Summary: where Midoriya Izuku goes back to his OG world, and Midoriya Deku wakes up in a breaking body and surrounded by a lot of people he doesn't know. But if his life was so perfect and great, why did he have these new scars and why did he try to kill himself?

### **No Choice**

...

He reached out for the person that looked just like him. Someone was yelling, someone was always yelling, but their hands touched and…

### **Waking up**

Midoriya Deku, as far as he was concerned, just wanted to die. He never wanted to open his eyes again. He was sick of living. What little joy he could scrape together was always desecrated by the end of the day. At that point, wasn't this just the better option?

No one would miss him. No one would notice. If someone did, it would be the person that found his body. Please, he thought, he didn't want to be here anymore. He didn't want to do this anymore.

And then, he woke up.

His eyes opened, and he understood. He was being forced to live, and someone was looking down at him and laughing. Why else would they go out of their way to do this?

"...Deku? Are you awake?"

He blinked and turned his attention to a man with light-blue hair sitting next to him.

"You idiot! What the hell were you thinking?! You-"

The sight of a man yelling brought back unpleasant memories, and as a result, the heart monitor in the room went wild.

Please, Midoriya begged, please just let him rest. No yelling needed. Just. Rest.

A squadron of nurses came in, along with a tall man with spiky white hair, who grabbed the man who was yelling at him and dragged him out. Midoriya was puzzled, why were they helping him? Why did they do that? It was almost as if they were there to help Midoriya.

That scared him. Why would people help him?

No way. Please.

The nurse gave him something-and he was alluded to rest.

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"Midoriya-kun?"

He jerked, his body tense like a drawn bowstring. A nurse.

Her gaze was gentle and pitying. He hated it. If she really felt pity, she should get him a wheelchair and roll him off the roof of the hospital. Please.

"Y-Yes," he said, his voice hoarse and scratchy.

"You are in the General Hospital," she explained slowly. "You were in an accident. What is the last thing you remember?"

I tried to kill myself again, he thought. But he can't say that, he's tried that, and no one cared then. All that happened was that someone called his dad and left a message and he got a new scar on his arm. If no one was going to help someone live, then why were they stopping him from dying?

"...Summer vacation just started and I went... back to grab a textbook," he said, vague but as accurate as he could get. He didn't tell him that he actually went back to die, but they didn't need to know. And this was more believable, without causing more work for them. The faster he left, the faster he could try again.

What was the accident? That he slipped on the guardrail when he should have pitched himself over it? That he didn't land flat on his head and splatter like a tomato? Was it really an accident if that was what he wanted?

The only accident here was that he was still alive, wasn't it?

"Oh dear, I was afraid of this," the nurse said. She took a deep breath, "I think you were hit harder than we thought. It's currently November."

"N-November?"

She pulled out her phone to show him the date.

But what Midoriya couldn't help but notice wasn't the month and date. It was the year. The world slowed down around him as he tried to stomach this notion. November, three years from the last thing he remembered.

Somehow, the only coherent thought he could make at that time was the shock that he was still alive, three years later.

### Touya **- not a relative**

Every once in a while, Touya really considered burning the entire world down. This was one of those days.

"What... what?"

"I... I'm really sorry." He must have looked especially pathetic or something, because the woman at the reception looked at him pityingly, "But unfortunately, we cannot allow any non-relatives to come in and meet with him. We are truly sorry for the inconvenience that it caused. One of the nurses on-call took it upon herself to send a text to every single person in his phonebook because we could not find a familial unit to make his medical decisions."

"But," he doesn't have anyone related to him right now, he didn't say. He didn't know shit about Midoriya's family, even though his own folks love him more than their actual kids. Could they count instead? From the sounds of it, Midoriya didn't even have a "dad" or "mom" registered on his phone. He remembered, still, Midoriya smacking him and Shimura so he could get to the register with their smartphones and his brick-of-a-phone.

(“It can call, text, and has a camera.”)

"I'm sorry sir, what did you say your relation to the patient was?"

Okay, one, his name was Midoriya Deku. And two, his nickname was Izuku. And three, they were...

"...We're..." Touya said, because he didn't know what else to call their relationship.

He was the piece of trash that didn't know he was recyclable until Midoriya found him in the rain that one day. He was the pathogen that made his home inside someone else's ruined apartment. Midoriya smiled like a saint as he gave him curry that was too spicy to be eaten. Midoriya magically knew what kind of bullshit he faced during the day by the books that Touya chose to read, and Touya could tell what Midoriya's mood was based off the type of ice cream he wanted to eat.

What did you call that?

Of course, he had to say something. They weren't strangers. They weren't quite friends. He could lie, this lady wouldn't know and she doesn't look like she would care, but he didn't want to lie about Midoriya. The question would be easier if she asked him what he wanted to be with him. Then, he could tell her about his eight year plan that involved a priest and a church and a ring neither of them could afford and an eternity to attend book fairs together.

