Summary: the one where Midoriya Izuku understands that this is his home now. (and regains all of Deku's memories)

### **You Make These Choices and Some Are Made For You**

A gunshot fired.

...A gunshot?

Midoriya slowly turned around, and he swore that he could see Deku-kun. A smoking gun in his hand, a smile on his face. Midoriya's hand came to where the bulletholes opened up holes in his chests, and his blood seeped out like flower petals blooming.

He choked.

Still, he thought that he understood what happened, because right when he crashed through the surface of the water, he swore that Deku-kun (it was Deku-kun, right? It had to be Deku-kun there was no one else) was smiling. It wasn’t this peaceful smile, but this cruel smile like he knew something Midoriya didn’t. That he had something that Midoriya didn’t.

It was vengeful and Midoriya didn’t know how to apologize to him. He didn’t know how to beg for forgiveness and strike a bargain so that they could switch.

The water swallowed him.

Midoriya’s eyes watched the moon blur in front of his eyes, and the water's surface rippled and fractured the gentle light. He could have sworn that Deku-kun was right there, and felt his eyes burn. There was no Deku-kun. No mocking smile. No shadow. No gut-feeling that someone was there.

There was no going back, was there? For either of them.

Tears escaped into the ocean, as though he cried enough to fill the entire world. An aching pain throbbed inside of him, and he wondered if this was the pain of dying. He couldn’t explain how, but he knew it for certain now. This was it for him.

No one would mourn Midoriya Deku, the same way no one would remember Midoriya Izuku.

### **Post-coma:**

Weary from sprinting for several hours straight, having someone empty a magazine into his chest, plunging into cold waters, and the exhaustion trailing the emotional trauma that came from realizing that he was home, Midoriya passed out and had to be hospitalized. Again.

He guessed that he was in much worse of a state than he thought, since he woke up hooked up to a bunch of different machines. The oxygen mask shouldn’t feel this familiar, but here he was. When he looked to the side and saw Shimura sleeping in the chair next to his bed, he didn’t feel surprised, and that’s how he knew that he had already replaced the home in his heart with the one he has been living in.

His eyes watered, because once upon a time, he would have been surprised to see anyone that wasn’t his mom. And now, he understood that he will never see her again. He would never eat her katsudon again. He would never get her warm hugs and worried lectures. He was stuck here, with different people who were waiting for him to wake up and get better.

A world without heroes and villains didn’t entail a world of peace and equality or anything, but Midoriya knew that they'd be okay.

“Izuku?” Shimura's voice was thick with emotion, red eyes rubbed raw and deep bags under his eyes.

Midoriya lifted his fingers up a few inches off the bed, to wave at him, and gave a pained smile.

That did it.

Shimura was on his feet in less than a second. The chair screeched as it slid against the ground. “Fucking idiot! What the fuck is wrong with you?!” he shouted, reaching over to press a button on the table next to his bed. “You fucking idiot, what were you trying to save this time? Do you have any idea how I-we felt when I got that call? When’d you even meet a bodyguard? What’s the point of a bodyguard if you end up hospitalized anyways? ”

He’s here.

He’s home now.

“...Sorry,” Midoriya rasped out. He reached his hand out, “Hold... hand?”

If it was his mom, he wouldn’t have had to ask.

Shimura, who wasn’t wearing his regular gloves but the old and tattered one that Midoriya got him when they first met, narrowed his eyes at him. He stared at Midoriya’s hand, and right when Midoriya thought he would be rejected, both of his hands clasped around his tightly.

Almost overbearingly, it was warm. Almost painfully, the grip was tight.

“Don’t go where I can’t follow you,” he whispered quietly, resting his head against small fingers, “Please.”

In another world, they were enemies pitted together because of destiny and a long line of succession. But that wasn’t this world.

Midoriya closed his eyes and squeezed back.

And this was his world now.

-

The next time he woke up, Dabi was flipping through a magazine by his side. No, not Dabi. This was Todoroki Touya, wasn't it? A civilian who works at the nearby florist.

“...When can… I be discharged?” he asked quietly.

