled teenager in a single second than in the year that Inko knew him.

“Kacchan,” he muttered darkly.

“Well, don’t let me keep you,” Inko said. The thought was warming, but she might die if she ate Izuku’s cooking again, she took the plate with a warm smile. Better to sacrifice Bakugo-kun to Chisaki’s grimace, and send them off with a smile, “Hurry up and answer the door, Izuku.”

“R-Right!”

Her little boy ran to the door, swinging it open and she couldn’t believe that he was already tall enough to open the door on his own, just like that. She could remember a time when he had to jump to get to the doorknob, and even then, smacked himself in the forehead with it.

“Kacchan! Good morning!”

“I’ve been waiting forever, Deku! Were you pooping again?”

“N-no, I wasn’t!”

“Haha! Poopy-pants Deku!”

“It’s not like that, Kacchan!”

This was fine, righ? Inko wondered, she always knew that boys played a little differently than girls, but was it always like this? Well, in her memories, there was a lot of hair-pulling and scissors, so maybe it was supposed to be like this. Kids got a little rougher, tousled around a bit, and nothing mattered as long as both boys returned home at the end of the day.

“Oh! Aniki!”

Inko’s heart froze as Chisaki took a full step back. Katsuki’s adoring eyes turned to the teen next to her. Slowly, she turned to stare at him, and golden eyes turned to her, desperate.

Interesting.

“I can’t believe it, Deku! You were just keeping aniki stashed away like Endeavor Spicy Chips?!”

“Kai’s not a snack, Kaccchan!”

“Haaaah? Of course not, he’s Aniki! Why’d you spent the night here, aniki? We should have had a sleepover! It would have been so much cooler than being at Deku’s stupid house!”

“No, it’s not!”

“Yes, it is!”

She stared at Chisaki while her baby boy and the only other friend he’s managed to make over the years bickered about this and that at the door.

“Aniki,” she repeated. Breathless. Between the yakuza and the PTA or neighborhood watch association, she would rather deal with the fucking yakuza.

“I-it wasn’t my choice,” Chisaki stammered, and she was reminded of the soaked Chisaki who sat in her kitchen all those months ago, hopelessly lost like an abandoned kitten. “I don’t…” The shame cluttered back into his face, like a storm cloud, and she tried to release that bitter resentment in her heart.

“...Nothing to apologize for,” she said.

In her head, she knew that no one was born into that kind of life because they wanted it. No one was born because they wanted it. She knew that Chisaki was just an unfortunate child who was caught in the wave of something awful before he even knew how to count. It was alright. She knew that people like that existed, and she had accepted the reality that she ate dinner with one every Monday and Thursday.

She knew that but she just wanted to know.

“Stupid Deku is stupid!”

“Kacchan is just mean!”

She wanted to know why her baby boy always ended up with these kinds of people.

### Future Aspirations - Inko & Chisaki

Inko felt her heart stop.

“...What?”

“...I would like to pursue a career in medicine.”

“Like… a doctor? A nurse?”

“...I’m not sure,” he admitted. “But I would like you to know that I would… I want to see a future. I want to make a future for myself and, and if at all possible,” he bowed his head forward but she could see that he was blushing all the way down to his neck, “I would like to be a man worthy of Izuku’s attention.”

Inko thought it was totally normal for her to lose her footing in that second. It was a totally normal and human reaction to being told that there was someone that did love her son and wanted to be deserving of sharing a future with him. In her head, it made sense, and it was honestly a lot sadder that she was so shocked that someone, that Chisaki, would choose Izuku.

“Is that… allowed?” she asked quietly.

They never really talked about it, about who Chisaki was and where he came from, especially not where Izuku’s young ears could hear, but fear grappled her heart. In these moments, she’s forced to confront the fact that ignoring the problem never helped. Her plan to make Izuku step away from all of this… dangerous pastime had never taken off.

At the same time, she couldn’t help it.

Could they? Could kids like Chisaki, who had everything stacked against him like this since the beginning, really be saved? Could they really change?

How far gone does a person need to be before ‘change’ wasn’t an option anymore?

“...I… I will make it work,” Chisaki said. “I understand that you don’t trust me,” Oh, Inkodidn’t realize that Chisaki knew, “and I don’t know if it’ll make me worthy to even look at Izuku, but I…”

Where was that golden eyed boy, who looked more plastic than human, go? Was this really the same kid who once told her that he could just disappear?

“But I don’t want to die without ever trying.”

Yes, kids like Chisaki, who looked to be made from blood and pain, were still kids. And kids, especially the lost and the lonely, looked for the brightest thing around them as their guiding figure.

For Izuku, it was All Might. For Chisaki, it was her baby boy.

When she met Hisashi’s parents, did she have a look like that? Did she look ready to cut her own heart out and fight tooth and nail for her husband’s hand in marriage? Was she going to raze the entire world down to ash if it meant Hisashi’s safety and happiness? The empty place next to her was loud.

Regardless of how lonely she could feel, did she understand how it felt for someone who never loved at all?

Of course not.

All she wanted in life was for Izuku to never know either.

“...Kai-kun,” she said, still in that awful habit of telling the truth, “If this is what you want to do with your life, then go for it. But don’t do it for someone else. You can’t force someone to accept you. Do you understand?”

Somehow, his eyes filled with hope. It took the weight off his shoulders, and briefly, she wondered where all those stars in his eyes disappeared off to, that it only returned in these moments. Did children become adults because they lose this shine? Was it possible for children to become adults if they didn’t have a childhood filled with these kinds of lights?

She couldn’t really speak for herself, but she didn’t want to imagine an Izuku who couldn’t smile anymore. Whatever it took. Even if Chisaki and Izuku became lifelong friends. Maybe, if they could change, and their shine never loses its luster, then it’ll be fine.

They’ll be fine, and Inko could think that she did a good job raising Izuku.

### Chores

“...What’s this?” Chisaki asked as he eyed the whiteboard that Kurono and Izuku was placing on the fridge.

“A schedule of chores,” Kurono explained.

Izuku nodded, “This way, it won’t be as hard on mom, so I figured that we could help out with this,” he said. He gave a blinding smile, “And this way, we can keep track of who is doing what when too, and make changes accordingly as needed.”

Chisaki stared at the calendar and frowned.

“How come I’m never on cooking duty?”

Kurono and Izuku side-eyed each other and turned away.

“Anyways, I’ll go let Tabe know that he’s going to be making dinner first,” Kurono said.

“And I’ll let Setsuno know that we’re in charge of clean-up-”

“No,” Chisaki’s hand dropped on Izuku’s shoulder as he frowned back. “Answer me.”

Izuku shot Kurono a look, clearly begging for help, but the older man had already scurried off. The traitor.

“Ah… it’s just.”

“It’s supposed to be fair, isn’t it? What, is my cooking bad? It’s not worse than the dog food that Kendo tries to feed us.”

“No, not at all,” Izuku said, shaking his head vigorously, “It’s just that… well.. I mean…”

Chisaki stared back at him, clear in his stance that he was willing to wait however long the younger man needed.

“...You just… take a long time to cook,” Izuku said, “and I get hungry.”

“That’s it?”

Izuku spluttered back, “Yes, that’s it. You enter the kitchen at four but we still don’t get dinner till 8! Do you know what that’s like?! But we smell food the whole time! It’s awful! I think that I’m going to actually die!”

“Then just say it! Why would you just take me out of the schedule in its entirety without even consulting me!”

“You hate cooking!” Izuku snapped back, “You always complain that it takes too long and that you would rather get take-out!”

The older man scowled back, “Then, all I need to do is get better, don’t I? Whatever, I can do it! It’s just cooking!”

Izuku stared at him for a long moment before he gave a long sigh back.

### The Angel

Chisaki thought about it.

If an angel couldn’t fly, it would have to stay, right? Chisaki stared at Izuku, and wondered where his wings rested, and if they reflected his heart. It would certainly explain how he could make it to heaven and back, if his wings were as big as his heart. He doesn’t dare hope that it would be strong or big enough to take him too, when he knows that he’ll be rejected at the gates.

Scum like him don’t belong in the light. The fact that he could even stand next to Izuku was already more than he deserved.

But even if he can’t step into the light, it would be easy to make Izuku step away, right? All he needed to do was make Izuku step towards him. He needed Izuku to choose him.

He just needed to make sure he didn't want to fly.

As soon as he thought that, Izuku looked up at him and beamed. He lifted up a worm in his hand, bragging about how the disgusting little thing was saving the world every day just by living and eating. In that second, Chisaki realized that his dad, his birth father who was too high off victory to realize his debts were staggering, was right all along.

He was a coward.

Seeing that beaming smile, standing as the center focus of those bright eyes, Chisaki felt all of his previous thoughts desert him and instead, he smiled back. It wasn’t something he was used to, and he once made a child in Izuku’s class cry at the sight of his smile, but Izuku somehow just becomes brighter.

Blinded by his light, Chisaki doesn’t want to see if it meant that he could no longer see him. So when the promised day comes, and Izuku leaves him like everyone else does, he thinks that he’ll just expire and die.

Humans, after all, cannot live without their heart.

### 15yo Chisaki & Inko - Talking about OverDeku

“Now then,” Inko said, pouring him some tea after Izuku was tucked in for the night, “Let’s talk.”

He straightened and tensed his figure and the sight of it made her heart harden. They were just kids, they were all just kids. They had their whole life ahead of them to ruin and teach them suffering, why must it start from before they are even strong enough to walk?

“None of that,” she said, voice gentle, “I just need to clear a couple of things up with you, okay?”

In her head, she understood. In her heart, however, when she’s seen the injuries they sustained and how ambiguous their morality can be, she doesn’t think she could ever love them as her own. However, there must be enough love and kindness in Izuku’s heart, so much more than hers, and she wants to respond to that.

He nodded, “Yes, I understand.”

One day, she thinks, he will see them as a family. Not in the way that he has been raised to see it, but in a new way where it doesn’t have to feel like a burden. At that point, when he is comfortable and his heart is filled with warmth, she thinks that she will meet Chisaki Kai for the first time.

One day, she will be able to feel something other than dread and pity for him.

“...I want you to treasure Izuku, and one day, my greatest hope for you is that you will treasure yourself too.”

He looked confused at that, like he didn’t understand, and she thinks that it’s fine. Izuku is with him, and she knows that he’ll be able to take it from there.

“With that said, I want you to know that there will be none of the hanky-panky until Izuku is older,” she said. She really didn’t want to think of her son engaging in any form of sexual activities when he barely came up to her waist, but she knows that things that are left ambiguous are the most dangerous ones. It’s practically inviting trouble in, and Izuku does enough of that. “Please wait until he is of age to give consent, and you are comfortable with it as well,” she said. “The most important thing is that you are prepared to take the consequences for your actions.”

He blinked at her, clearly confused and she could pinpoint the exact moments where it must have sunk it, as his face began to rapidly color.

“I would never…” he sputtered out before a hand came up to cover his mouth.

He looked down, shy and embarrassed and Inko felt like she could feel how hot his face was from her place across the table. The sight would have been much more endearing if she didn’t feel such immediate relief at the thought that he was still capable of feeling after all.

“I understand,” he said instead. His eyes met hers, determined and earnest, even if his cheeks were still pink. He was the picture-perfect definition of a child that grew up too seriously and too quickly.

What a good kid, she thought, she hoped.

### Nemoto - Confessions

“...It’s reassuring,” Chisaki said quietly, “To have you by my side.”

It was a simple sentence, said casually as they made their way out of the grocery store with hands filled with enough food to feed their entire lot. Behind them, Izuku came out as well, struggling to stuff the change back into his wallet and as soon as he was ready, he reached to grab the groceries.

“Here, lemme help.”

“No, it’s okay,” Nemoto tried even as Izuku’s small fingers tried to pry at the bags in his hands.

“Izuku, take these,” Chisaki said, giving him a bag of snacks.

“I can lift more than this,” Izuku immediately pouted back, but took the bag.

“I know,” the older man said, “But we got the rest. C’mon, let’s go home.” His steps paused as he looked behind to where Nemoto fell behind.

It was overwhelming. The kindness was genuine. The compliments were genuine. Everytime he hears it, he takes it deep into his heart, locked away and kept precious.

When they said <let’s go home>, they were including him. When Izuku asks him something, he looks at <him> and asks <him>. When Chisaki’s piercing yellow eyes seem to stare into his soul and peered into his sinful life, still allowed him to stand by his side.

Eventually, these moments will combine with these feelings and they will evolve. If he was an upstanding citizen, he would think that this was love.

But he’s not. He’s just some scumbag that lucked out and met Izuku and Chisaki when the world tried to break him.

He’s a scum. Either he will try to take it all for himself, or he will give all of himself away. It was always one or the other and never both. It couldn’t be.

A give-take relationship is something only meant for those who wander under the sun.

### Grandma gets sick - Izu’s 12

When Izuku is 12, his grandma collapsed.

It results in them moving out of their apartment in Musutafu for something closer to the hospital. This way, his mother could spend more time with her to take care of her. But it also resulted in getting a much larger townhouse in a busier part of the city.

While it was for upsetting reasons, it was still an exciting new chapter for most of them.

His grandma never gets better.

### Chisaki informs the Expendables

“Ah, I think there’s been a misunderstanding,” Chisaki said, sighing a little. He rubbed the back of his neck as he regarded the people with him in the room. “I don’t care about any of you, or anything really. None of you matter. If you guys were to roll over and die right now, I will have forgotten your name by this time tomorrow.”

There was a long, stiffening silence as the puzzle pieces came together. The fragments of their memories with Chisaki, all surrounding the fact that he rarely gave them the time of day, dismissed them, and otherwise left them alone, was because he was indifferent to them.

The person that they spent the most amount of time with was someone who didn’t care at all about their existence. It was, at once, a humbling but awful realization.

“But right now, Izuku has gotten used to you. And if any of you were to die, he would be upset.”

He took one of his gloves off and eyed them with a frown.

“I hate the thought of touching anyone that’s not him, but I don’t have a choice. I won’t let him down.”

The first time Chisaki really uses Overhaul on them to fix all their injuries and return them to their peak health was an experience so painful they never want to experience it again. However, the pain was also representative of the fact that they mattered.

They could no longer afford to die or get injured because there was someone that would miss them. There was someone that truly and genuinely cared about them, their wellbeing and their future. It was something so bizarre and strange that they didn’t know how else to react other than give in.

“Do you understand now?” he said looking down at them, “I will only fix you as long as you have use.”

And as many times as wished, Chisaki would continue to Overhaul them if it meant Izuku’s safety and happiness. They weren’t certain when Chisaki’s ambitions and values became their own, but one thing was for certain.

If it was for Midoriya Izuku, no price was too high.