"We're roommates."

His boss was right, he really needed to up his customer-service game. That way, he would know how to act with other human beings and make it go his way.

Why couldn't he have been born an incorrigible piece of shit like Hawks?

She pursed his lips, and he could feel his hopes fade.

"Midoriya's family life is complicated. I can vouch for this man, and will take responsibility," a voice from behind came out, and Touya could fucking kiss Toyomitsu and that stupid grin on his face. "He's the main adult that will be in charge of Midoriya when he's released."

And well, when the police officer said that he would take responsibility, the nurse gave in with a sigh.

"You know, this is really against protocol but..." she leaned back, to get out of her seat, "But that young boy saved a friend of mine's sister a little while back," she said, "but we couldn't get in contact with anyone to come in for him." She bowed deeply, "Please, there is a limit to what we can do, so please let us know if we can help, off the record."

He's allowed access.

"...Thank you," he said quietly to Toyomitsu.

"Well, no matter how much I don't like you," Toyomitsu said with an easy smile, "It's probably better if you're there."

And by that, he meant that they didn't catch the suspect, have little to no information about him, Midoriya wasn’t helping the investigation, and don't know if someone would be crazy enough to break into a hospital to finish the job. Knowing Midoriya and the type of people he attracted, it was more likely than not.

No, wait, this was Midoriya. He would fucking wreck himself, but the hospital wouldn't see a single yen in damages.

Touya could feel his stress manifesting into a rock in his gut.

"Has he woken up?"

Toyomitsu paused at the door, and shook his head.

"So, what... happened?"

That made the man turn around. He looked left and then right, double checking that no one was nearby and leaned in close.

"Someone gunned him down," he said quietly, "and then he fell into the bay. Eyewitnesses were construction workers who heard the gunfire and called the police."

The younger man took a slow breath, remembering to get oxygen to his brain. A gun? In Japan?

"And that was yesterday. Tsukauchi got the okay to get our departments together. So," Toyomitsu motioned at himself, "here we are."

"...Any leads?"

Toyomitsu's eyes flashed. He placed his hand on Touya's shoulder.

"None that I'm going to tell you."

Which, okay, fine. That made sense. He didn't like it, but it made sense.

"Stay by his side."

He batted the hand off of him. Like he would do anything else.

"Where's Shigaraki?"

"Oh his way."

"And Hawks?"

"Work. He's wrapping up. We... We were supposed to have dinner together tonight. I was on dinner duty. There was a sale on pork, so we were… we were going to make some katsudon."

"Izuku is a tough kid," Toyomitsu said, his eyes gentle with something that Touya didn’t want. "He just forgets his limits sometimes."

Touya glared at the blond.

"That's why, when he wakes up, we gotta make sure someone's next to him. To remind him that he got those limits."

And that's why Touya was allowed in, he assumed. He was going to play that figure so that they could focus on the investigations. Fucking christ, what a wreckage this whole thing was.

"We should just lock him up somewhere," Touya said.

Toyomitsu gave a dry laugh, "You really think he won't find trouble there?"

He rubbed his temples. This whole thing would be too damn easy if that was all it took to stop this.

-

Touya took a step outside for a fucking moment, and was sprinting back to the room when he heard Shigaraki yelling.

Why did he had to wake up as soon as he walked out?

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"O... One more time?"

"Clean out your damn ears," Akakuro snapped out, his last nerves fraying. "How many times do we have to fucking explain it? He lost his memories of the last three years. Right now, to him, you and I and everyone here are all just strangers."

It was amazing how his entire mental stability relied on someone else's memories.

### **Deku, not Izuku**

He had wondered, and never asked, about Midoriya before he picked him up. He always figured that there had to be something fundamentally different about Midoriya, who lived by himself in an apartment for four, surrounded by books. Midoriya, who had cigarette burns lining his arms but didn’t flinch away from fire, sat in front of him.

A Midoriya he never met before. A Midoriya from a time before he was found in the rain. A Midoriya from when his scars were fresher.

That Midoriya stared at him, confused and wary as he came in.

“Excuse me,” Touya said, taking the seat next to him. Blue eyes stared at him, taking in his expression and his features, and when Midoriya looked away first, felt like he lost something precious. He didn’t know. There was no way he knew. But once upon a time, Touya was the one who had a hard time maintaining eye contact. “...You don’t remember me, do you?”

The young man fisted the blanket in his hand, a white-knuckled grip as he shook his head.

“N-no,” he said quietly, “I… Do I owe you money?”

The question was so sudden and unexpected that Touya couldn’t help but laugh. It was a small laugh, as he covered his mouth and his shoulders shook. The young man frowned, his eyebrows furrowed but not nearly as scared, and Touya relaxed a little.