Touya jolted, one of the rare times he ever showed his unrefined side, as he crumpled the magazine in his hand. He nearly leapt out of his seat and rushed to hover by Midoriya’s side. Looking at his eyes, the soft blue color that he stopped associating with a painful fire, muddled with something dark as his lips pulled into a scowl, he wondered what could have made him so upset.

“You fucking idiot,” he said, his voice cracking, “You’ve got no fucking clue what a mess you’ve made.”

The words sunk in slowly, and Midoriya suddenly felt wide-awake and alert. He frowned, “Is… Sakamata in trouble?” he asked quietly.

Touya stood up straight, glassy eyes looking at the wall across from him. And realizing that it was Touya here instead of Shimura, Midoriya tried to sit up.

“W-wait, it’s not Shiga-”

Touya's hands, large and impossibly warm, grabbed his shoulders and pushed him back to the bed. Instead of leaning back when he knew that the student’s back was flat on the bed, he moved his hands down his arm, right above his elbow.

“Such an idiot,” he said quietly, his face scrunched up like he was the one who had been hurt. “It’s me,” he croaked out. “You’ve made a mess of me. I …” he clenched his teeth, swallowing hard and then sighed deeply. “Shit, when I heard that you… you fell and wouldn’t wake up, I…”

He trailed off, and then took a deep shuddering breath, leaning down to press his forehead against Midoriya’s sternum. It was a slow movement, but with the tight grip Touya's hands had on his arms, it was hard to move his arms to comfort him. It wasn’t painful, of course, but it was firm and unrelenting.

Being this close to him should scared him. Either the exhaustion or the medicine must be messing with him. Or maybe...

“I couldn’t even remember the last thing we talked about.”

Midoriya felt his heart stutter in its beat, and he closed his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he tried to keep himself centered. He’ll apologize properly at the end of this. He’ll apologize and he’ll do whatever it takes to earn everyone’s forgiveness. He’ll do this right, even if it’s a little belated.

“Don’t go away before I repay you,” he said.

“...Dabi, you don’t owe me anything,” Midoriya said quietly. “I just want you to-”

“Be free and at peace with myself, right? To be happy and live happily ever after, right?” the man replied back, a throaty chuckle ripping out of his throat. Somehow, when he laughed like that, Midoriya couldn’t shake the thought that he sounded more like he was crying. “You still haven’t figured it out?”

He lifted his face, his swollen face with eyes bright red with unshed tears.

“How can I do that without you?”

Civilian Touya was a Touya that could cry for other people. Midoriya couldn't get over that.

"Don't... Don't worry about anything else. Just rest, alright? Promise me you'll wake up again, and just rest. No one's in trouble."

Right when he was about to say something. Touya placed one of his hands over Midoriya's eyes. Effectively, he covered up his entire eyesight, and the warmth of his hands seeped into his bones.

"Sleep."

Trusting that voice he did just that.

-

The next time Midoriya woke up, he was still in the hospital. He felt much better than he did before, and as soon as he yawned, a rolled-up newspaper came swinging at his head.

"Wha-?!"

It didn't hurt but it shocked him. Whipping around, he stared at Chiyo in shock.

"I'm a patient!" he gasped.

"You deserve worse!" she snapped back. "How can you try to leave before me!?"

"It wasn't like I was trying to!" Midoriya yelled back.

"Try harder!" she snapped back.

"Uhm, excuse me," one of the nurses said quietly.

The two turned to her, watching as she clutched her clipboard tightly to her chest. No doubt, she was dumbfounded at the fact that this little old lady was yelling at her patient, ready to smack him again with her newspaper.

"I uh... It's time for Midoriya-kun's check-in."

"Yes, of course," Chiyo said, nodding her head. She got out of her seat and waved her newspaper in a menacing way at the boy in the bed. "You be good!"

He gave an exasperated sigh back, "Yes, ma'am."

She turned to the nurse.

"Don't be afraid to smack him if it looks like he's going to run away."

"I uh... Okay," the nurse said, unsure how else to respond.

Chiyo left at that.

"She's just worried," Midoriya said, eyes finding the surprised nurse.

She stared back. According to her training, Midoriya had gone through something especially traumatizing.