-

“...

### Ideas about the Future

Chisaki hit the books. He didn’t know what he wanted to be or anything, but he knew that if he wanted to be something, he needed an education.

First, he’d get an education. Then, he’d become a respectable member in society with a simple job. He would build this perfect picture person.

And then, then he would get Inko’s blessings and properly court Izuku.

-

Chisaki rubbed the back of his neck. He took a deep, long breath, and decided that he was going to take a break after all.

What he doesn’t know, at this point, is something that he doesn’t know. He’s just going to have to take that hit to his score and move on with life. He hasn’t seen another human being in… he squinted at his clock, about 8 hours.

...8 hours?

He jerked to the clock and then rushed for his phone. It was, in fact, nine pm and despite the fact that there were more than 10 people going in and out of this house at all hours, it had been quiet enough that he could focus. No one even came to check up on him? Call him for dinner?/

He checked his phone. No new messages, notifications, or anything.

Deeply unsettled, he opened the door to his room and immediately smelled the food. It smelled like fried fish. It smelled great. His stomach rumbled a little, and he realized just how hungry he was after all. He rushed down the stairs, but his hunger paled in comparison to the awful feeling of being forgotten.

Right. He had been left out.

And while this wasn’t something that he wasn’t used to, and this wasn’t something that normally bothered him, it gnawed at him, to think that this one person had ignored him, neglected him, ate dinner without him.

He ignored Katsukame’s and Nemoto’s greetings as he made his way to the sound of running water. He all but ran into the kitchen, where Sakaki was diligently packing bentos and had bit his tongue in shock at the sound of Chisaki’s shoulder hitting the side of the wall. His chest heaved, even though he was fit, as the reality that he was ignored by Izuku settled inside of him instead.

“Oh, there you are,” Izuku said, looking up from where he was doing the dishes. “Ready to eat?”

He blinked back and slowly nodded.

“I didn’t know when you were going to be done studying, but I figured you hated being interrupted anyways. Let’s eat now.”

He stopped doing the dishes, washing the excess soap studs off his hands and turning off the water despite the dishes being half done. He wiped his tables and grabbed some plates.

“We have fish tonight, mackerel and croaker. Give me a minute to get the fire under the miso,” he said, keeping busy. “Go ahead and sit down. It’ll be out in a second.”

Chisaki, numbly, nodded back. He made his way to the dining table and slowly sat down at his designated spot, and in a few moments, Izuku joined him. He put the plate of fish down, utencils, bowls of rice and Miso soup for two, before taking his seat across the way from him.

“I thought I was going to pass out from hunger before you came out,” he sighed dramatically. “It must have been some session, huh?”

Chisaki stared at the food.

“...You didn’t eat yet?”

“Why would I?” Izuku replied back, “We always eat together.”

The older man stared at the young boy, who looked at him as though he was the silly one to think that Izuku would have ever eaten and not told him.

“...I see,” he replied back, picking up his chopsticks and began eating.

It was warm.

-

Belatedly, he realized something important.

“...Wait,” he said, “I was supposed to do the dishes today, aren’t I?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Izuku said. “Just focus on your studies. I’ll do them.”

“I could say the same to you,” Chisaki replied back, frowning. The agitation of studying things that he still couldn’t engrain in his memory, combined with that awful feeling he had when he realized what time it was was resulting in his irritation. “You’re in school too.”

Izuku kept chewing, but put his chopsticks down to stare at the older man.

“...Kai, it’s okay,” he said. “I want to do this. I finally have an idea on how I can help you, so let me do this. Besides, one day, I’m sure I’ll need someone to take over my chores for me too. So you can step in then, okay? But right now, you have more important things to worry about, so I’ll take care of it.”

The older man stared at him, and not for the first time, wondered how a piece of scum like him ended up with someone like Izuku. The young man gave him a small smile.

“We’re a team, y’know? Family and stuff.”

-

Afterwards, Chisaki spent an hour playing boardgames with the group of them (a mistake), with Izuku sitting right next to him. When it hit ten, he all but chased Izuku around to make sure he properly got ready for bed. He sat down at the chair in his, Kurono, Nemoto, and Izuku’s shared room, and dragged it so that he was sitting next to the younger boy’s bed.

Izuku climbed into the bed and Chisaki went as far to tuck him in. He arched an eyebrow at the older man and pouted a little.

“...Kai, are you sure you don’t want us sleeping out in the living room so you can focus on your studies?”

“No, I spend enough time without you.”

Izuku blinked twice and his face began to burn. In his embarrassment, he pulled the covers up to his cheeks and turned to his side so that his back was facing the older man. Chisaki chuckled at the sight.

“What’s the matter?” he asked, unable to stop himself from teasing him when he made it so easy, “Izuku, I won’t know what’s wrong unless you tell me.”

“Whatever,” Izuku muttered back, “Stupid Kai.”

Chisaki smiled back.

“Goodnight. Don’t work too hard,” he said, “And don’t sleep on the couch outside.”

“...Alright,” Chisaki said. The younger man relaxed, as though Chisaki would never break his word. The trust bestowed in him made his head light, and he wondered what he did to ever deserve it. “...Goodnight, Izuku.”

The younger man yawned before he turned back onto his back. Green eyes locked with yellow eyes, before he gave a sleepy smile and closed his eyes to rest.

Chisaki stared, watching for the moment where his breath evens out, before he leaned over to press a kiss against Izuku’s forehead.

He sat down at his desk, where the fucking vocabulary words from hell stared back. He had them color-coded and properly noted. He had notecards and notebooks. There were pens scattered across the desk. Looking at it, he thinks that they make about the same amount of sense as they did when he left.

But with his stomach filled with homemade food, and his heart flooding with a love he doesn’t deserve, he focused back into his work with newfound vigor.

He was going to fucking ace this exam.

### Grandma Spills the Beans

While the sound that left his grandma was a laugh, it was not kind. The sound of it made Chisaki abandon everything to run back for the hospital room.

“This quirkless, useless boy is the heart of all your problems! Everything wrong about you originates from that boy! And without a father, what has he become?! What has he dragged you into!? I told you to abandon him if you couldn’t kill him! I told you to! And you choose to keep that pathetic boy into your life! You made that choice!”

That woman had a voice that could outrank any PA system. It carried down the hallway and around the bend, and the usual peace and quiet of the hospital at this time shattered under the weight of her words. He didn’t think he could move any faster, and the woman had a lot to say.

“And for what? He’s just some commonplace fag who has more men in your home than you did in your life! Is this what you taught this? Is this how you raised him? Inko, look at him! And now he’s sprouting bullshit fantasies about being a hero!? I’d rather die than be saved by him!”

Chisaki finally got to the room, ignoring everything else as a sinking realization grasped his heart. The door was already slightly ajared and he was given clear view of Inko, who was teary-eyed and red-faced. She didn’t see him.

“You’re just trying to lock me up with the loonies! Of course you are! You value that man’s shadow more than your own mother!”

“Mom-” she tried to interject, but the old woman was much louder.

“Get out! Get out of here! I don’t want to see him! Hizashi! Hizashi, you fucking lying scumbag! You dare show your face now!”

“Izuku, just get out!”

And then, Izuku appeared before him.

Izuku stared at hm, wide-eyed in shock before he dropped his gaze to the ground, but all Chisaki saw was the black eye blooming on the right side of his face.

The whole world stopped and Chisaki came to a simple conclusion.

This woman needed to die now.

Despite not showing any physical changes, however, Izuku sensed it. Of course he did. After all, in that second, he grabbed Chisaki’s hand. His power sapped away and instinctively, he wrapped his fingers around Izuku’s hand. When the younger man tugged him, he followed like it was the only thing he knew.

Leaving the hospital room, with all eyes on them and the way their hands were conjoined, Chisaki was led to the stairwell. It was silent, since they were on the fourth floor and no one takes the stairs when the elevator works, at nine in the morning.

They stood there for a moment, in silence. Chisaki’s hands trembled as he pulled out of Izuku’s grip and turned him around. He cupped the younger man’s face into his hands and pulled him to stare at the bruise. Izuku pushed his face against his palms, and he wondered how something so small could be so strong.

His eyes met his, as clear as they were when they were eating lunch together.

“She hit you?” he asked quietly, even though they knew the answer.

“It’s okay-”

“It’s not okay,” the older man snapped back, louder than he meant to. His grip tightened on the younger teen and watching Izuku’s eyes widen in surprise, he reeled his emotions back in as tightly as he could.

Izuku’s hands came up to keep his hands by his cheeks. He didn’t use Overhaul, he wouldn’t until he was asked to, but it bubbled because he felt like the black-eye was mocking him. Staring back at him was the irrefutable fact that Izuku had been hurt by something that Chisaki could have stopped.

The warmth from Izuku’s face and hands permeated through his skin, however, and stopped him. When his small fingers gently squeezed his, he felt the ache and the rage lull into something much quieter.

“...You couldn’t meet my eyes,” Chisaki said, trying to emphasize, and it sounded so desperate that Izuku’s eyes fluttered shut. “Izuku, she… she did something that made you unable to meet my eyes.”

The desperation took hold of his heart, seized his body, and his fingers trembled with the itch to fix this.

“No, no,” Izuku said, “I… That was me. Don’t blame other people for something I did.”

“You-”

“I’m sorry, Kai. That was on me. I… I just didn’t… I was ashamed and I didn’t know how to face you. It won’t happen again.”

“It’s not your fault,” Chisaki said, releasing his face so that he could grip the younger man by the shoulders. In his hands, he could feel the bones underneath the thin shirt, and he doesn’t understand how such small shoulders could bear the baggage he gave him without being crushed. “I don’t want to make you apologize. I’m not… You have nothing to apologize for.”

Izuku released one of his hands to place it on his cheek.

“Then, release your anger here. When we got back in, leave grandma out of it.”

Chisaki felt his heart stutter.

“...I can’t,” he pulled away entirely, removing himself from what could quell his thirst for revenge. “I can’t, Izuku. She… she hurt you. She wants to take you away from me. I need to get rid of her.”

“Then, I’m sorry,” Izuku replied.

Chisaki flinched, as though physically struck by the words. He stared back at Izuku, betrayed.

“You….”

“Kai,” Izuku tried again, “I’m so, so sorry.”

-

When Izuku returned, his mom was waiting for him outside of the hospital room. Chisaki kept his eyes down, with his hand still holding Izuku’s, but buried in his pocket.

“...Izuku, I think it’s best for you to go home,” Inko said quietly. She kept shooting frightful glances towards Chisaki, but the normally immaculate man didn’t even look at her. “And maybe we should put visiting grandma on hold for a bit, okay?”

Izuku’s eyes traced the exhausted slope of her shoulders, the defeated inches of bags under her eyes, her frazzled hair, and nodded.

“Okay.”

“We’ll… talk about this at home, okay?”

“Okay.”

“I love you, Izuku.”

“...I love you too, Mom.”

-

Izuku has been, and probably always will be, a cry-baby.

When he was six, he cried when he tripped and skinned his knees. By the time he was seven he cried when they watch animal shows and the mother bear dies. A couple of years later, he cries just as often but not over the same things. He cries for things that Chisaki believes is just as meaningless and worthless, like when he told him he’s never had katsudon until he had Inko’s.

But he can also laugh.

It’s a sound that Chisaki never realized he was waiting for until he hears it and something loosens in his chest. It can be anything from a smothered giggle behind his hands when he’s laughing at the strange dance Sakaki learned, or the high-pitch squeal he has when he’s tickled.

For Chisaki, Izuku is Everything.

He is all the joys and sorrows that the world could provide. He gets frustrated and stubborn and always gets back up. His eyes are always clear, reflecting the world as he sees it. And the world that Izuku sees, he understands but doesn't quite comprehend, is much more than he could ever fathom.

Izuku gets teary-eyed when he laughs too hard. When he’s relieved, he cries and laughs all in the same breath. He has a victory dance and mutters like a runaway train. He was a quiet kid, altogether, but easy to read from head to toe.

His entire world could be redefined by the way Midoriya is, and it’ll still be overflowing and overwhelming for Chisaki in every way.

So in moments like this, where Izuku is quiet and blank-faced, he feels as though the ground underneath him is unstable. He loses his place, his world was knocked off-orbit, and he doesn’t even know where to begin to bring back the center of his universe where he belongs.

“...Izuku?”

It was so strange. When Izuku loses himself in his thoughts, Chisaki knows because all he has to do is listen. When Izuku is tired, Chisaki knows because all he has to do is look at him.

Standing in front of the man, he was holding onto the guard-straps. On Izuku’s immediate left and right was Kurono and Tabe. If he feels uneasy, they look haunted, as their eyes kept flickering between each other and Izuku.

But when Izuku, clear-eyed and alert, sat down quietly on the train with his focus trained on the view outside of the train, Chisaki realizes how lost he is without someone to guide him.

“Izuku,” he tries again, feeling himself fraying at the ends. This time, however, Izuku turns to stare at him.

“...Hm?” he tilted his head.

“...What do you want for dinner tonight?” he asked, desperate to hear that voice.

“Ah…” Izuku blinks slowly, his eyes falling to his lap before coming back up, “Maybe we should order pizza? I think.. I think pizza would be good. Was there something you wanted to eat? Sorry, I don’t… I don’t think I can cook anything right now. And it’s going to be hard to stomach anything to be honest, actually, maybe pizza is a little ambitious. I have school tomorrow after all…”

He started mumbling again, it was soothing. He released a little sigh of relief, and of course, Izuku noticed that.

“Ah, sorry, I’m really out of my mind, aren’t I? I think… I think I’ll be okay,” he said. “You don’t have to worry so much.”

This unsettling feeling, Chisaki learns, is worry.

He doesn’t like it.

-

When Inko comes home, she sighs heavily as soon as she sees Izuku’s face.

“I know,” she said, “I know you have questions. But let’s eat first, okay?”

“...Mom, the longer you wait, the harder it’s going to be,” he said. “And I think… I think we’ve waited long enough.”

The resulting fight that occurred was something that happened and escalated so fast that ended with Izuku running for the door. Inko screamed out in frustration before she ran for the master bedroom. While the walls weren’t exactly paper-thin, they could all hear her muffled cries.

Chisaki had, naively, believed that Izuku could only get angry on the behalf of other people. As it turns out, it was because the only person that Izuku could get angry at was his own mother. It was ironic in an odd sense and Chisaki wonders if you could love someone so much you hate them.

“W-What are you doing?” Setsuno blurted out, handing him a jacket, “Go.”

Chisaki would buy this man something nice later, because that was the push he needed. Figures that the playboy Setsuno would understand these kinds of things best. He forgave him for understanding how to Relationship better than him this one time, as he grabbed the hoodie (his, Setusno must have grabbed Chisaki’s hoodie to give Izuku) and he ran out the door.