“Nah, we’re roommates,” he said. “You…” He tried to find the words for it. And after days and hours of mulling and wondering, finally found it when curious green eyes met his, “...saved my life. Like a hero.”

“...Huh?”

“You pulled me out of my lowest moment, and saved my life. I’ve been living with you since I had no other place to go.”

That look on Midoriya’s face, followed and confused and a little worried that he was talking to some mentally deranged guy-Touya’s certain that he looked at Midoriya like that too. And, now it just felt a little lonely.

Did Midoriya, when people look at him like that, also felt like this? He hoped not. He really, really hoped not. He didn’t know how he could handle it, if he ever made Midoriya feel lonely.

“How selfish,” he said.

Touya’s breath caught in his throat.

“Ah, sorry, that was rude,” Midoriya’s hand came up to his mouth, covering it.

And while Touya rolled the words in his head, because yes, it was selfish, Midoriya was a selfish guy and he-

"So we're... roommates?"Midoriya continued, a little less cautious. “Uhm…” he eyed him.

Touya felt his heart slip underneath into a blender and get crushed.

"Touya,” he said, the way he never got to before, “You… you used to call me Dabi.”

“...Why?”

A wry grin twisted on his face. Midoriya’s eyes continued to dart from Touya’s face to his own hands. This time, it looked like head a hard time looking at Touya.

“Guess we’ll never know.”

"Okay," he nodded slowly. "Uhm, I'm… I'm really sorry."

Touya paused, and with much more force than he intended to, asked, "...What?"

Midoriya flinched backwards and Touya pretended that he didn’t feel anything, "Because... you just look really sad. And I... I thought that maybe I had forgotten something important."

And Touya was ready to leave it all behind, actually.

Before this moment, he was prepared to just leave. He was ready to and he was preparing his heart to make the change. It would be the biggest change in his life since Midoriya found him on the side of the road. He'll go bum off of Akakuro until he scores an apartment or something. He had (really vague) plans.

But his resolve crumpled, because Midoriya was still Midoriya, through and through. One look at those green eyes, confused and concerned, and Touya knew that someone would have to kill him before he chose to leave Midoriya's side.

Once upon a time, he hated his mom for never leaving his dad. As it turned out, he took more after her than him.

"...Nothing you can't relearn," Touya said.

He paused. He came here for a reason. Since Shimura left after his initial outburst, and Takami was...doing whatever it was that he did when Midoriya didn’t give him attention, he was left to explain things. From the sounds of it, none of the officers in uniform have gotten any positive feedback either. None of them wanted to subject any of the kids to this, when they didn’t really get it either, and it wasn’t like Midoriya had a great web of adult role-models.

Well, reality was something else. In reality, Touya just didn’t want to give this position up to anyone else. He had, selfishly and foolishly, thought that he could be special if he reappeared in Midoriya’s life as this figure but it was painful. It was…

"It'll take some time to get used to it, but it'll be fine. Just ask if you don't know something, and say something."

"Okay," Midoriya said, bobbing his head.

They sat in silence for a few more seconds.

"Well? Aren't you going to ask anything?" he asked, losing his patience.

"Eh? Oh uh..." green eyes looked at him warily before he looked back at his hands instead. "You uhm... You didn't look like you wanted to be asked anything."

"I said it was fine."

Midoriya balled his blanket in his hands.

"But saying something is fine doesn't mean it is," he said. "I don't... wanna be someone who uhm... makes people not fine because it's... it's convenient for me."

And Touya truly and honestly wished that, if he was going to forget everything between them anyways, Midoriya would have also forgotten his kindness. If Midoriya could just forget Dabi and forget their early morning dinners and painful hiking trips, why couldn't he also forget courtesy? How come forgetting the people you lived with was easy, but placing the comforts of strangers before your own was so hard?

"You're a nutjob," Touya blurted out. "A fucking crazy, disgustingly nice guy."

Where his Midoriya would have laughed at the words and sheepishly rubbed the back of his head, the Midoriya in front of him flinched backwards and tensed like he was waiting for Touya to hurt him in every and all ways available to him.

It made the world feel achingly small. It made him feel like his body was too small.

Midoriya might have forgotten, but Dabi felt like he was the one who lost.

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“How are you?”

“He’s Midoriya,” Touya said as he waited for the vending machine to drop his drink. “Through and through.”

It thunk’d.

Tsukauchi’s hand came to his shoulder as he bent down to take the drink out and handed it to Touya. Right when he reached to take it, Tsukauchi squeezed his shoulder again.

“I asked how you were doing.”

Touya looked Tsukauchi straight in the eyes for a second, before he dropped his gaze.

“He doesn’t know who I am.”