She was also one of the nurses that were called in from standby to help him out when he was rolled in. The kid went through a lot of trauma. Some of it looked much older than the bullets opening holes inside of him, and all of it looked painful.

So, in accordance to her training, she was supposed to speak to him in soft and firm tones. He was supposed to be terrified of everything around him. She was prepared to sedate him if he entered any bouts of panic. She was prepared to strap him down into bed if he thrashed or tried to escape. She was supposed to, according to her training, be one of his first encounter with people to remind him that he was safe here.

However, Midoriya looked like he had woken up from a nap. A little groggy but otherwise ready to get out and play or whatever it was that kids did these days.

He cooperated just fine with her, asking about the weather and the day. He complimented her hair, and she would have normally been fine with it but it just felt too normal. Making small chat like they were normal and friendly people that ran into each other, the nurse wondered who the training was actually made for.

"So, looks like you're healing up just fine," if inhumanely fast, she said, but kept the last part to herself.

"That's good," Midoriya nodded back.

"I'll let the doctor know. There's a few more things that you have to know, and then I'm sure that you'll be discharged sometime next week or so."

"Next week?" Midoriya asked, eyes wide.

"Yes, is something wrong?"

"Ah, I'm just worried about my schoolwork, that's all-"

"Oh, well, your friends are outside, so I'm sure that they'll be happy to catch you up. I'll send them in since I'm done."

"...My friends?"

-

"Oh! Deku! Are you alive?" Inasa shouted from the back of the group.

"You really scared us!" Uraraka said.

The group of teenagers came in before the nurse even had a chance to leave. They all spoke over each other, making it hard to listen to any one person. Unlike everyone else, who used their eyes to physically check on Midoriya's state, Bakugo boldly walked to the window. He stared outside, like he was checking the view of the parking lot from Midoriya's third floor room.

"Monsieur! I am relieved to see that you are well," Aoyama said, winking at him for good measure.

"Deku! I have a copy of the notes!" Iida said, lifting a bag up.

"Dude, let him worry about getting better soon," Kirishima commented.

"Waah, Deku, hurry up and get back to school. It's so boring without you!" Mina complained loudly.

"But you have to be here for another week? Damn, you're so lucky!" Kaminari said. "The nurses here are so cute!"

"I... I wouldn't really use lucky to describe this," Shouji said, frowning.

"We all chipped in to bring you some fruits," Mineta cheered, lifting the basket up proudly.

"Please let us know if there's something we can do to help," Yaoyozuro added, worriedly staring at him.

"Ah, he acts like that but Monoma is really good at cutting fruit," Kendo added.

"Why would you call me out like that!?"

"How are you feeling, kero?" Tsuyu asked.

The attention turned back to Midoriya, who smiled back.

"I'll be back in school next week," he said. "When I'm out, let's go do something."

"That sounds great!" Mina leapt at that. "We should go to the mountains! Or the ocean!"

"In November?" Tokoyami frowned.

"He has to be cleared for physical activities like that. We should hit the ramen stand and then karaoke or something," Kirishima said, a frown on his face. "You sure you're okay?"

Midoriya, feeling his brittle heart crack reach a little deeper, smiled back.

"Yeah," he said. "I'll be fine."

How long does it take to mourn someone that doesn't exist? As the person that got rid of him, was he allowed to mourn for them? If no one even noticed that they were gone, could anyone mourn for him? He wasn't the one that physically killed him or anything, but did it matter?

Fitted in someone else's body, Midoriya smiled at Deku-kun's friends.

He'll be fine. He can't be anything less.

### **Purpose - bakudeku**

“...Was it on purpose?”

Midoriya looked at Bakugo, who didn’t mince his words, and wondered how hard he had to scrub at his eyes for them to be that puffy. He supposed that he should just be happy that he waited for them to be alone this time.

It was on purpose, however. He chased a ghost halfway through the city and ended up in the waters, completely willing, after all. The gunshot was definitely surprising, but it wasn't like it wasn't building up to that. How should he answer this?

“Was it… on purpose?"