Izuku doesn’t get that far down the street when Chisaki’s footsteps alert him that he wasn’t alone.

“...Kai,” Izuku whispered quietly, “I want to be alone.”

Oh, he realized, the tables have turned.

“No,” he said, “You don’t.”

He didn’t stop walking until he was right behind him.

“And I don’t want to be alone right now.”

Izuku finally turned around at that, his bloodshot eyes rubbed raw and puffy, his black-eye looking even worse under the streetlight, but there was an uncertain smile trembling on his lips.

“That’s cheap,” he said.

Chisaki was fine with being cheap if it meant that his world will stabilize.

“I… I don’t want to go back yet.”

“That’s fine.”

“... Come with me?”

“Always.”

-

They get to the park, and Izuku sits down at the bench with Chisaki right next to him before he opens his mouth and everything he has been bottling up comes tumbling out. Chisaki swears that he could feel himself returning back to orbit and feel the ground stabilize underneath him.

### Setsuno & Izuku - Family

“Family doesn’t owe family,” Izuku said. He looked over to Setsuno and took the empty bento case out of his hands, “That’s why we’re family.”

Setsuno blinked back, opening and closing his mouth like a fish before he looked down at his feet.

“...Well, I guess that’s a lie too,” Izuku said, opening the bento and running warm water over it before washing it down. “Since, seeing you happy makes me happy, I guess it’s just a really roundabout way of using you to make me happy.”

The blond stared back, eyes glistening in tears as Izuku gave a merry laugh.

“Congratz on your certification, Toya.”

### Brief (very brief) reprise - inko & a quiet household

Chisaki didn’t come over as often. Inko wasn’t sure how to feel about it. She wasn’t sure when he became such a staples the household that she noticed he was gone, but she was also fine with it. It relieved her of some constant tension that ended with her taking stomach medicine for the night.

It also looked like Izuku was a little dimmer.

“Izuku,” she said, patient smile on her face, “How was school today?”

Her baby boy stared at her for a moment, before his lips pulled back into a painful looking smile. Her heart ached at the sight of it.

“It’s… great! The curriculum is getting really fast. I’m having a hard time keeping up.”

Oh! She felt relieved. She was worried that he was getting bullied or something. And that would be strange in and of itself, because everyone knew that Izuku knew a highschooler. If the way that some of the neighborhood ladies told her the wrong date for the monthly neighborhood watch meeting was any indication, people should be giving Izuku a wide berth.

“Oh, do you want some help? I’m sure we can find a tutor-”

“No!”

Inko jerked backwards, Izuku wasn’t the type to raise his voice. It looked like he was just as surprised.

“Ah… I mean, I want to see how far I can go first,” he said, a laugh twisting and strangled out of his neck. He coughed awkwardly, “And I’m sorry for yelling. I was… I didn’t want you to worry about it. A-Anyways, wow, mom, this is delicious!”

And Inko, who figured that Izuku was a young boy who was becoming a young man, smiled back patiently. At the very least, they were talking and communicating about it. That was an important part. Izuku needed to feel comfortable with her.

At the very least, Izuku needed to know that she would be on his side.

-

And then Izuku comes home with a split lip and a missing sleeve. His arm is covered in nasty burns and he smelled like burnt hair.

“I-Izuku-?!”

And he ran right past Inko and into his room, where he remained until he left in the early morning before Inko could see him.

When she got a call letting her know that if Izuku missed anymore days in school, he would be expelled, she wasn’t sure what she needed to do.

-

### Shigaraki [idk]

* Something, something, izuku gets involved in some bad shit while Chisaki’s been studying.
* Where he meets Shigaraki & dabi and accidentally pulls them into that hero-life? They spend 4ys in juvenile reform program?
* Midoriya’s not bullied. He just doesn’t exist. No one’s sure what’s better.
* As they get older, ppl telling bakugo not to hang out with him, which was dumb, since Bakugo doesn’t listen to anyone

### Made it - (18Chisaki;11 Izu)

When Chisaki made it, when he graduated, when he was accepted into the research group he wanted, from the college he wanted, when he felt like all his efforts were finally paying off, he ran straight home and collected Izuku in his arms and spun in a circle.

He was laughing, a bright and joyous sound, and he didn’t even realize that it was a sound that he could make.

-

“Does this mean we’re dating now?” Izuku asked.

“Of course,” Chisaki said before he thought about what he was saying. He couldn’t help it. He honestly couldn’t remember the last time he had rejected Izuku’s request. At this point, he doesn’t think that he could ever see that boy’s face and say no.

And then, the words sank in and his face flushed bright red. At the sight of it, Izuku laughed.

“I feel like we’ve been together for a long time already though,” he said.

Chisaki’s eyes softened, but the embarrassed flush didn’t subside.

“And we’ll be together for a long time after this too.”

This time, Izuku’s cheeks turned red, and the sight of it made Chisaki’s ear burn.

“Can we kiss?”

Chisaki spluttered behind his mask, “I think we’re moving too fast then. I also don’t want to be labeled a… as someone who preys on children.”

Izuku frowned back, and the action made his cheeks puff out. If the subject matter didn’t make him cringe so hard, he would have kissed him right then and there.

### Went on a Date, Became a Dad

“And when you feel safe again, when you feel like you can speak again,” Izuku laughed ruffling her hair like he wasn’t bleeding from the forehead, “You can tell me your favorite ice cream flavor then, okay?”

-

“...Mom, don’t freak out,” Izuku said, as he walked in, but before Inko could have the time to be pleasantly surprised at the warning, he continued, “But on our date today, I became a dad. Look, you’re a grandma, surprise!”

Chisaki’s head snapped over to Izuku, in absolute horror. Why did he trust him with this? Why did he think that Izuku had the right idea for this? This was terrible, and from the way he heard something clatter to the ground, it wasn’t going to be pretty.

In Izuku’s arms, the frightened six year old stared at him with the same amount of awe that Chisaki once did, just a few years ago. He could have groaned, if he could feel anything other than doom at that moment, because he knew

“Oh my god, I’m a grandmother,” Inko gasped quietly. Her eyes turned to glare at Chisaki, and Izuku stepped right in front of him. Her eyes fell to him, and he gave a warm smile.

“It’s my decision,” he said. “I’ll take responsibility.”

“You’re twelve,” she whispered back.

“Yeah, that’s why it’s a surprise!”

And whether anyone wanted it or not, this was how Eri became a Midoriya before Kai.

### Midoriya Eri

Eri isn’t a quiet girl. She is silent.

There was something systematically wrong for a child to be so still and silent, devoid of all emotion and life. Chisaki feels like he’s looking at himself sometimes, and it annoys him. She stares at the ground, flinches at loud sounds, and trembles when someone comes close. However, this is only when she isn’t with Izuku.

When she’s with Izuku, she is pressed right up against his side, or sitting in between his legs, or laying her head in his lap to take a nap. Izuku, who has gotten so used to this, only makes enough adjustments so that he can continue working on whatever it was that he was working on, while she rested against him.

“Izuku,” Kurono called as he walked into the room, “Do you know where my notebook went? The little red one.”

Eri’s hand reflexivly tightened on Izuku’s pant leg. If the white-knuckled grip caused him any discomfort or pain, he didn’t let it show.

“...Oh, I think it’s on the kitchen counter. I think you and Shin mixed your bags up, because Shin was pulling it out during breakfast.”

“Is that so?” Kurono sighed, and the action made Eri bury her face further into his lap.

In an effort to give her some support, he took his hand off his book and carded through her hair with his fingers. She relaxed a little against the touch, and Kurono had the decency to look regretful.

“Sorry,” he muttered quietly.

“No need,” Izuku said, “You’re lucky that Shin didn’t take it.”

Kurono’s lips quirked upwards, and he nodded. At any other time, he would have taken the notebook and settled down next to Izuku, but as it was since Eri had come into this household, he kept his distance instead.

-

“Okay,” Inko said quietly, rubbing her forehead with her temples, “The paperwork is in. We are all set. Welcome to the family, Eri-chan.”

The pale girl, who only left her room when Izuku did, and had a lot of trouble speaking or looking at anyone, buried her face closer to Izuku’s pants.

### Chisaki & College Friends -

“I’ll be back late,” Chisaki said as they boarded the train together.

“Ah, the welcome-freshman party, right?” Izuku replied back.

The older man sighed back, as though this whole thing was a pain.

“Play nice,” Izuku said,”Who knows, maybe you’ll make some friends.”

“I don’t really care about things like that. I want to get back to the research,” Chisaki replied back.

He grabbed one of the hanging straps as they train doors closed, and even though Izuku was now tall enough to grab one himself, he still held onto Chisaki instead. It was something that hasn’t changed, even though the young man made a huge deal about the fact that he could grab it. And so, just like always, he wrapped his other arm around Izuku’s shoulder and held him close. The younger man leaned his head against his chest, like he always did, and Chisaki hoped that this would never changed.

“Still, having friends is going to make it easier in the long run,” Izuku replied. “Who knows, maybe you’ll find a really good friend amongst them?”

Kai stared back and moved his hand from his shoulder to his hair and roughly ruffled it.

“W-Waaah! Kai-”

“I’ll try to come back early, but if I’m late, just go to sleep without me.”

“Okay,” Izuku replied, even though they both knew that he wouldn’t.

-

“Sorry about this, Rikiya. I know you’re tired after work today.”

The larger man, helping him with the trash, nodded back. “No problem. Being alone will be bad.”

The younger man blinked back in surprise and he chuckled back.

“Yeah, you’re right.”

“...Ice cream?”

Izuku thought about it and then nodded. “I think that’s a great idea.”

They made their way to the convenience store, making sure to grab something for everyone, and Katsukame grabbed the bag while Izuku paid the store clerk. They were conducting their usual one-sided argument where Izuku would try to take the bag and Katsukame wouldn’t budge as they walked home when Izuku passed because something caught his eye.

Katsukame and Izuku stopped and stared as a loud group of college students made their way through the streets. Of them, they saw Chisaki. Katsukame brightened at the sight of his friend, but Izuku tugged on his shirt before he could wave or say hello.

And then, his grip tightened into something less friendly as they both zoned in on the beautiful woman clutching at his arm.

“Ah… I-I think it’s a misunderstanding,” Katsukame said quickly.

Because anyone with eyes could see how Chisaki kept pulling his arm from her. He was clearly uncomfortable with the entire ordeal, and the only thing that was keeping him from Overhauling everything out of his way was the fact that he had promised Izuku that he wouldn’t use his quirk like that anymore.

More than anything, he didn’t think anyone could ever ruin Chisaki except for the man next to him.

“Ah, he saw us.”

Katsukame and Izuku watched in mild amusement as Chisaki all but threw the girl off of him, gave a hasty nod to the others and ran across the street.

“Hey,” he said, his mask crinkling a little to show that he was smiling as he jumped over the guardrail to stand next to Izuku. Golden eyes softened incredibly as he reached over to take the bag out of his hand, and Izuku let him. “Ice cream at this time?”

Izuku shrugged back, “It’s Friday. I think it’s fine. Is it okay if you leave?”

The younger man tried to peer behind him and Chisaki took a step to stop him.

“Yeah, they want to drink more.”

“...Who was that girl? She looked like she … wanted to be more friendly with you.”

Chisaki put his arm around Izuku and began walking towards their home, uncaring if Katsukame came with them or not.

“Ah, one of the senpai’s friends tagged along,” he said. “She’s been like that all night. I thought I was going to lose my mind. I’m glad I got to see you.”

Izuku leaned a little more into his grip, “Me too.”

“...Izuku, can I ask for a favor?”

“Shoot.”

“...Can you grab this arm? I… I can still feel her touch. I want to purify it.”

Izuku rolled his eyes, but detached himself from Chisaki’s grasp to walk around him and grab the other arm. He wrapped his little arm around Chisaki’s arm and rested his head against it. His other hand reached to grab his in a strange handshake.

“Don’t say it like that,” Izuku replied back, pressing his face against the older man’s jacket. “...We didn’t buy you any ice cream.”

“It’s fine. I’m sure Setsuno wouldn’t mind giving his up.”

Izuku giggled, and then turned back.

“Rikiya, don’t get left behind.”

The taller man straightened at the attention, even when Chisaki’s eyes turned cold. He nodded at him, and Katsukame understood that he was being entrusted with the task of watching their backs for the evening. The thought gave life inside of him, meaning behind his existence, and he beamed back.

His reward was given when Izuku gave him his ice cream, and Chisaki nodded at him in approval.

“Good work,” he said.

-

“...Kai, are you still awake?”

The older man grunted back, and after a moment, rolled over so that he was facing Izuku, who stood next to his bed.

“Now I am,” he lied, like he wasn’t just laying on his side for the better part of the last two hours.

He eyed Izuku, who was in his All Might pajamas and holding his All-Might pillowcased pillow, as he stood next to his bed. More than used to this, he scooted back until his back hit the wall and Izuku took it as an invitation to join him.

The younger boy laid down so that his back was against his chest, and the familiar warmth immediately settled something in his heart. Without thinking about it too much Chisaki placed his arm around him and scooted in a little closer.

He knows that they shouldn’t be doing this. He made a promise to keep his hands off of Izuku until Izuku was of age. He knew that, but the feeling of that woman remained wrapped around his arm and he swears that he could still smell her perfume.

Izuku turned around in his hold, reached up to run his fingers against his cheek.

“It’s okay,” he said. “I trust you.”

The shadow receded, and Chisaki slept well that night.

### Inko & Eri - Talkative

Inko placed her head in her hand and sighed.

“I just wish that she would open up to me,” she said.

Izuku leaned back in his seat and frowned at her, “What do you mean? All she does is talk.”

Inko turned to Izuku and pouted back, “Mou, Izuku. She’s only like that with you, you know.”

### Hojo & Izuku - Danger

Hojo and Izuku were the ones who picked her up that day.

They had decided to walk to where Tabe was working. The idea was to go sit there until Tabe got off shift in about thirty minutes and then the group of them would hit the grocery store before heading home together. And if they happened to get some ice cream, it would be something that they don’t tell Kurono or Chisaki.

It was perfect, and then, while on the way there, someone lost control of their quirk.

They had enlarged into something much bigger than a two-story house and roared. It moved slowly, but its strength was nothing to scoff at. In an instant, it had thrown a compact car through the skies and it crumpled against a streetlight. The metal bent like paper and the glass shattered.

And Hojo, who flinched backwards and crystallized himself in an attempt to protect himself, turned around and felt so incredibly disappointed in himself. Where he, someone with a quirk with great capacity to protect himself, only worried about himself, Izuku had covered Eri and sustained the worst of any injury, a cut to his neck.