Tsukauchi closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and waited to meet Touya's eyes again. It was the way professionals cried on the job, and Touya wouldn't have ever known that until he met Midoriya.

“I finally got to tell him that my name was Touya.”

Talking about it, it felt like he was distant from the entire ordeal. This wasn’t actually happening to him. This was another person’s problem. This wasn’t-

“I didn’t realize that it was so easy to forget someone-”

-this wasn’t real- Midoriya didn’t forget that time Touya carried him down the side of a mountain and he didn’t forget that time he almost burned all the books in their apartment and he didn’t forget that it was their apartment and-

“-but I guess I never had something I didn’t want to forget before-”

-like a framed photo, he could see Midoriya’s grin stretching from ear to ear as he lifted the latest JUMP issue with his favorite shounen-hero plastered across the front-

“-I don’t get it-”

-because Midoriya eyed him warily, like store clerks who thought that he was going to shoplift and cause trouble, and he’s never seen Midoriya look at anyone like that before-

“-Dabi,” Tsuakuchi said, because Dabi would have never met this man if it wasn’t for Midoriya, wouldn’t have ever had cops around his dining room table, all groaning about how spicy Midoriya’s damn curry was, “you don’t owe him anything.”

His world stopped, and for a brief second, Touya almost lost all control over his fire. The green of Midoriya's eyes, as haunting as they were kind, stopped him.

“What did you say?”

“You don’t owe him anything. He doesn’t owe you anything. The guy who helped you is no longer here. The guy you want to help isn’t him.”

Does memory make the man? Does memory make their relationship? Touya’s hand shot out, grabbing Tsukauchi by the front of his collar.

“You-”

“Dabi, look at yourself,” Tsukauchi said. “Because the Midoriya Izuku-kun that I knew, that I have lost too, would have never wanted you to look like that!” he shouted back. “Think hard, Dabi! Because if you’re going to hang around him looking for a ghost-then you’re not helping him and you aren’t helping yourself!”

The fight drained out of Touya, like someone pouring water over a campfire. It sizzled out without a fight.

“...Then what am I supposed to do?” he asked with the remaining embers.

“...What do you want to do?”

A few years ago, this question was easy. He wanted to make a mess of things. He wanted to hurt the world that had hurt him. A few years ago, he imagined burning the whole world down as he drowned in the rain. A few years ago, he would never think that what he wanted could be measured into a few words.

“I want to make new memories with him.”

Tsukauchi’s hands squeezed his shoulders.

“Okay, okay,” he nodded. “We can start there.”

### Touya & Deku - books

"That one!" Midoriya said, his eyes shining as he reached for the book in front of Touya. His finger stopped right before he touched the spine of it, eyes shining as he tried to yell while whispering. He leaned right next to the man as a result, in his space as the two crouched in front of the stack of books. "I just love it so much! The main character in this one is this failure of a pizza delivery guy and he goes back in time to stop a serial killer. But he's in his fourth-grade body! It's such a timeless story!"

Touya’s eyes were wide, and Midoriya turned to him. Seeing his expression, the young man blinked. He jerked backwards, realizing that he was probably too close, and Touya snagged his arm, carefully stabilizing him. The young man paled, before his expression turned to curiosity, as though he couldn't understand that someone would touch him without inflicting pain.

Smooth and confident, without once yelling that he would never touch Midoriya with the intention of hurting him, Touya nodded.

"I liked it too. Do you have any other recommendations?"

Smooth it over. Pretend he didn't see it. Some pains healed because they didn't let it sink in. Some pains healed with normalcy. Perhaps, if Touya continued to treat Midoriya like a normal human being, Midoriya will remember that he was a normal human being. He doesn't remember how Midoriya coaxed him out of his shell, but he did remember reading and reading and reading.

"The other things by this author are super interesting, if you like crime-mixed with some fantasy elements. His new series is about a pair of twins who are abused at home, but only one of them dies. It's... It might be finished by now, but when I read the pilot it was so just interesting!" he said, his excitement running in full force.

Oh thank god, Touya thought. He nodded along, a smile on his face as he made a mental note to take a detour on the way back from work and grab a copy about the books that Midoriya was talking about.

The world couldn't take that smile from him after all. He would do his best on this end to protect it.

### **help**

"Wait, you're going to help her?"

Midoriya turned back, surprised and confused all in one, "Uh... yes?" he said.

"Even though you don't know her? This might come back to bite you in the ass one day."

He stared for a moment longer and then nodded, "Yeah, that's true."

"You're just going to...."

Midoriya looked from him to the old lady trying to bag her groceries and then back.

"Do I need a reason to?"

And this, 'pretend you don't know Midoriya because Midoriya doesn't remember you' would have been so much easier if Midoriya wasn't Midoriya at his core.