Without a moment of hesitation, he picked Eri up with a soft apology on his lips and ran for cover against the wall.

“Eri, are you okay?”

Her hands clenched at the front of his shirt in a white-knuckled grab. She trembled hard and Izuku’s arms wrapped around her tightly.

“I know that it’s scary, but I promise that I will protect you, okay?”

She stared at him for a long moment and then slowly nodded her head. He returned it with a small smile of his own.

He lifted his head and nodded at Hojo, “...You good?” he asked.

Hojo, ashamed nodded back, and Izuku smiled.

“Okay, can you send a text to Soramitsu that we’re going to be late?” he asked, and when he saw the other man pull his phone out, kneeled down to be at eye level with Eri and gave her a smile.

“Stay with Yu, okay?” he asked. “I’m going to be right back.”

“W-where…?”

Izuku pointed back at the destruction behind them, “I’m just going to make sure everyone makes it out alive.”

“...Why?”

Izuku arched his eyebrow at the question, “Because they need help.”

Hojo knew that Izuku’s attitude was what led to his salvation. But now, on the other end of it, he doesn’t think that he’s brave enough to let him go.

“Wait, Izuku, I don’t think this is a good idea,” he said, reaching to grab his wrist, “Let’s go, okay? Please?”

Izuku stared at him, and then shook his head. Having never been rejected by this man before, Hojo’s grip turned limp in his shock and Izuku pulled out of it.

“Get somewhere safe,” the quirkless boy said before he turned and ran for the burning accident.

In that moment, Hojo learns that he has not changed at all. He was still that cowardly boy that always looked for someone else to tell him what to do. Even after all this time, even when it was Izuku that ran into danger head first, he remained standing safely outside of the range of fire.

-

Hojo watched, a little numbly, as the police and firefighters came about 15 minutes after the accident. They looked tired and exhausted, probably because there’s been explosions all around the city all week long, but their entire demeanor changed when they saw Izuku sitting next to an unconscious man.

He talked to them for a bit, and they pointed at him and said something incredible stern. It was too far away for Hojo to hear, but from sheepish look on Izuku’s dirty face said that this was a common occurrence.

After a complete dressing down, the officer ruffled his hair and sent him on his way. Izuku came running to them, looking a little more tired, but ultimately content.

“... Is this normal?” he asked quietly.

Izuku shrugged back, “If someone needs help, and I can help them, I should.”

“...Don’t you think that it’s dangerous?”

The younger man, holding one of Eri’s hands while Hojo held the other one (and god they were so small and smooth, was it truly alright for him to even gaze at her?), stared at him in confusion.

“Of course it’s dangerous,” he said, “that’s why they need help.”

The older man stared back, eyes wide, and thinks that if the world was filled with people like Izuku, there would never be a violent crime again.

### Eri’s a Bother?

“...Is it okay that I’m here?” Eri asked quietly.

“Of course it is,” Izuku replied back without missing a beat. “It’ll be hard on you and it’ll be hard on us, but once we get over that, it’ll be as though we have always been together.”

“...Not a bother?”

The young boy stared at the girl and smiled back. He dropped his hand on her head and gave a smile.

“You’re family,” he said, “Not a bother.”

Her eyes shined back, and she took a step closer to bury her face against his stomach.

### [fake] all might

>>ie that time Midoriya ran into a fight btw afo and ofa with an All Might mask, proclaiming that he was All Might not the guy on the ground and that he had fooled AFO

>> gets fucking wrecked but gets back up (also smart, and thiswould have worked if it wasn’t AFO he was fighitng)

>> and reminds both of them of something important

>> midoriya gets hospitalized & all might asks to take him in

### Hospital -

Inko, on occasion, has to be reminded of what Chisaki doesn’t have.

Did he ever have someone that would drop everything and run to where he was when he was hurt? Did he ever have someone that looked at him like he was a treasure and wanted nothing more than his good health and happiness? Did he have someone who asked him what his favorite food was? Tried to cook it for him? Anyone that held his hand when he was scared or stayed up at night to wake him up if he had nightmares?

Of course not. If he did, he would have never fallen into a yakuza’s hands, and he would have never been so caught by Izuku’s eyes.

The things that she did for Izuku because it was obvious and natural, wasn’t something that was obvious and natural for everyone.

The people that Izuku wanted to save were products of that. The people that Izuku thinks heroes save are people like Chisaki.

She had hailed a taxi and sprinted the rest of the way to the General Hospital, where they told her that her son had been in three different surgeries after a sudden villain attack at UA. All those heroes, and only her boy was injured so badly that he had his own hospital room in the hospital because Recovery Girl’s quirk wasn’t enough. VIP treatment, she noticed, and she passed through the hospital he was once born in to see how her baby boy was doing.

There, she saw Chisaki.

Chisaki, sitting in his labcoat, clearly after running here from the labs, with Izuku’s bandaged hand cradled in his. He turns to her, with more emotion than she’s used to seeing. For a brief second, she’s back in her kitchen, looking at the yakuza scum that her six year old brought in like a stray dog.

In that moment, she realizes that he’s so fundamentally broken by the world that he couldn’t even cry. As a result, he just looked lost and confused.

This child, she thinks, because Chisaki was once the Dangerous Child that Izuku brought home one day, was still a pitiful child. In her heart, she cannot even pull up enough emotion to love him, because when she sees those lost gold eyes, she feels like she’ll choke on her pity.

The same way Chisaki looks at Izuku is the same way she saw her grandpa used to look at her grandma, from a time when the world was uncertain and coming out of a terrible war. It’s an old memory, nostalgic and painful all in the same way because she never wanted to be reminded of it when her husband hasn’t responded to any of her calls for the last few months.

Back then, she thought that the greatest thing that could happen was a love like her grandma and grandpa. Thinking back to those days, she feels stupidly naive. Looking at the two in front of them, remembering how quickly her grandpa followed her grandma after death, doesn’t think that anymore.

“...Inko-kaasama,” he said quietly, sounding like a child even though they celebrated his twentieth birthday last month. “I… I can't go in.”

Oh, she realized.

He was looking at her like that because he was waiting for her permission.

She stared at her baby boy, the same as he always was. Bruised and on the verge of breaking, exhausting himself by doing his best, by going Plus Ultra, and then falling asleep somewhere other than his bed. The scuffles from elementary school, the time he fell out of a tree trying to help a cat, the time he crashed his bike into a car, all of those incidents growing up, and now he was in a bed because of an accident at school. They’re all accidents.

There were all accidents.

“...Go ahead,” she said quietly, “I’m sure that… Izuku would like to go to school tomorrow.”

She wasn’t wrong.

Chisaki looked at his hands. His dirty, dirty hands with a dirty quirk, and thinks that he would do anything to keep this angel on earth.

-

“Uh, excuse me, are you… Midoriya-shounen’s mother?”

Inko turned to the person who was speaking. She stared at him, and wondered why he wasn’t in a hospital bed, when he looked like a literal skeleton. Despite being a stranger, she couldn’t close her heart away, and wondered if she should ask for a nurse.

“Ah, my apologies for the late introductions,” he procured a business card out.

Was this a scam?

She looked at it, and then took it.

Yagi… Toshinori? Her eyes widened comically when she realized that he was the Secretary of All Might. Wait. wait, that means that, if he knew her name, and he was standing right here, outside of her baby boy’s hospital room—

“My name is Yagi Toshinori,the secretary of All Might. I was the person that your boy ran out to save.”

No no no no no. She thought it was weird that Izuku was given such wonderful service and a high VIP room. She thought it was weird that people were giving her and Chisaki-kun a wide berth. There were so many police downstairs, now that she was calm enough to remember.

“I was wondering if I could have a bit of your time.”

No, please, if there is a god, please, Inko thought, her eyes welling with tears. This cannot be happening. This cannot be real right now. Izuku, she thought to herself more and more with every passing day, why can’t you just come straight home from school?

“Of course, once all of this dies down. And we will be honored if you would allow us to take care of Midoriya-shounen. I believe that he has what it takes to be a hero.”

Please don’t take her baby boy away.

### Notes about School

* All Might gives OFA to Izuku @ same time, but in those 10 months of training, they manage to take down the League before it even starts & AFO is in prison
* All Might retires “to focus on teaching” and keeps the flame for absolute emergency until Izuku graduates
* It goes about as well as you would think

### Post UA Entrance Exam -

“I thought it was weird,” Chisaki told him on their slow walk back to the train station. “The meals that you asked for, the training that you were doing, how often you were out and when you were back, too exhausted to do anything.”

Izuku couldn’t raise his eyes to meet his gaze, and when Chisaki stopped walking, he took a few more steps before stopping. Standing by themselves in a deserted street, only the sun laid witness to their movement.

“...Inko-kaa-sama didn’t say anything,” he continued, “And when I asked her, she said that it was good for you to be so focused on your goals, that you were finally looking up and not at the ground anymore.”

He clenched his hands into fists, shaking his head.

“I saw them. Your scars. They weren’t there when you went to school today, but they’re there now, aren’t they? Those aren’t scars that came from training with Rappa, and there’s no way you got that injured without me noticing. On top of that, the entrance exam should have ended before noon, you were there until evening, weren’t you?”

Izuku’s hand tightened on his bag, but didn’t say anything.

“Answer me, Izuku! What’s… What’s going on? Why are you hiding things from me?”

There was another silence that hung over them and the silence was replaced by the light of the evening sun. Izuku took a deep breath and turned around slowly.

“I got a quirk,” he said quietly. “I … It enhances my physical ability. I’m not used to it, so I broke some of my bones when I use it. Recovery Girl took care of me at school.”

He bowed at the waist. It was the same thing that he would tell his mom. It was the same thing he would tell anyone else.

“I’m sorry for worrying you. I promise I’m okay. I didn’t want to tell you or mom or anyone because I didn’t want you guys to worry about something that will be solved quickly.”

“If you don’t say anything, we’ll get worried anyways. At least tell us so we know what we are worrying about,” Chisaki said, sighing deeply. He walked forward to stand next to him, reaching to interlock their fingers together before putting it into his jacket pocket. Izuku smiled at the gesture, and squeezed back.

“...Okay,” he said. He leaned against his arm a little, and if it annoyed Chisaki, he didn’t mention it. He never did, and he never would, but the inaction spoke loudly to Izuku. “...It’s going to get pretty bad. Probably worse before it gets better,” he said, “Since I’m still going to be a hero.”

“I know,” Chisaki replied back, keeping his eyes forward as they made their way back, “Promise me that you’ll come back to me. And that you’ll call me, I can fix this up better than anyone else.”

Izuku squeezed his hand.

“I promise.”

“...But I can’t believe you. You can tell me top secret things like how All Might has an arch-nemesis who can give and take quirks, but you can’t tell me when you got a quirk?”

Izuku shrugged back, but he felt the weight of the secret against his heart. And for someone who has always been by his side, he knew that Chisaki also felt it. They walked two more steps before it became unbearable and he couldn’t do it.

“...I can’t tell you why because it’s not my secret to tell,” Izuku said quietly, “But when it becomes my secret. You’re the first one I’ll tell.”

“Yeah,” Chisaki nodded, “That sounds better.”

Not even 24 hours after All Might gave him this extremely dangerous secret, Midoriya blabs it to the most important person to him.

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### First Week @ UA

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“...Also, Midoriya, stop by the teacher’s lounge during lunch,”

Izuku stopped mid-stride and turned to where his homeroom teacher stood.

“Yes sir,” he said.

“How are you already in trouble?” Bakugo asked, turning around in his seat.

“I… I don’t know,” Midoriya muttered back, “Hm, looks like I’ll be late to lunch. See you soon, Kacchan.”

The man waved back.

-

“Ah, Midoriya, I’m glad you stopped by so I didn’t have to chase you down,” Aizawa said when Midoriya peeked his head into the door. “Now then, I don’t want to waste anyone’s time, but I have to say this,” he said.

He turned to the young man and narrowed his eyes.

“You’re a student here at UA’s Hero Course now. You’re on the path to becoming a Pro Hero. Do you understand that?”

Midoriya nodded back.

“...Good, so don’t do any more of that vigilante stunts anymore. If you get caught, you can get into serious trouble, and it can even cost you your ability to get a license.”

The green-haired teen paled at that, and nervously shifted away.

“V-Vigilante work?” he said nervously, “W-what ever could you mean…?”

“I mean it, Midoriya,” Aizawa said. “With that said, if you know any of the other crazy Vigilantes, make sure you tell them to stay out of trouble, too.”

The young man hesitated before he gave a small smile, “I… don’t really know anyone that fits into that description,” he started, “but if I do, I’ll be sure to pass it along.”

His homeroom teacher narrowed his eyes back at him.

All things considered though, he thinks that he got off pretty lucky. At that moment, Aizawa probably could have shut down his entire hero career before he even got started. However, instead, his homeroom teacher decided to let him play it through instead.

To change himself.

He hummed a little, and hoped that he could be a hero that would make him proud.

### USJ - AFO finds Izuku

“Ah,” the man who was death personified said as he stepped through the gates, “There you are.”

Under the weight of his bloodlust, the children of UA’s Class 1-A Hero class faltered.

-

Aizawa Shouta considers himself a competent man. He knows what he needs to do, and understands what he needs to do to complete them. However, he was also a Pro-Hero. An underground hero, yes, but a pro nonetheless. He’s been one for years now.

And for all his years, he could count on one hand the amount of cases that he’s been on where someone tried to eat someone else.

In all honesty, it was something that he never wanted to encounter again. There was something about watching someone try and eat another human being that irreversibly changed all the people involved in the situation. Fuck, he knows people who left the Police Force after seeing that particular scene.

It was something that he would never wish upon someone else. Especially not his 14 year old first-year student.

Izuku muffled his cry against his hand, and the sound of the Nomu’s maw closing around his shoulder and chewing easily overpowered it. The Nomu pulled back and tore chunks of flesh off when it pulled away. It chewed and swallowed before it opened its mouth and it’s tongue rolled back out. Bits of skin remained in between it’s teeth as its eyes rolled back in its pleasure.

And Aizawa struggled a little harder to get to his feet. The man holding him down was having none of it, and he pressed his foot down a little harder into his spine, ready to shatter it at any moment. Regardless, Aizawa was struggling to breathe against his broken ribs as it was. He couldn’t feel one of his arms and feels too much in one of his legs. He’s been trying to activate his quirk on the Nomu-but it’s worthless. It was clear that this display of strength it had was something that was natural and not quirk based.

Some hero he became.

Izuku, futily, shuffled forward inch by inch. His hand went from his mouth to his shoulder juncture where it was a mess of blood and flesh as he tried to squirm away from the monster standing over him.