Instead, he can't leave and he's always in pain.

### Tomura v Deku

But Midoriya did not know how to do the dishes. He didn't know how to run the laundry machine. He didn't put away his stuff when he was done- he didn't really put anything away, just made another stack of his things right next to him. He didn't put his clothes away, and he didn't put them in the hampers (separated by color and type) when he was done wearing them.

At first, Shimura was pissed. How could he just leave his shit around everywhere? If he needed help, he should have just said something. If he didn't understand, then he should have asked.

And at the end of his long-winded yell, he took one look at the pale-faced Midoriya and felt sick. It just wasn't fair. All Midoriya needed to do was give him that look, and even though Shigaraki didn't do anything wrong, he's the one that felt guilty.

He grinded his teeth down, and Midoriya kept his eyes on the ground. His hands clenched his own shirt tightly, balling it up into a white-knuckled grip.

"...I didn't mean to yell like that," Shimura grinded out.

Midoriya flinched at his words, but didn't say anything.

"Well? Say something!"

"S-sorry," Midoriya said, his voice quiet like a mouse.

"Not that!"

"Hey!" there was a flutter and Takami was in front of him. "Hey, chill." A little further away, Touya grabbed Midoriya's wrist and tugged him towards the door, dressed in a light jacket as he passed a sweater to Midoriya and guided him out the door.

This far away, his ears ringing from his own voice, Shimura could still hear Touya saying that Shimura was just grumpy because he had eaten all of his pudding so they were going to go get some more pudding and let him calm down. And Midoriya's stiff body followed him hesitantly, and that wave of rage kept crashing with his heartache inside of him.

And this scene.

This scene felt so damn familiar. Not in the sense that he and Midoriya used to fight like this (one side yelling, the other side blankly staring forward) but something a little further back. Back when he didn't understand why his father was always so upset and why his sister pulled him to the side because it wasn't his fault that his dad was angry, it was just bad circumstances.

"Hey, come on," Takami said, voice quiet as golden eyes (unforgiving eyes because the people closest to Midoriya were always ready to fight someone to the death for him). "In case you forgot, this is Midoriya's first time rooming with someone," the blond said. His voice was gentle, his words were from, and his eyes promised pain.

The words suckered-punched him in the gut.

Then what, that 13 year-old Midoriya who found him outside like discarded trash knew how to be a good roommate? Looking at the Midoriya in front of him, he could see where his Midoriya came from. He could see him and it hurt. The distance between them widened everyday. His feelings twisted into knots. The people that he thought were his were suddenly torn from his hands. The memories that he treasured closest to his heart had already begun to rot away as every smile on Midoriya's face was starting to get replaced by that fearful expression instead.

He couldn't remember how his dad smiled. He couldn't remember if his dad smiled. Would that be the same for Midoriya? Would he hear his name and never think about 'Shigaraki' who forgot what loneliness meant, and instead see 'Shimura' who was always angry?

He couldn't believe it.

He became his dad.

"...Shimura?"

"What should I do so I don't become my dad?"

Takami stared at him for a long moment. The only indication that Shimura had that he heard him was the fact that his easy smile slid off his face. Sharp eyes focused on his face with an intensity that made Shimura wonder if his face would melt off.

"...Can't say, I never met him," Takami replied back. "But, if you have an idea on what you don't want to be, then don't you have an idea on what you do what to do?"

Immediately, he saw Midoriya's face, eyes bright when they took out their first batch of chocolate chip cookies out of the oven. He remembered burning their tongues because they couldn't wait long enough to taste-test them. He remembered the gooey insides, the melted chocolate dripping on their fingers, and he remembered it so fondly and so vividly, that he didn't even realize that he was smiling until Takami gave him an exasperated smile-like he didn't have a gallery of memories he used to share with Midoriya that didn't make him giggle.

"You get it?"

"Yeah, shut up," Shimura said, without any of the anger and any of the bite he had two minutes ago. "And go buy some chocolate chips."

"Huh?"

-

"So we're going to make chocolate chip cookies," he announced when everyone returned.

"...What?" Dabi said.

"This was your conclusion?" Takami whispered out.

Shimura took a deep breath, fought off the oncoming flush and looked straight to Midoriya.

"Yes, I ... I want to make cookies with you," he said. "So will you," he made a motion to the kitchen, "please just come with me? Please?"

His teeth grinded down so hard, his jaw hurt.

But Midoriya stood up, eyes wide and still a little wary, but he came.

"...Thank you," Shimura whispered out, feeling something dislodge in his heart.

He looked to the other two.

"C'mon."

"Wait, us too?"

Takami blinked, pointing at himself.

"If you don't help, you're not eating it."

"But I bought the chocolates!" he said, gaping.

"Yeah, with my money. Now, haul ass."

And grumbling, the other two joined him in the kitchen.

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"...Why'd you agree?" Shimura asked quietly. "I wasn't... nice."

"...I think you get angry," Midoriya said, "But you're not a bad person."

"...Then, what's a bad person?" Touya asked.

Midoriya's hand stilled. He worked his jaw. Hopelessly, he looked up at Touya like he was suddenly asked to navigate through a mountain with a blindfold. "Someone who's... bad?" he tried.

The others started to chuckle.

"God, Dabi, how'd you miss that?" Shigaraki jabbed out good-heartedly.

“Geez, Dabi, it wasn’t a trick question.”

And even though there was a grin on his face, Touya snorted back.

### The Gym - MuscularMido

"I-I'm sorry, I don't-"

The huge blond in front of him stared at him for a moment before he took a step back and swung at Midoriya. The young man gasped, but jerked to the side, and brought his arm up to guard against the hit.

Somehow, he could see with glaring precision that he could grab this tree-trunk of an arm and swing himself over it to land a hard kick to the blond's chin. It would end the fight, and the thought was familiar and foreign all in one.

"You don't forget reflex," the blond said, stepping back.

His grin, somehow, grew even bigger.

"You already paid for the year-long membership. Don't let it go to waste."

He handed a flyer to Midoriya, and this time, Midoriya took it.

The invitation to go to a boxing gym was terrifying, and left him with a morbid sense of curiosity. His hand trembled, eyes tracing the gaudily colored flyer, and wondered (not for the first time) if this really was his body.

### Too Much Skin- [ Hawks ]

In reality, yes, there were plenty of things that Midoriya never told them. But in all honesty, Takami figured that the others knew, but he didn’t know. Like, the problem with being the latecomer and all, he didn’t know and no one really told him.

Midoriya stepped out of the shower in a t-shirt and shorts. And Takami had never seen him in t-shirts and shorts. In the heat of the summer with their broken A/C or the time their water-pipe burst and they had to bum off of Yamada and the others, Midoriya never showed any more skin than absolutely necessary.

And well, of course, he slipped up every once in a while. Takami had seen the mess of healing scars, some fresher than others, that lined his wrists and ankles. There were some unsavory gifts on his neck and one behind his left ear. The blond never doubted that Midoriya had a rough life.

He had to, why else would he return to an apartment filled with adults that weren’t related to each other except for the fact that they had hit the end of the wire?

But words like ‘troubled childhood’ and ‘bullied’ floated around in his head but he didn’t think that it could accurately describe what he had seen. Words, profane words, were etched into the skin of his arms and calves. The thin, white t-shirt did little to prevent his eyes from seeing the ridges from where skin healed in a mess.

Like how some people may decorate Christmas trees, with strange ornaments and something special on every branch, Midoriya’s body was decorated in scars of all variety. Ranging from long jagged ones that ran from under his sleeve to his wrist, to words carved in his skin, to small circles-

“...The bath’s open, Takami-san.”

His head snapped up, and before, where Midoriya wore an undershirt so that his shirts weren’t as see-through and kept a towel across his neck, he could see a scar, as thick as Takami’s fist, from his neck and over his collarbone and down under his shirt.

“...It’s from a hot iron,” Midoriya said.

“W-wha?”

“It doesn’t hurt anymore,” the young man replied back. “You don’t have to look so sad.”

“I-I-”

The young man pulled his towel off his head and wrapped it around his neck.

“I’m sorry. With the way everyone was, I … I didn’t think that it would scare you.”

The blond blinked back, still working on the fact that Midoriya once had a hot iron to the front of his chest, but taught Shimura how to iron their clothes. He opened his mouth uselessly, and as Midoriya's words registered, he clicked it shut. He was in a state of disbelief, and the conflicting emotions clashed unfavorably.

“I… I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to stare,” Takami blurted out, figuring he needed to stare somewhere.

“No need,” Midoriya chirped back, “People stare at the strange.”

And maybe, the way Takami had his wings and Shimura disintegrated things and Touya burned, Midoriya thought that his scars were his unique feature. Being able to withstand hellish and brutal moments, and come out of it, smiling like he’s never known hurt, was Midoriya’s quirk.

His quirk was strength.

“It’s not strange,” the blond said. “It’s not, not like that,” he tried. He could flirt with just about anyone to get what he wanted, but now that he was faced with someone who once held him through a thunderstorm, he lost his demeanor.

“Takami-san. The bath’s open. Go ahead.”

“I-right,” and Takami would have taken the opportunity to leave this behind him. And if the blond never met Midoriya, he would have gone with it. He would have taken the chance to abandon this painful and awkward conversation and run away.

If he had never met Midoriya. If he had forgotten Midoriya.