“Now, now, Nomu. While I understand your excitement, I don’t want him incapitated in his fear.”

He shivered, feeling his heart stop at the oppressing shift of bloodlust in the air. He could gag on the feeling alone, and, not for the first time, wondered where the fuck back-up was.

A sudden blast drew his attention back, as his student had lifted his hand to flick at the Nomus knee. It didn’t do much damage, but the Nomu faltered and it was enough for the kid to gain a little bit of distance between himself and the monster who took a bite out of him. His finger was unmistakable broken and Aizawa thinks that he could feel his heart breaking.

“...If you… think that’s delicious,” he said, his lips twitching to form a forced grin as his tears stained his cheeks and his chest heaved, “Then you’re going to have to work for the rest of your meal.”

No, Aizawa wanted to scream, even as his student readied himself into a battle pose. Midoriya had one of the highest scores on the entrance exam, right? Where did all of that intellect go? How could someone have this little self-preservation? Because even if he manages to hold his own against this Nomu, there was no fucking way he’ll be able to face off against the man pinning him down.

“Excellent,” he purred back and Aizawa wished he was more.

-

Chisaki Kai was rubbing the back of his neck, frustrated with himself for being unable to focus in on the assignment and current research project. However, there was an inkling feeling that something was terribly wrong.

And then, he got a call from Bakugo Katsuki. He frowned, because the blond wasn’t the type to ever call him, and thinking that it was still during school hours, he felt all of his worst suspicions arose out of him. Without any hesitation, he picked up.

“Katsuki,” he greeted.

“Come to UA right now because Deku is dying,”

Police sirens wailed loudly outside, and Chisaki looked up to see a pale-faced Kurono running towards him.

Sometimes, he hated how accurate his gut instinct was.

-

Izuku’s eyes fluttered open to the feeling of a familiar hand cupping his face. He felt as though he was floating through the clouds, and in that haze, took a slow breath in. He nuzzled his face a little into the touch, and the thumb came to rub right underneath his eyes.

“...How are you feeling?”

He blinked, blearily as he took in golden eyes and felt himself return to the atmosphere.

“...Kai…?”

“...Yeah, it’s me.”

The memories suddenly came flooding back in and he jerked up. His face paled as one of hands reached for his shoulder, and feeling his bones through skin, relaxed. The hand pulled away from his face and the older man sat down next to him on the bed.

“Sen...Aizawa-sensei-”

“I’ll take care of that,” Chisaki replied back, “But I needed to check on you first.”

And then, he slowly turned to Chisaki, who had an unreadable expression on his face. To anyone else, it must have seemed cold to be so blank-faced, but Izuku felt his eyes water as he put the pieces together. His lover was still in his lab coat, with his research ID hanging on its lanyard around his neck.

“... Sorry,” he said quietly, biting back the fear to put a smile on his face. His gaze fell to his lap as he gripped his shoulder tightly, as though he could stop himself from shaking, “You were in the middle of your research, weren’t you? I bet it was Kacchan that called you, but it’s okay. I’m fine now-”

“Izuku, I’m here,” he said, staring at the ground, “Take your time.”

The green-haired man shivered as the fear came back and the older man reached over to hold his hand in his. The hand was still much bigger than his, and the feeling of being engulfed in that warmth made his eyes burn harder. He sniffled loudly and then pulled his hand away. Chisaki turned his head a little to stare at him.

“My teachers,” he said quietly, holding his hands close to his heart, “tried so hard to protect me. I… I couldn’t protect anyone. I just… I just laid there and was easy picking.” He placed his face in his hands and gave a full shudder as the tears couldn’t come out, “When… When it took a bite, I couldn’t do a goddamn thing.”

Golden eyes took in the sight.

“I just… I want to be a hero, but in that moment, I was just so scared. I couldn’t do anything. I couldn’t even move. And it was so hard to smile,” he said, voice cracking. “I feel so dumb and useless.” The tears came running down his face, “I want to be stronger. So I can protect everyone and I don’t have to worry you anymore and you don’t have to leave what’s important to you to come and help me.”

The final pieces slid in and he gave a soft whimper as he succumbed to the tears.

Silently, Chisaki watched as the one person that mattered to him in the world broke apart on the infirmary bed. He stared, and wondered what the world did to earn someone who could only cry for someone else, and wondered how Izuku could always find tears for other people.

“You already are a hero,” Chiaski said. “No one died. The worst injuries were between you and two of the teachers. The other kids that you were with, you protected.” He ruffled his hair, thankful that Izuku is such a strong person that he could still accept the touch of another human being no matter what evil came crossing his path. “...You came here to learn how to be a hero, didn’t you? Now, you’re a little closer to that.”

His hand trailed from the top of his hair to cupping his cheek again. He leaned in and pressed their foreheads together.

“Thank you,” he said quietly, “for coming back.”

Izuku sniffled loudly, but he leaned in to the touch.

-

Outside, All Might gave a shaky sigh as he clenched his hand tightly into fists.

“...You choose a good successor,” Nezu said quietly, “His light is as bright as yours, and we won’t let it burn out.

“No,” the man agreed, eyes bright with determination “We won’t.”

Midoriya was 14 when his teachers understood that his body may break but his spirit wouldn’t.

### Post-USJ Nightmares

The nights following were hard.

Izuku couldn’t sleep longer than a few hours at a time. It seemed that, whenever he closed his eyes, the touch of death would return. Those teeth would worm their way through his skin and pulverize his bones. The sickening crunch echoed through his body and he would wake up screaming.

Kai’s arms wrapped around him tightly in those moments, and for a moment, it would be the only thing that was holding him together. Then, as though remembering where he was, he could cut himself off and tremble.

The first time it happened, Izuku learned that several members of his household are armed with guns. When he saw, his first immediate thought was that it wouldn’t be enough to stop <That Man>, and Izuku’s second thought was that he held nothing but pity for any idiot that tried to break into their home with malicious intention. It was such a simple thing, and it made him feel obsolete.

He needed to protect his people.

Izuku steadied his heart, and the rest of his body followed.

He needed to get stronger.

“Sorry,” he whispered, I’m sorry. I’m okay now. It just… It was just a nightmare. I’m fine now.”

He wasn’t fine. Not even close.

-

His mother had always been stern in the fact that he and Chisaki didn’t sleep in the same bed. The fact that they shared a room was already pretty scandalous in her eyes, but it helped that Kurono and Irinaka stayed with them in the room as well.

With how out of control his nightmares were getting, however, she didn’t think it was a good ‘excuse’ for them to share so much skinship together.

### Post-USJ: Return to Class

After the fiasco with USJ, classes were cancelled for two days. The official reason was because the faculty needed to revamp their security, but unofficially, they thought that it would be good to give the kids some time with their family.

But the first day back was always hard. And seeing Izuku come in without any visible injuries immediately released some of the pent-up tension inside of them.

“Yeah, you looked really bad when they were carrying you out,” Kirishima said, “But you bounce back really fast, huh? That’s pretty manly!”

His classmate smiled back, “Uh, yeah. I don’t know about the manly part, but I guess so,” he said, nodding.

“...Are you sure you should be back already, kero?” Tsuyu asked quietly.

Midoriya’s eyes turned warmer, “...Thank you for the concern, but I’m really okay,” he said. He clenched his hand into a fist, “If anything, now I want to get even stronger. This time, no one died, so next time, no one should get hurt.”

There was a long silence before Kirishima barked out a loud laugh.

“Damn!” he said, eyes shining, “That’s just… so manly, Midoriya! You’re right! I thought that I did all that I could, but the more I think about it, the less I believe it! I don’t want to just be pulled along by other people. We’re training to be heroes, after all!”

“That’s nice, settle down and get to your seats,” Aizawa said walking in.

“Oh! Sensei, you’re like all healed too?!”

Their homeroom teacher waved his hand, “Yeah, yeah,” he said. His eyes narrowed into slits, and they were pulled to full attention as his mood shifted, “But I heard what you were saying earlier,” he said. Even though his voice didn’t fluctuate, they could feel the weight of his words, “While you guys are here, you are UA students. We, your teachers, are responsible for your lives. You have the rest of your life to be a Hero, so right now, don’t worry about being a hero. You’re only a student once.”

“See!” Mineta said, “Why can’t you guys listen to sensei more!”

Midoriya pointedly stared at his desk.

“With that said, the entire school board is working on this issue. We won’t be caught off-guard like this again,” he said. “More importantly, we have bigger things to discuss.”

Everyone leaned in closer.

“The Sports Festival is coming up!”

### Midoriya Household Fight

These have become more and more frequent. Nights where Izuku would make his mom cry, and they would both yell their voices hoarse.

Since getting into UA, these fights have gotten worse and worse. However, the USJ accident propelled it much further.

“You father doesn't want you to be a hero-”

“I don’t have a father! What do I care what he thinks?!”

“Izuku! How can you say that?! Your father works so hard to make sure we have-”

“I’m not dumb, mom! Of course I know that it’s strange for a businessman to be away that long and that often on business trips! He doesn’t call or webcam, he doesn’t bother with souvenirs or pictures! I know mom! We’re the other family!”

“No! No, he’s just working!”

“I’m not going to live that lie anymore, Mom, and you shouldn’t either!”

“He does love me! He does! You wouldn’t understand because you’re just a child, Izuku! When you’re older, you will understand what love is-”

“I don’t want that love! I don’t want the love that I have to wait for nothing! I have a love, in my room, right now, and he’s a thousand times better than whatever Hizashi was to you!”

“He’s still your father! And he’s not some criminal and he has never hurt anyone-”

“Chisaki has never hurt me either! He doesn’t hurt me with his inaction! He doesn’t lie to me! Mom, I’d rather love a guy who’s faithful to me than wait around for someone who is never-”

A loud crash sound was heard, and Chisaki decided that he had heard enough.

He walked into the room, and the way Inko’s eyes were glaring at him, understood that he was not wanted here. Not right now, at least. There was some broken glass on the floor, and he made sure to keep Eri behind him. It looked like the cup that was on the table had fallen to the ground, he assumed because Inko backed up into the table. Something in his chest loosened at the thought that it was truly an accident.

“...Maybe you guys should take a break,” Chisaki said, “And cool off for a moment.”

“...I’ll take care of this,” Izuku said, walking over when Chisaki grabbed his wrist.

“...Get dressed. Let’s go pick Shin up from the station together.”

The young man didn’t even look at him and nodded weakly. He bent down to drop his hand onto Eri’s head.

“...Sorry that you had to see that,” he said quietly as he walked away.

They all pretended that they didn’t see the way Inko ran for her room.

### Class - Midoriya-kun’s Injuries

Bakugo totally and honestly forgot that what he grew up with, his ‘normal’, was not at all normal. It didn’t occur to him how much he accepted things that weren’t usually socially acceptable until one day, Yamada pulled him to the side.

“Ah, Bakugo-kun, you grew up with Midoriya-kun, right?”

“Deku? Yeah,” Bakugo nodded back.

“...Ah, hm. This is a little hard to ask, but uh… Has Midoriya-kun always been this way?”

Bakugo scowled at the memory, the question, life in general, but answered, “Yeah.”

Yamada nodded slowly, clearly out of his comfort zone.

He sighed, rubbing his temples as he tried to find a better way to phrase whatever he wanted to say. Losing his patience, however, Bakugo sighed back. He wasn’t one for suspense.

“Sensei, just say it.”

“Ah…” he could see it. Yamada was probably, again, thinking about how nice it must be to be young and able to blurt whatever he wants out, “we’re just concerned since it seems that he’s always walking around with another injury is all.”

Bakugo blinked and shrugged back, “Yeah, that’s probably his brothers.”

“Brother?”

“Yeah, he has like eight of them.”

“Eight brothers?”

Bakugo nodded, “They’re all fucking assholes. But they get the job done.”

“I uh… see.”

### Remembering Something Disgusting

“You know,” Chisaki said quietly, catching his attention, “I remember when you were like that.”

Izuku, who was carrying the other half of the groceries, stopped and turned around to stare at his companion. Curious, he walked over to where he had stopped and looked over to see what Chisaki was talking about. However, all he saw was a bunch of very dirty kids playing in the sandbox.

“...When we were younger?” Izuku tried.

Chisaki stared at the kids and then looked down at Izuku. His mask crinkled when he smiled and Izuku pouted back.

“What? I won’t know if you don’t tell me.”

“You used to get so dirty all the time,” Chisaki sighed, dramatically, as his eyes shined in mirth. “And I was so impressed that all your stains came off so cleanly, and how quickly you could get them dirty. And there was that time you played in the sandbox and instead of washing your hands, you tried to eat dinner as soon as you came home. You even brought those beetles straight into the house.”

“I-” Izuku spluttered back, his face turning red, “I- was a kid then!”

Chisaki barked out a laugh, a liberating sound that could only happen because it was them. He looked down at Izuku, clearly remembering the entire thing to be much more fond than Izuku, but the younger man couldn’t find it in himself to say anything else.

“Yeah,” he said, “A kid then.”

And sometimes, Chisaki thinks he knows what a childhood should have looked like. The thought doesn’t make him as bitter as he thought it would.

### UA - Sports Festival

There was a long, long silence in the Midoriya’s household as they watched the spectacle in front of them.

“...Izuku… isn’t quirkless?”

Chisaki, who was pale and sweating, gripped his arms tightly. And when the burst of fire ran and covered the arena, jumped to his feet.

“Izuku,” he muttered, “Izuku-”

Forgetting his jacket, he barely remembered to put on his shoes as he bolted out the door, ignorant to the yells behind him.

“Izuku-”

“Kai! Kai, just wait!” Kurono said, arms reaching to grab the man by the forearm, and was sent sprawling backwards onto his back when Chisaki had punched him.

Nervously, Setsuno kneeled down next to Kurono, trying to give him some support.

“The teachers are at school! They’ll take care of him-”

“Take care?! Did that look like they’re taking care of him to you?!”

“Kai!” Kurono yelled back, “Izuku knows what he’s getting into! And we have a job here too!”

Chisaki’s liquid gold eyes promised a fate worse than death, and if Kurono could give Izuku any form of mental peace, then he welcomed that fate. It would be the least he could do for everything that these people have done for him. He would do anything, be anything-

In the background, Rappa shouted out, “If you guys are done fighting, get some fucking water or else Izuku ain’t gonna have a mom to come back to!”

They had more important things to worry about, and Chisaki turned to stare at the door for another long moment.

Then, his phone rang.

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Izuku gave a slow breath, and was glad to know that his chest was moreorless in tact. He wiggled his toes next, happy to know that his legs were pretty much unscathed. But his arms.

Even through all the painkillers, he could still feel the faint haze of pain lacing through him. Next to him was All Might, and he would rather break every bone in his body than have to face his undoubtedly disappointed expression.