“But you know, Midoriya,” he said, before he left and his courage deserted him, “You didn’t deserve it.”

“...You don’t even know what happened.”

“You didn’t deserve it.”

Midoriya was barely 15 when they first met. From what Shimura once mentioned, they met when Midoriya was in middle school. Meaning, in the first 11-13 years of his life, he was inflicted with this.

And Takami didn’t think that Midoriya, who would hike a city and a half away to deliver a grandmother’s letter to her son, who ran into a burning apartment to let all the occupants know to evacuate, who got slack-jawed when he saw the view at the top of the mountains no matter how many times they saw it, could ever deserve this. He wished that these were the things that Midoriya forgot. That he would let the memories of these painful scars disappear and remember all the times they ate ice cream at the top of the monkey bars instead.

“Takami-san-”

“You’re right. I don’t know everything about you, but I know that,” he said. He stepped forward to Midoriya, “You don’t remember me and the last few years, but that’s fine. You’re still you. Memories and stuff like that, we can make again, but this, this I won’t let you think that any longer.”

The young man took a step back, his eyes turning wary and Takami stopped. Understanding that they were still strangers, he took a step back.

“I will say it as many times as I need to, until you learn and believe it, too,” he said. The words that he always wanted to say came bubbling up, “Midoriya, I am so incredibly happy that you are here, with me, now. Thanks for holding on for so long.”

Green eyes widened, it might have been funny at any other moment, and he hoped that one day, in the future, Midoriya will remember this moment. He would remember Takami’s wide grin and earnest words, and think of Hawks.

The same way Hawks could still see Midoriya’s wide grin when the lightning flashed, and thought that heroes could look reliable even with a split lip and black eye.

He grinned, and headed into the shower to wash this feeling of uselessness off his skin, and wonder again how Midoriya ever did this.

### Stain - Not letting go

“Ah, sorry, lemme-”

Akakuro grabbed his wrist.

“Why are you sorry?”

“I-I just-I-”

“No, use your words. Take your time. Why are you sorry?”

“I’m sorry that I-it’s ugly, I didn’t mean to-”

“I,” Akakuro stopped and took a deep breath. “If you’re apologizing for your scars, then don’t.”

Midoriya was stiff under his grasp, but Akakuro didn’t want to let him go. He felt like, everytime he let him go, Midoriya went somewhere even further. One day, he won’t be able to anchor back to him. It scared him, because he knew that one day, Midoriya would leave. He would go off, to do what he did and it wouldn’t be with him. At that point, when he stopped being his Stain, he wouldn’t have him anymore.

But not now.

“Don’t apologize for something you overcame.”

And Midoriya’s lips pulled back, baring his teeth as he pulled at his wrist, “Why-why does everyone say that? You don’t know why I have these! You don’t know how long I spent waiting for someone to notice that there was-there were all those people in that room but no one did! No one noticed and I had to-I had do it myself- and I just-”

Midoriya’s eyes welled with tears, and that was fine. Akakuro was here.

“Overcame? Don’t say it like I wanted to survive! Don’t say it like I didn’t want to die! Don’t- I didn’t know what to do…” His shoulder trembled. “I didn’t want to be alive. I don’t want to be alive. And everyone looks at me like I should be more but I don’t know who that was and I don’t remember who anyone is but they-they keep looking at me like I should just know things! I feel like I’m just-just waiting for everyone to realize that I’m not that person and then they’ll just leave me anyways.”

His knees turned weak, and Akakuro grabbed his other arm. Slowly, he helped the young man down to the floor, where he kneeled down in front of him.

“I don’t know. Everyone talks about me like I’m some… some superhero but I couldn’t even save myself.”

Akakuro wasn’t a hero.

If he was, he might have said something grand and amazing. He would have said something inspiring and Midoriya would have believed him. But he didn’t have that. He wasn’t Midoriya, who had infinite kindness and forgiveness packed away into that small body of his. He saw flashes of anger cloud his vision whenever he caught any glimpse of Midoriya's scars. The thoughts haunted him and it made his fingers tremble. In the years between the time of injury and meeting Akakuro, Midoriya had become the consistent figure that he remembered him. He might have needed it and appreciated it at the time, but right now, that unbridled anger sat under his skin. Right now, he needed to place his anger away and focus on what mattered to him.

And what mattered was...

“You’re right. I spoke callously,” he said. He released him. “I don’t know. The same way you don’t know about me either.”

Midoriya looked up at him, eyes wide.

“When we met, I was trying to kill myself. My life was… awful, and all I could think about was jumping off a bridge,” he said. It was weird talking about it now. It felt incredibly distant from him, as though it didn’t happen to him at all, but someone that he knew. “I got on the ledge when you asked me if I wanted to talk about it.”

“...I did what?”