God, why did he do that? Todoroki didn’t even want to be saved. And at the same time, he didn’t think that he would live with himself if someone had opened up that much to him-and he let them go without at least trying.

“I can’t heal all of that with a single session. We are going to put you into surgery.”

“Get the fuck out of my way, you fucking extras!"

The door suddenly opened and an array of students came pouring into the room.

“Midoriya!”

“Deku!”

“You fucking nerd!”

The young boy stared in shock as several classmates came trying to rush in. Recovery Girl frowned, trying to stop them, but Bakugo made it to his side with his phone in hand.

“Kai-aniki is pissed. Here.”

Izuku took a deep breath. “I can’t hold the phone,” he said. “Can you put it on speaker?”

“It is,” Bakugo responded back, watching no little amount of glee at how fast Izuku’s face drained of all color.

“Yes, Izuku,” Chisaki’s voice said through the phone. “And you can’t hold the phone, right?”

Izuku closed his eyes, and resigned himself to his face.

“...I’m sorry.”

“That’s not what I want to hear.”

The young man hesitated for a second, and looked at the phone. He pursed his lips, as though trying to decide if he should tell him, and then finally bit the bullet.

“...Recovery Girl said I have to go into surgery for it.”

His friends broke out into shocked cries, but the silence that Chisaki gave him was far, far worse. He didn’t give a long sigh or yell at him or anything, although he could hear the familiar voices of the rest of his household in the background.

“... I know you don’t want to hear it, but I-”

“Do you regret it?”

But this question, he was ready for.

“No. I’d do it again if I have to.”

This time, Chisaki did sigh, and Izuku felt something loosen in his heart.

“I am coming with Setsuno to pick you up,” he said. “I’ll see you in a few.”

“Thank you,” he said. “...Did everyone watch?”

“Yes. You have a lot to say to Inko-kaa-sama.”

Izuku groaned back.

“Okay, that’s nice,” Recovery Girl shouted out, “Now, all of you, leave! He needs to rest! Chisaki-kun?” she called through the speaker phone, “I will let the security at the front know about you. It’s just you and one other?”

“Yes, I’ll make Setsuno wait at the car. Kurono will be coming with me. I’ll see you soon.”

“Drive safe,” Izuku called out, more out of habit.

The tone turned inexplicitly tender suddenly.

“Izuku, you’re the last person I want to hear that from. Katsuki, thank you for giving me a call.”

“No problem.”

The blond pocketed his phone at the end of the call. “We got some free time while they fix up the arena. But I got better things to do than hang out with a loser. Later, nerd.”

With that, Bakugo turned on his heel to leave.

“You would think he would have a better attitude about this,” Iida sighed back.

“...The fact that he came here at all is a kindness,” Izuku said, sighing. “Still, thank you,” he said looking at them, “for coming to visit me.”

“Of course! After all, you sustained heavy injuries! It was only natural that we did!” Iida called out, making a chopping motion with his hand as he did so. “It’s good to know that you are okay, though!”

“Yeah but seriously, no pro is ever going to look at you after a stunt like that,” Mineta added before being slapped by Tsuyu’s tongue.

“Don’t rub salt like that,” she scolded.

“Children,” Recovery Girl said again, but her voice was quiet and chilling. It brought a frigid silence over them even as she smiled at them, “You can talk to Midoriya-kun later.”

“Haha… See you later, Deku.”

“We’ll see you soon, Midoriya.”

It seemed as though they could not leave any faster, and the room was empty again. Izuku released a breath he didn’t know he was holding. His vision swam a little, and he groaned.

“...You really should rest. I’m sure Chisaki-kun will be understanding of it,” she said quietly.

He shook his head. “He’s worried enough. If I sleep now, he’ll think it’s a lot worse than what it is.”

She pursed her lips, “You’re in pretty bad state as it is, Midoriya-kun.”

He gave a hollow laugh as he leaned back against his pillow. “...This is the end of my sports festival, huh?” he said quietly. The regret wrapped around his heart tightly as

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“...Izuku was crying before, wasn’t he?” Chisaki asked quietly, once he was certain that the younger man was sleeping soundly. He didn’t wait for a response as he continued, “Ah, I ask because I’ve known him since he was little you see. And in all the time I knew him, he’s a bit of a cry-baby. He was the first to cry and his eyes water seemingly always.”

He didn’t look up from the young man, but his voice was laced with poison.

“But he doesn’t cry for himself. He’ll sniffle, but he doesn’t cry,” he continued, lifting his hand to wipe at Midoriya’s red cheeks, “His bones break, he gets impaled, gets cuts and burns and bruises, but he doesn’t cry because it doesn't hurt him.”

Gold eyes cut through the room and landed on Yagi Toshinori, and the older man took a moment to catch his breath underneath the cold glare that was shot his way.

“Should something happen to him, I will destroy this entire world until nothing stands. And I will start with this school.”

The blond stiffened, but then the younger man blinked and like the spell was broken, he looked back to Izuku.

In that single moment, he doubted that Izuku truly understood that Chisaki was his ally and his alone. Somehow, the thought scared him a little.

### Police!Kurono

“I thought that the name Kurono was familiar,” Yagi said as he nodded at Kurono.

The officer, although he was off-duty, straightened and nodded. Out of habit, he saluted, and Yagi waved it off. Relaxing, he stared at him for a moment before recognition dawned on his face.

“You are Tsukage-senpai's friend,” he said.

Yagi smiled feeling warm at the thought that he was recognized as a friend and nodded back.

“I didn’t realize that you were close with my student,” he said.

“Izuku was the reason why I decided to join the force,” Kurono said, “But… I asked to be put in Tsukage-senpai's squad.”

“Oh?” Yagi responded, feeling delighted that his friend was getting some more support. “You know… that job isn’t very rewarding. There’s a lot of work in that department. It’ll be hard to manage a family or even a girlfriend.”

“...That’s fine,” Kurono said, “there’s someone that I want to protect. I think that, if I stay there, I have the best chances of protecting him.”

“...Midoriya-kun?” Yagi asked, even though he knew.

The man nodded back politely.

Suddenly, Yagi understood why this man was so cold and polite to him. Just like the other man sitting next to Izuku in Recovery Girl’s temporary office, it was clear that this wasn’t someone that cared about heroes or the likes. This was someone who was here solely for the sake of Midoriya Izuku, and just like Yagi had parts of himself that he hadn’t shared with Izuku, he realized that the young man had parts about himself that he has yet to share as well.

Somehow, it made him feel a little lonely.

“...It seems that Midoriya-kun has some great support at home,” he said, “That… that’s honestly relieving.”

“I wish I could say the same about his teachers,” Kurono replied without missing a beat and ouch, okay, Yagi could understand that sentiment, even if it stung.

“...Ah,” Yagi said quietly, losing the fight before he ever began.

“...My apologies, I didn’t mean to come off that coldly when you are still Izuku’s teacher,” Kurono replied, “or while you are Tsukage-senpai's friend.”

“Ah, no, no worries. I think it’s good to be honest.”

The man turned to him at that, sharply, and opened his mouth to probably say something even more unsavory, when the door opened and Izuku was there.

“...Sensei, I’m well enough to keep watching,” Izuku said, looking almost as good as new. He looked a little tired, but the bandages were off of his arms.

Wistfully, All Might wondered if Chisaki was able to fix anything, but kept the words to himself. It would be a shame to ask something of him when he couldn’t even protect his student.

The scars were gone, but All Might would never forget his pale features as he tried to reach for a shoulder that wasn’t there anymore, a few weeks ago at that godawful sudden battle.

“Thanks for coming out, Hari. Sorry to send you away as soon as you got here though.”

Kurono shrugged back, but brought one of his hands up to ruffle his hair.

“I’m glad you’re alright.”

“...I’m sorry for worrying you.”

“Good,” Kurono said. He dropped his hand from his hair to his shoulder, squeezing tight, “Make sure you apologize to the others when you get home, okay?”

“Okay.”

With that, Kurono and Chisaki left as quickly and silently as they had came and Izuku turned to Yagi to give a full bow.

“I’m sorry if they said something insensitive. They’re not usually like this, they’ve just been a little more touchy than usual when I get hurt.”

“Ah, no,” Yagi shook his head, “I don’t think that’s something that you should be apologizing for. All their concerns seemed to be justified.”

“Still, knowing them, they probably said it in an unsavory way,” he said. “They’re… They’re not bad people. A little lost, and they… they operate the way that they do because that was the only way they knew to survive. It’s a work in progress, but I swear to you that they’re not-”

“Midoriya-shounen,” Yagi said sternly, “It’s alright.”

Izuku looked like he swallowed a lemon whole and then he sighed. “...I’m sorry. I just. I must be more tired than I thought.”

“I guess Chisaki-kun’s quirk is something that only fixes your physical well-being?”

The younger man nodded back, “It takes a lot out of him, and other people. But to be honest, I never felt that kind of bite-back from his quirk. According to Toya and Kendo, ah … Kai’s other friends, though, it’s pretty painful.”

The blond rubbed his chin as he thought about it, and then nodded back. He took some mental notes on the names and said, “Well, regardless. It’s good to know that you’re in good health again, even if it’s just physically. That’s a good start. And with the support you have, I think you’ll be in good hands.”

The green-haired man beamed back, before the doubt returned and he dropped his eyes.

“...I… I’m sorry that I couldn’t live up to expectations,” he said. “But I… I didn’t know what else I could have done to help Todoroki-kun.”

Yagi’s eyes softened at the admission, while he didn’t doubt that he was a little disappointed at the results, the amount of pride he felt for his successor overshadowed everything else. And when he let Izuku know that, the shine in his eyes made him feel as though he was the one that was being saved.

### Gran Torino’s Internship

“An intern?” Shimura parroted back. “Here? Someone wanted to intern with you?”

Gran Torino shot him a dry look. “Don’t disintegrate him,” he said and then turned to Dabi, “and don’t cremate him. He’s my student’s student, so I promised to look after him. He will be returned to UA alive at the end of the week.”

“Some fucking rip-off, fake-ass, weak bitch is going to be our intern?” Dabi asked, annoyance clear as day, “And since you agreed, we are going to be the ones to have to deal with all their shitty whining and complaining. We’re not fucking babysitters, especially to some elite UA trash that couldn’t get a real hero to sign on with them so they settled for us.”

There was a polite knock on the door, and after a long battle of eye contact, Dabi scowled before getting up to get the door. Shiragaki, even though he was glad that he didn’t have to get the door, had a hard time feeling any glee in this situation.

Dabi opened the door, his expression schooled into something controllable, and Midoriya Izuku stared back at him from his place at the door. He looked a little better than he did on the television, except for the extra inch of bags under his eyes, like he didn’t sleep particularly well for the past seven months or something. Standing in front of him, a little taller and a little thicker than he was when they first met all those years ago, Dabi couldn’t help but note that his eyes had not lost their shine.

All in all, he looked like a dream.

“Oh, you’re here already?” Gran Torino said from behind him, “These are my side-kicks, Cremator and Decay. They’re awful human beings, but they got their license so I’m sure they probably have some morals,” the old man explained to the boy who was frozen stiff at the front doors of his office. “They’ll be like your senpais during your stay here. However, they’re easy to annoy and piss off, and there’s not much to do here anyways so they might just take off for the week. Actually, that might be better so Toshinori doesn’t nag my ear off about killing his student, haha!” the old man finished with a grand laugh.

However, no one laughed with him, as the trio stared at each other like they were the only people in the world.

“...Hi senpais,” Izuku said, recovering to a blank face, “I’m the fake-ass, weak bitch from UA. I think… you’ll be babysitting me for the next week or so?”

Dabi and Shiragaki stared for another moment before they closed the door suddenly.

“I didn’t fucking think it would be Izuku! I totally forgot that he went to UA!”

“You think I knew?! You idiot! I was the one that had to stop you from storming UA during the fucking festival!”

“Fuck! Wasn’t he like dying anyways? Why’s he here anyways?! We’re not ready to face him yet!”

“Shit, why is he the intern!?”

“Fuck!”

Then, they opened the door again.

“Ah, Izuku, it’s been a while, I guess,” Decay sighed dramatically, lifting both his hands to shrug like he didn’t have any cares in the world.

Next to him, Cremator shot him a disgusted look and rolled his eyes. He tilted his head up and stared down at the young teenager in front of him with the coldest look he could manage. “Don’t think that just because we knew each other back then, that we’re going to take it easy on you,” he said, doing his aboslute best to play it cool like the young man didn’t hear him yelling just a moment ago.

“That’s good,” Izuku replied back, a warm smile on his face. “I missed you guys.”

The two looked at the young intern, mirrored looks of shock on their faces as Gran Torino tilted his head to the side to hum a little as he observed them with all far more interest than he had initially. Within seconds, their composure crumbled and a sheepish look crossed both of them, looking more like small children who were caught eating cookies before dinner.

“Well,” the old man muttered, more amused than the other three were comfortable with hearing, “I’ll be.”

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“Wow, I can’t believe you guys got taller,” Izuku sighed as he chopped the carrots.

Next to him, moving in sync with him as though they’ve never spent any time apart, Dabi stopped stirring the curry so that the young man could put the chopped vegetables in. Then, on the other side, Shimura placed the washed tomatoes into the salad.

“Maybe you should hurry up and hit puberty,” Shimura replied without missing a beat. He yawned as he turned off the water when he was done with the remaining vegetables. He toweled off while Izuku kept chopping.

He gave a humorless laugh, “No, I’m pretty sure you guys are the freaks of nature here.”

“What, is that Bakago still a midget too?”

“Kacchan? Ah… I think he’s taller than me too. But not by much!”

“Maybe Chisaki’s still fucking with you,” Shimura replied back, rubbing the back of his neck as he pulled out some dishes for them. “And he likes them little.”

Izuku’s face turned bright red at that, and both of the other men took a moment to stare at his expression. He spluttered a little as he chopped a little slower.

“...Then, isn’t this a good thing?”

“Man, I used to think that you had it bad before,” Dabi replied back, in no little amount of shock and disgust, “But wow, you haven’t changed at all. Fucking lovebirds, you’re still not sick of each other?”

Izuku laughed back, a little nervously, and moreso than the red nipping at the tips of his ears, it was the scars that his eyes kept trailing down to. The shame and guilt curled back up inside of him, and he kept stirring the curry.

No matter how many digs they made at Chisaki, there were some things that they couldn’t change. And even if Izuku had already completely forgiven them and the planets all aligned, they had not forgiven themselves.

If the scars remained, he could only imagine that Chisaki would never forgive them either.

“No, I guess not.”

And Shimura and Dabi would just have to live with that for the rest of their lives.

### Gran Torino Explains

“To be honest, I didn’t think you guys had it in you,” Gran Torino admitted. “When you guys came to me all those years ago, I didn’t ever think that you guys would have gotten so far. As it turns out, you guys did have some secrets huh? Hahaha, I was always curious why such morally dubious guys like you wanted to get your Hero’s License so bad.”

He chuckled, taking a bite out of his microwaved Taiyaki with a glee that didn’t just have to do with eating his favorite food.

“I didn’t ever think that we’d be so similar.”

“...What do you mean?” Shimura asked, biting the bullet.

“...I wasn’t much of a hero, not at all like All Might or Izuku, or any of those bright and mighty guys. I only got my license to help Nana out. That eventually got extended to Toshinori, of course,” Gran Torino explained quietly, a chuckle on his lips. “To think that both of you would be just like me.”

His eyes glazed over at the memories and he closed them. He took a deep breath and turned to the two young apprentices next to him.

“But you guys are a little different than me. Since you guys have me, at the very least, I’ll teach you everything I got. That way, unlike me, you’ll actually protect him.”

Dabi sat quietly against the windowsill, his eyes watching the stars above while Shimura quietly sat by the coffee table.

They would have thought that the internship would lead to them teaching the intern, showing them the ropes, and all that. Learning all this about each other was not apart of that equation.

### Kaminari & Deku - pain

“Oi, Deku,” Kaminari called out, exhausted and tired, “How do you keep going even when it hurts?” he asked.

“Kaminari!” Yaoyozuro snapped back, appalled that he would ever ask such a thing.

“I’m just curious!” Kaminari said, wincing when Jirou smacks him in the back of his head.”What?”

“It’s fine,” Izuku said, “You won’t know unless you ask, right?” He turned to the blond and smiled, “To be honest, I don’t really get it either. I don’t really know how to explain it either. I just… I guess if you hit a certain pain threshold, you stop feeling everything altogether?”

“If you have time to chatter,” Aizawa called out, “I guess you don’t have enough to do.”

Kaminari started to wail at that, more than tired, and Deku laughed.

Still, he couldn’t escape his teacher’s heavy gaze.

### Broken Legs Aren’t a Reason to Stay Down

“...Deku, are your legs broken?!” Bakugo snapped back, “Get up!”

Shouji wanted to strangle this guy, was he really trying to become a hero? He worriedly turned, already beating himself over the fact that he had slipped and dropped his wounded classmate, and watched no little amount of awe as Midoriya did just that.

“I… I’m fine,” Midoriya said, like his arms weren’t limp and floppy, bruised and bloody. “I’m fine, Kacchan!”

“I wasn’t worried,” Bakugo snapped back as he came in front of them. “Get up. We need to counterattack.”

Shoji, ready to yell at both of them, because the teachers were going to come and someone was going to save them, couldn’t quite get the words out.

“Yes!” Midoriya said, using his head to help balance himself so he can get to his feet, since he couldn’t use his hands. “I’m… I’m fine!”

The feeling in Shoji’s gut intensified, like he was watching a car accident in slow motion.

### Post Battle- Scars & Apologies

There’s a lot of new scars on Izuku.

Izuku, who was currently watching the news recording for the third time in a row with a notebook in his lap, scribbled something down, crossed something out, chewed on the back of his pen, and no matter how many scars painted his hands, Chisaki is grateful that he hasn’t otherwise changed at all.

“Izuku, Inko-kaa-sama cut us some pears,” he started, placing the plate of fruits in front of him as he took his place behind him. He sat, as he always did, with Izuku between his legs and leaned forward so that his chest lined up to his back. He hesitated for a moment, before he wrapped his arms under Izuku’s arms so that the younger man could keep writing.

Like this, Chisaki could feel Izuku’s heart beating in tandem next to his, and for a moment, it felt as though they are one and the same. He placed his forehead at the junction where Izuku’s neck meets his shoulder and hopes that this will also never change. He inhaled deeply, pleased that Izuku finally smells like home and his soap again, that he doesn’t smell like blood and disinfect anymore, and rubbed his nose against the ridges of his new scars by his neck.

Thinking about how he got them, his heart constricted painfully.

Without a doubt, he could get rid of all of these. Izuku will return to that smooth skin much like when he was younger and Chisaki could protect him from the world.

But then, he noticed that the younger man’s heart began to beat a little faster.

“...Do you want to get rid of them?” Izuku asked quietly.

He lifted his head up, and loosened his arms so that Izuku can scoot away from him. Immediately, he missed the warmth, but whatever Izuku wanted was more important than anything he felt. He stared as the younger man turned around halfway so that they were mostly face to face.

“...Get rid of what?” he asked. His teachers? They weren’t doing their job of protecting him very well. His classmates? They were usually making more of a mess for him. The world? It might take some time, but he could do that too.

He thinks that there is very little that he wouldn’t do for Izuku at this point.

His eyes met Chisaki’s briefly and then they came down to his hands. Chisaki, who never got tired of seeing Izuku’s face, wondered what he needed to do so that Izuku could start sleeping well again and get rid of those damn bags under his eyes.

“These,” he said, lifting his hand to show the scars that littered his hands. “I… I thought about it. That, uhm, with your quirk, you could make me be uh… whatever you want.”

Chisaki blinked back, whatever he was expecting, it wasn’t this.

“So. I wanted you to know, that since I’m… It’s really ugly and I’m not really much to look at either… It’s okay, if you wanted to change me so that I’m uh… to your standards.”

And after being so long with Izuku, he was convinced that he had already given his heart, soul, and being to him. He was certain of this, and wanted nothing more than to live a long, happy life with the person who completed him. More importantly, he thought that Izuku knew that too.

Looking at Izuku now, the tremble of his lips tracing his uncertainty, the defeated curve on his back, and his inability to even meet his eyes, he realized that his incredibly resilient love, who doesn’t cry when his arms shatter and blood vessels pop, was hurt. He was hurt, right now, and offered his vulnerable, hurting heart, right to Chisaki.

In that moment, Chisaki wanted to die.

That look on his face, he put it there. The confidence that every one of them worked so hard to piece back together day after day had been shattered by him. Izuku had been driven to a corner where he was lost and desperate, and did the only thing he thought he could do.

He made a plea with Chisaki, compromising and half a step from begging the older man to stay with him.

Golden eyes fell to the scars on Izuku’s hands. They were numerous, and each one seemed bigger and more painful than the next. He gathered those hands into his, they weren’t as small as they used to be, but he still easily dwarved them.

Ridiculous.

He pulled one hand away to pull his face mask down to his chin, and then lifted Izuku’s hands to his lips. Like he was kissing the gems of a monarch’s ring, he pressed his lips against the scars Izuku carried.

“Chisaki…?”

“You are,” he said, “already perfect.”

The hands he held trembled, and without looking up, he knew that Izuku must be teary-eyed. He smiled against his knuckles.

Good, he hadn’t lost his touch.

“You have always been perfect, Izuku. If you don’t want these scars, I’ll get rid of them and you’ll still be perfect. If you go out tomorrow and fight,” he gulped his feelings down, lest he choked on them, “and get more scars, you will still be perfect. You are perfect, if this is a part of you, then it must be perfect too.”

He leaned back, smiling at the sight of Izuku sniffling as he desperately tried not to break down crying. To fix something, sometimes, you had to break it.

“I love you, Izuku,” he said. “So, I just need one thing from you, okay?”

Izuku gave a jerky nod, but he didn’t pull his hands away.

“Please, always return to me. Then, at the very least, I can make sure we have a long life together.”

He leaned in, pressing a kiss to his cheeks where the tears were falling. He released his hands to cup Izuku’s face, and Izuku’s hands came up to cradles his hands. He cried even harder, and Chisaki wondered how someone could be filled with so much empathy and care that his tears never ran out.

He treasured it. He tipped the younger man’s head up a little to press a chaste kiss against his lips. And then he kissed them, again and again, letting his arms come down to wrap around his waist and pull him closer. Izuku’s hands, scarred and perfect, cradled his face with a tenderness that made him warm.

“I’m sorry,” Izuku said, nearly sobbing at this point. Incoherent under the tidal wave of his relief and fears crashing together until they all came pouring out, he babbled out, “I’m sorry, Chisaki. I didn’t… I didn’t-”

“That’s not what you should be saying right now, right?”

Chisaki leaned back, tucking Izuku’s head under his chin. He fit there, perfect as always.

“...I promise. I will definately, without fail, always make it back to you.”

Chisaki Kai was Grade A Scumbag, but if he could have one thing from this world, he wanted this.

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Izuku, like he was still a kid, cried himself to sleep in Chisaki’s arms. The older man gave a little hum, running his fingers through the wild curls. Like this, he thinks that they could die right now and there would be nothing better that this world could offer him.

If he had it his way, he’d lock Izuku somewhere no one else can see. Then, he’d purge the entire world of everything but the two of them. In another world, he is certain that would be his ambition.

But he needs a heart to have ambition, and he already gave that away.

So, he will do what he needs to. He will protect the heart that he was entrusted with. With that in mind, he lifted Izuku properly into his arms and carried him to his bed. He wiped down the residue of salty tears and snot. He placed him down, pulled his face mask back up, and vividly, he suddenly remembered what Inko once told him.

>> “...I want you to treasure Izuku, and one day, my greatest hope for you is that you will treasure yourself too.” <<

To think, she would curse him to live.

He laid down next to Izuku, determined to keep their hearts together, beating in tandem.

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### To Save a Life

"I have killed a lot of people."

"...You know, I'm training to be a hero," Izuku said. "That means that every person I saved is alive. And everyone I couldn't, I killed."

He reached out to grab Chisaki's, and this time, the older man didn't pull away.

"But I'm not going to stop being a hero."

The burden to be a hero was heavy.

### Provisional License:

The weight of his license is a lot lighter than he thought.

### Rappa - To Love

Rappa rubbed the back of his neck. Him, like everyone else that lived with the Midoriya’s, lived in near silent-fear with every explosive fight that occurred between Izuku and his mother. And he knows, as the person that trains with Izuku the most, how tired he seems to be, how the world seems to rest against his shoulders, how exhausted he was getting from everything around him.

And honestly, he didn’t know what he was feeling. He didn’t know how to describe the tight bundle of nerves that sat and ate at him with every passing day. He doesn't know how to put into words the feeling he got when Eri tugged at his hand to take another lap around the block so that she didn’t have to be home just yet.

And so, he spent the day locked up in the gym, punching the hours away with a repetition that never failed to center him. With that, he easily became one of the most level-headed people in their household, especially since the others don’t burn off stress as easily as he does.

But that doesn’t mean he doesn’t feel it.

Of course he feels it, fuck, he’ll never forget the first time in his life he broke out into cold sweat because Izuku was screaming himself awake. He knows that the young man felt awful about waking up the whole house for several days straight, and nothing they said eased that feeling for him. He knows that the nightmares persist, because he’s usually the first one up and has found Izuku’s shivering body on the couch on several occasions.

They never talked about what happened at USJ, the park, the train crash, or the other incidents that landed Izuku in the Emergency Room this past six months. Chisaki made it very clear to them that the incidents were not to be brought up in the presence of Inko and Eri, but especially Inko.

And so, they will keep it to the grave that something has been trying, for the last six months, to target Izuku. Someone was coming for him, and he wanted to feed it to his pets. Someone was coming and he was stronger than All Might. But instead of killing him, he wanted Izuku to live in perpetual fear and he wanted savor it.

Rappa’s seen some sick fucks in the world. This one takes the cake.

Izuku is strong. Even though his sleep schedule is wrecked, he still gets out of bed every morning to go on a run. There’s no way he feels safe in the world, but he always moved with purpose. He doesn’t lose himself to the fear, and even turned down the option of being guarded on rotation by the police or other heroes. (Why? Because he thinks that they should be ready to save people who can’t save themselves.)

Izuku is someone who can still objectively think and care about other people. The last six months were taking a toll on his life and mental state, but his core feelings and beliefs didn’t waver.

So, finding Izuku, sitting on the couch at four in the morning with his head in his hands, Rappa thinks that he’s so incredibly lucky to be able to see the rise of the Strongest Man alive. He walked to the kitchen, grabbed a water bottle because the kid was probably dehydrated from crying himself awake again, and passed it to him.

“I don’t know anything about falling in love or soulmates or whatever,” he said slowly, barely remembering to keep his voice down since everyone was still sleeping, “But I do know one thing. If it makes you strong, it’s true. It’s not a lie. It’s not fake. It’s not something that hinders you and it’s not something that makes you weak.”

He kneeled down in front of Izuku, the same way this kid did for him all those years ago, and wondered if this time, he could be the one that reaches him.

“You used to tell me all the time, remember? That you wanted to be a hero, your own hero?”

His breath catches a little when those green eyes seemed to light up a little more. Good. They were starting to water, always filled with a kindness meant for other people, and Rappa felt a little dazed at the thought that those eyes were on him.

“Izuku,” he tried one more time, “You’re strong, so all that’s left is the hero part, right?”

Izuku gave this shuddery breath, and nodded.

“Ready to go on a run?” he asked, and Izuku nodded.

There were dried tear-stains on his blotchy red face, and Rappa thinks that this is the face of the man who will dethrone All Might.

### Forgiveness

“...I thought about it,” Izuku said, “...But I think I have an idea on how to save him.”

There was a long pause before Yagi managed to find his voice.

“...Save him?”

Shimura’s hands slammed down onto the table, his chair skidding loudly behind him, “Do you realize what you’re saying?! Or who we’re talking about?! This is All for One! The guy who killed my grandma! Ended All Might’s reign! And after everything he did to you-you want to save him?!”

Izuku stared at him for a moment, his eyes impossibly soft and he nodded. “Yeah.”

“W… Midoriya-shounen, could… could you please elaborate on this?”

“Heroes save people,” he said. “And I don’t want to be a hero that takes the easy way out because it’s more convenient for me.”

His whole life, Izuku thinks, he was blessed. He was given unconditional love from his mother, found a friend who never looked down on him for being inherently different from other people, and lived looking up to a hero who never lost his smile. He lived in a cozy apartment that never went hungry, and he always had clothes to wear.

He grew up surrounded by people who loved him and cared for him, even though they came from a background that took more than they gave. The people that he knew, each and every single one of them, had an incredible strength to them that allowed them to keep going, to keep trying, even after their own painful experiences. The people he was with were strong, and he really wanted to be just as strong as them.

He beams back at them, “I am Deku who does his best,” he said. “So I want to at least try to save him.”

He wants to be strong. He wants to protect this. He wants to be a hero.

“Midoriya-shounen,” Yagi said quietly, his voice heavy, “What if you can’t?”

Even now, in this room, surrounded by people who care about him for some strange reason, Izuku doesn’t want to let them down.