“Yeah, I felt the same way you feel,” Akakuro said. “You said that you didn’t want to be someone that pretended that you didn’t see something wrong when you did. Pretty heavy to hear from a middle schooler.”

He gave a lopsided smile to him, remembering his attempted suicide much more fondly than most people would. But Midoriya stopped shaking in his grip.

“But I’m an adult. And I’m a police officer. So it’s okay if you don’t want to tell me and talk to me. I get it,” he said.

He released him.

“Still, it doesn’t matter when or what or how long or anything like that. If you need me, I’ll come. It just can just be to sit in the quiet. Or I can take you someplace else. I became a cop because I wanted to be someone who could help make the world a better, safer place.”

Akakuro wasn’t going to leave him.

### shinsoDeku - future

"Yeah, my quirk lets me control people," Shinso said.

At this point, he thought that Midoriya, who didn't know who he was and didn't find him getting his ass handed to him in an alleyway, who flinched when someone yelled loudly, and didn't know the answers to the question in the textbook.

"Oh, that'll be super useful in the police force, huh? You could just make people say the truth."

And again, Shinsho was forced to face the possibility that some people were born with kindness, the same way other people were born with cruelty. The thought made his heart ache and his guts twist. Here he was, fucking testing to see what this-Midoriya's reaction was, and acting all shocked that it was nearly the same as his-Midoriya.

It was almost as though there was always just one Midoriya.

In times like this, Shinso really disappointed himself. Since Midoriya was never disappointed in him, and this Midoriya didn’t know him, it felt like he was even doubly disappointed in himself, because he knew that someone had to be.

"...I'm thinking about it," Shinso replied back. "Probably going to be a civil servant, and make sure that kids don't think that they're bad because the world tells them that they are."

"...Wow," he gaped back, eyes much brighter.

If Midoriya's eyes could be this bright from a time where his scars were fresh and bleeding, Shinso felt even more certain that he would never meet anyone as strong as Midoriya.

"That's so cool," he said. "I... I haven't really decided what I want to be yet."

He nodded back. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes. Trying to remember what he wanted from the world when he was in middle school, Shinso laughed. He remembered those days where it didn't matter if he came home or not, or if he went to school or not, since no one looked for him or talked to him or waited for him at the end of the school day to hit the arcade and get some ice cream before holing up in the library for several hours.

Everyday was the same, everyday there was no one and nothing. Future? What future?

Those lonely days should have spelled out a tragedy. He should have grown up the way everyone expected to, corrupt and awful with a long list of victims behind him. He could have. He should have.

"We have another year before we graduate," Shinso said. "By then, you might find something that you want to know more about."

To someone who was surrounded by people who knew what they wanted from life, it must be incredibly mocking to be told "you'll figure it out" or be told "there's no rush".

However, now that he was on the other side of that, he didn't know what else he could say.

"...But there's some things that you won't know unless you go and check yourself," he said. "I'm planning to visit some campuses in the next few weeks. Do you wanna come with me?"

"Like..." Midoriya straightened, his eyes brightening a little more, and he said, "like a trip?"

Shinso, through sheer willpower, managed to keep his cool. He didn't blush, and he didn't fluster. He somehow managed to keep a blank face as he slowly nodded back. Did he look cool? Did he look calm? It would be nice if Midoriya thought that he was cool and reliable.

"Yeah," he said. "Like a trip. For you and me. I'm planning on going out past Nagoya, so we might have to spend a night out there too."

He thought it was important to mention, since he figured Midoriya had people waiting for him every night and a job to inform.

Nowhere in that, did he ever think that a soft blush would cross Midoriya's face.

"L-like a sleepover?"

Shinso, unable to help himself anymore, covered his face with his hands and took a deep breath.

"W-Was that a stupid question?"

"No," Shinso said, shaking his head," And uh. Yeah, it's uh... like a sleepover," he said.

And well, when he was a kid (not that long ago, but it felt like it), and he didn't understand why no one's parents wanted their kids to spend time with him, he wanted to have sleepovers too.

"We can have normal sleepovers too," Shinso added. "You can come over to my place and we can read manga."

"Really?" Midoriya was practically climbing across his desk as he crawled over to Shinso. A thousand stars could fit in his eyes, and Shinso couldn't help but smile back at his excitement.

"And we'll pig out until dawn."

"Serious?" Kirishima asked, dropping his bag down on the table next to them. He turned back around, cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled out, "Guys, party at Shinso's! Bring a sleeping bag"

Shinso's face fell, while the others cheered in the background.

“Wow,” Midoriya breathed, “You’re so popular.”

### **h**

## TouyaDeku - Afterstory

What... What were couples supposed to do? Because, if Midoriya was being very honest, it felt like everything was the same as it was before. Just that sometimes, his eyes caught Touya's gaze and he felt like his face was on fire.