“I… I think I can.”

“Shounen-”

“When he looks at me, and he talks to me, I… I don’t think it’s me he’s talking to,” Izuku replied back, looking at his hands. Green lightning sparked right around his fist and he looked back up, “I think he’s talking to my quirk. I’m not saying that I’m going to let him take my quirk or anything, but there’s something here. We don’t know what’s going on, but I think that this is our first clue.”

Gran Torino and Tsukauchi exchanged a look. Shimura slumped backwards into his seat. Yagi’s hands trembled from where they were folded in front of his face, and Dabi’s eyes never left Izuku’s face.

“...Even if we somehow save him,” Tsukauchi said, speaking slowly, ‘There’s no definite way that he’ll be able to reform properly.”

He knew how old this guy was, or at least he had an idea of it.

“Yeah,” Izuku nodded, “But I wanna be a hero.”

Shimura’s dad used to always say that, “Heroes are just people who would put strangers before their family” and Shimura thinks that he was dead-wrong. In front of him is the kid who has the exact same smile as he did when he was six, even if there was a scar running from his earlobe to his back about three inches wide. He wished that his father was alive, because he was wrong, and the proof was sitting right in front of him.

Heroes were dumbasses who tried to save people who don’t deserve to be saved.

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Izuku gave a little hum.

“The meeting went that well?” Chisaki asked.

Izuku turned to him and smiled back.

“Yeah.”

“Shimura looked pissed.”

“Yeah, I think it’s a good thing,” Izuku replied, his smile turning bigger. “I was really worried about him, but I’m glad it was needless. I think he’ll be fine.”

“Really?” the older man looked doubtful. Possibly because he saw Shimura disintegrating all the toilet seats in the bathroom.

“Yeah, because Shimura got mad for someone else. Could you believe it? That Shimura got mad for someone else?”

Golden eyes stared at Izuku, and he stopped walking. Just a few seconds later, Izuku stopped too. He looked back in confusion.

“...What did you say then? That he got so angry?”

“How’d you know that it was for me?” he asked, surprised. He stopped in his steps, and the older man stopped too. “It could have been for Dabi,” he tried.

Chisaki’s stare didn’t waver, but he did raise an eyebrow. Izuku winced and dropped his gaze.

“He doesn’t like how I hero,” he said quietly, “he never did.”

The older man gave a hum in response, as he turned back around and resumed their pace, “Who are you trying to save against their will this time?”

“Why do you guys always make it sound like I’m the villain in the situation?”

The other man snorted in response and Izuku sighed back. After another beat of silence, he turned to the older man. Unlike almost everyone else, Chisaki was the hardest to derail from the conversation, since he turns silent as he waits for a response. It was as frustrating as it was humbling.

“If I tell you, are you going to get angry?”

“If it was enough to piss Shimura off, probably.”

“And you’re not going to let this go, are you?”

There was another beat of silence before Izuku dropped his gaze to the ground. Really? The silent treatment? Really?

“...I want to end this. I want this to end with me,” he said, placing his hand over his heart, “I want to be a hero, the best one that I can be. That means that I’m going to do my best to save everyone. As long as they’re alive and they draw breath, I’m going to try and save them.”

He lifted his head up, his bright green eyes shining with a confidence that Chisaki doesn’t think anything could dent.

“The guy that’s been coming after me… I think I can save him. So, I’m going to.”

“...The guy that stormed your school?”

“Yeah.”

“And cornered you at the mall.”

“Yeah.”

“And crashed the train you were on.”

“Yeah.”

And Chisaki is certain that Izuku was born with a quirk. After spending the majority of his life watching him grow up, he has a mounting amount of evidence to prove it. It was a quirk that gave him a strength that no one else could match, and it gave him an unparalleled amount of wit. It would be a quirk called ‘Forgiveness’, and Chisaki thinks that there is nothing more terrifying.

“...I see.”

“...That’s all you’re going to say?”

“...I’m trying my best not to start yelling,” Chisaki replied back, his face devoid of emotion, “Because that’s not productive and you already made your mind up.”

The green-haired man gave a sheepish smile back. Betraying him, Chisaki heart fluttered at the sight of it.

“...You remember your promise to me, right?”

“I’ll always come back!”

And Chisaki, with all his heart, hoped that it wouldn’t be in a bodybag. Knowing who he was up against, he doubted that he would even get a body back.

...The thought wasn’t helpful at all.

Izuku took his hand happily, probably thinking that this was all fine and dandy, and Chisaki hoped deep in his heart that he wouldn’t ever let go.

### KuroDeku - To Be Asked to Save Someone

“...Please,” Kurogiri said quietly, “I think you’re different.”

...Which wasn’t something that Midoriya wanted to hear when there was a pole the width of his fist going through his gut, but thinks that every little bit of information is worthwhile, even if it’s getting harder and harder to focus. He took a deep breath, but couldn’t find his voice.

‘I know…. That sensei cannot be saved. I know this, so perhaps you can make a difference in this,” he said. “...Deku, please, save Sensei.”

How? Midoriya wanted to snap back. How the fuck was he supposed to magically find a way to save a guy who has seen the rise of quirks? Blood bubbled up to his mouth.

“...But I suppose, you are too weak to.”

When the officials and some of the other heroes made it, Midoriya felt the world close around him. The thoughts and beliefs crashed against each other and fell apart, as the flashing lights and concerned faces blurred right by him. Still, in the corner of his eyes, he saw that Kurogiri was in handcuffs and he knew that if the man left, he would never see him again.

There was no way that a hero-in-training like him would ever get the opportunity to see him again. There was just no goddamn way.

So, he gritted his teeth and shoved the paramedics out of his way. A pipe as tall as him was halfway through him, and he swears that he could feel it slipping and sliding against his organs. Still, he pushed forward because it wasn’t just All For One and it wasn’t just the victims. It wasn’t just kids like Chisaki and Todoroki, and it wasn’t just adults like Nighteye and Aizawa.

There were thousands of people that he would meet as a hero. There were thousands of people that he could have saved and he didn’t every day. Knowing that made a weight rest against his heart and he didn’t care what happened to him because he wanted to be a hero to do one thing.

“It’s not a waste!” he screamed out, gasping for every breath as his chest heaved. He took a full step, ignoring everything except the 25 feets between him and Kurogiri. He screamed out, his voice hoarse from screaming this whole time, and the bone-weary exhaustion seeping deep inside of him. “And I heard you! So it’s not a waste!”

Kurogiri, just the slightest bit, turned his way, but Midoriya couldn’t tell. He was far too blurry, and the world was spinning, but that was okay. He managed to pull a grin on his face and he announced it, loud and proud, again and again, as many times as it took.

“Because I am here!”

With that, the exhaustion and the bloodloss finally caught up to him, and he passed out.

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He’d wake up in the hospital, a bored-looking Chisaki next to him. He would take one look at the shadows casting across his face, and hated how relieved he felt that someone was sitting next to him at all.

He needed to get stronger.

### Eri & Familial Love -

“Eri,” Midoriya said sternly, “You were brought into this world, loved by your family!” His hands tightened around her shoulders, and she’s certain that it was the only thing that was keeping her on the ground. “Alright?” His eyes were infinitely kind, and she could see her reflection in them like they were a mirror.

Her bottom lip trembled.

His voice dropped as he stared at her.

“They didn’t leave you because they wanted to.”

“...Not even grandpa?”

“Not even grandpa.”

“...Really?”

Midoriya nodded. And with that, he leaned in to press a kiss to the top of her forehead. She giggled, like she always did, because Midoriya’s love was warm and encompassing, gentle and a little ticklish at times.

“Me and Kai, mom and Kurono, and everyone,” he said, starting to rush. “No one is going to leave you because they want to.”

“...But they’re going to leave me one day, anyways?”

The greatest tragedy, Midoriya thought to himself as he brought her closer, would be that she was so smart.

“Eri,” he said quietly against her head. “Time is a precious, precious thing.” His bottom lip trembled before he regained control over his emotions. When he pulled away, he beamed back at her. He hoped that she didn’t understand that yet, but he knew that she would one day.

One day, she would look back to this moment and he hopes that she would find something to smile at.

“...Izu-nii?”

“Eri,” he said, hoping that it didn’t sound like farewell, “I love you, okay?”

He knocked her out.

It would be nice if she forgot everything and only had good things. It would be nice if they had more time together. It would be really, super-duper, amazingly awesome, if they all made it out of this together.

He looked to his left, and just as predicted, Kurogiri had opened the portal.

All Midoriya Izuku has ever wanted was to be a hero. He wanted to protect people with a smile on his face.

Nowhere in that did anyone say that he would have to say goodbye in such a roundabout way.

“Let’s go then,” he said.

### To Be A Hero

“… My name is Midoriya Izuku,” the young hero-in-training said slowly. A warm smile stretched across his face, the personification of kindness, “and I want to be a hero that saves people with a smile, like All Might.”

He pulled his fists up, steading into a battle stance and All For One vibrated in his joy.

“So, I’m here to save you, whether you like it or not.”

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### To be removed: Dabi - Off Ass

“Well uh, duh,” Kurono sighed, “Dabi doesn’t have loyalties. I’m pretty sure he doesn’t even know what it means.”

Izuku shot him a look, and the older man gave him a small smile.

“That’s why, I don’t think we have anything to worry about. If Dabi… Whatever he wants, I’m sure that it’s because of you.”

“He became a villain because of me?”

“...Yeah,” Kurono said, “To be honest, I think I understand.”

“What?”

Kurono’s smile was gentle, but it didn’t quite reach his eyes.

“I… You always talk about being a hero, and everything you do speaks for that. And then, you kept getting caught up in all those crazy things… So, I thought about it,” he said, keeping a steady eye and hands on cutting the apple in his hands, “I thought that… I could become a villain for you. I could infiltrate and destroy them from the inside out if it meant your safety and happiness.”

“...There’s nothing happy about that,” Izuku snapped back, “Do you even understand what you’re saying? There’s no chance at redemption for most of the Front right now, they’ve gone too far. I don’t… I don’t think that I can help Dabi, even if I stop him.”

Kurono pulled his eyes from the apple, and a watery laugh bubbled out from his lips.

“I’m a little jealous,” he admitted, quietly, but before Midoriya prompt him any further, continued on. “Izuku, for guys like us… when we’re saved, it’s not that you stopped us from dying, but you give us reason to live. It’s like, our entire being is rewired and rewritten, and at the center of it is you.”

Izuku stared at him, his mouth slackening The words, the facts, the implications, kicked his brain into a higher gear and Kurono’s gaze turned warmer at the sight of how hard Izuku was trying to process this.

“But… But that’s not-”

“I know that it’s not what you want. And I know that’s not what Inko-kaa-sama wants either. But… we can’t help it.”

Kurono placed the last of the cut apples, shaped like bunnies, onto the plate. He gave that same watery laugh, but sounded like he was going to shatter over the plate.

“That’s what it means to save scum like us.”

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“...In all honesty?” Setsuno hummed as he fiddled with the game console he was playing with Izuku in the hospital room, “I think I would have probably done the same thing.”

Izuku’s fingers stilled, and he died in game.

“Awwww what a shame-”

“What do you mean?”

Setsuno blinked back at him and then smiled, “Ah, sorry, I wasn’t supposed to let that slip-”

Lightning fast, Izuku’s hand shot out to grab Setsuno’s shirt by the collar and yanked him forward so that the other man had no choice but to watch something dark pass through his eyes. The sight of it sent shivers down the blond’s back as he lost himself to fear.

“...Explain.”

“Izuku,” he said, like he hadn’t lose his breath and his heartbeat wasn’t racing as he managed a small smile, “...If you want me to die, I’ll do it. If you want me to steal, lie, cheat, I would do it for you. If you want me to live, if you want me to die, whatever it is that you want, I’d do it.”

Izuku’s grip loosened, and he dropped his gaze, guilty.

“If you want me to go and chase Dabi, join their side to tear them down from the inside like he is, I will do it.”

“...But you’ll ask?”

Setsuno’s smile became sweet, like he was looking at something impossibly beautiful, “I don’t want to leave your side. My ultimate goal, the absolute proof that I have lived, rests in your future with Chisaki.”

Izuku’s eyes widened, and he shook his head. “You and Kurono are all saying the same thing! That’s not what I wanted! That’s not why I helped you that day!”

The blond laughed, as though this whole thing was funny.

“You see, Izuku? That’s the thing, you think that you only helped me that day.” he shook his head, “You oculdn’t be further from the truth, you know?”

He leaned in close, knocking their foreheads together as he took Izuku’s hand into his and squeezed it tightly. His hand still engulfed it, and he swears that he could feel the warmth of Izuku’s fingers permeate right through him.

“All these years of your patience and kindness, I will repay with selfishness,” he said, “I’m sorry, but please, please don’t send me away. Please let me stay.”

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Izuku rested against his pillow.

“You knew, didn’t you?” he asked quietly.

Chisaki didn’t look up from his book, “Yeah.”

“That… that Dabi left because he thought this was the best way to pay us back and that any one of them would have done the same, that… that they think they owe us?”

“Yeah. I figured.”

“You-”

“What do you think we should do? Abandon them? Tell them how to live? It’s fine, isn’t it? They’re alive, they’re happy, they’re doing what they want to do. Just because they’re saved and they don’t commit crimes doesn’t mean that they’re not scum. They’re still scum. And for scum, your pretty laws and logic won’t work.”

His golden eyes met Izuku’s and pinned him down.

“We saved them. We took them in. We need to take responsibility for that.”

Izuku stared at him before he looked down to his lap. Chisaki leaned back in his chair, closing the book and gave a sigh.

“Are you going to cry?”

“...No.”

“Good, I hate it when you cry.”

Izuku gave a huff, a smile pulling on his lips. He looked up to meet Chisaki’s gaze and sighed back.

“...This… I can’t belive-”

“Izuku. Before you finish that sentence, do you regret saving them?”

The young man stared back and shook his head.

“Do you still wanna be a hero? And keep saving people who might become villains one day?”

“...Yeah.”

Chisaki’s shoulders relaxed and something softer entered his eyes.

“Then, you better go save him again.”

Izuku straightened, his eyes watering again, and Chisaki snorted. He pulled his hand out of his glove as he leaned in. He cradled Izuku’s head in his hand, using his thumb to wipe at a stray tear, and used his other hand to pull his mask down to his chin. He leaned in even closer, pressing his lips to Izuku’s forehead, then to each of his eyelids, rubbed their noses together, and then gave him a chaste kiss on the lips.

“I love you,” he said. “Please return to me.”

“Always,” Izuku murmured back against his lips, “I love you, too”

Chisaki rested their foreheads together for a moment, before fully pulling back.