But if he said yes, he knew that Bakugo might break. This Bakugo wasn’t his Kacchan, after all. He was a little more fragile and a lot more fretful. He didn’t see the world as a stepping-stone. He didn’t grow up chasing after a wide smile and red cape.

“I was looking for something,” Midoriya said at last.

“And you just… blindly chased it halfway across town and all the way into the water. Tossed yourself into a medically-induced coma,” he deadpanned back.

It seemed like it was a universal constant or something, that the blond could make all of his actions sound so insignificant and stupid. It was nostalgic. Privately, he was glad that no one told him that

“It was… really important to me.”

If he had caught up to Deku-kun, maybe he wouldn’t be here. Maybe he’d be with his mom. Maybe he’d wake up in a hospital room where it’d be Iida-kun and Uraraka-chan. Maybe Touya and Shimura, among many others, would remain locked up and far away from the public eye. The people who died would still be dead. People who can’t get up and around would still be unable to. He would get to live with regrets and guilt instead of being haunted by people who forgot how to hope. Maybe, maybe, maybe.

The blond sniffled loudly, and he rubbed at his eyes. He was rubbing them raw, and his bottom lip trembled. He took a deep breath, and moved to pinch the bridge of his nose as hard as he could.

“Then just fucking say something,” he said, his voice shook as much as his shoulders, “We can go look together.”

He left Bakugo first in the last world, he reminded himself. He wondered if the blond cared or even noticed. Probably not, right? Everyone else would have annoyed him about it, but he didn’t think that Bakugo would truly and honestly notice or care. They weren’t close anymore, after all.

But then again, it didn’t matter. Because right now, there was a Bakugo right in front of him, too. There was a Bakugo in front of him, and this was his body now. This was his life now.

This was his Bakugo now.

“Kacchan,” he spoke up, “You wanna get some crepes?”

There was a brief silence and Bakugo released this laugh. It sounded like broken glass against his ears.

“Why was I worried about you?”

“Because, Kacchan,” Midoriya said, a painful smile on his face as he regarded him, “we’re friends.”

The blond stared at him for a long moment, eyes wide in their shock. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, probably trying to calm his heart down before he exploded out, and succeeded about halfway. He spun on his heel, but Midoriya could see that he was red, all the way to his neck and ears.

### **Home Sweet Home - AiDeku**

“...Are you sure you’re okay?”

Midoriya smiled back, exasperated since it seemed like this was all anyone ever asked him. He lifted his hand up to rattle off his practiced answers.

His index finger, “Yes, I am fine.”

His middle finger, “No, I don’t feel any pain nor do I feel any discomfort.”

His thumb, “I took all of my medications already and I’m not due for the next dose in a few hours.”

His ring finger, “I will be sure to tell you the moment I feel something is the slightest bit wrong.”

His pinky, “So let’s keep moving, okay?”

“...You have it all figured out, don’t you?” the host said, a small smile on his face. He gave a long suffering sigh, but it was ruined from his smile. “Good to have you back.”

Midoriya gave him a cheeky grin back.

Ah, he thought, home sweet home. He’ll use the bathroom and he’ll be in his own clothes now. No more hospital garb. No more nurses looking for Hawks-no, Takami, or any handsome person that popped by. Midoriya will sit and enjoy his literature and go back to school and everything will go back to normal. He will graduate and get an office job somewhere far away.

Because he can’t leave. This was it. This was his life. No more Deku-kun to apologize to, this was all his now. He will live with all his mistakes, with all these people.

This-

“...But you know, you’re not really convincing when you say that you’re okay but you’re crying.”

Midoriya’s hand came up to his face, surprised that there were tears running down his face. Aizawa’s hands, not nearly as scarred as he thought they would be, came up to his face with a handkerchief. The smell of Aizawa’s cologne was familiar and faint, something that he was still surprised he used, but found comfort in.

His face wiped, he opened his eyes to see red eyes peering down at him. No scars on his face. Smooth and clean like a host who sells himself on his face should be.

Aizawa’s face was so close to his that he could see his own reflection in his eyes.

“Did you know?” he said quietly, “You only live once, you know? This is the only life we have.”

He covered his mouth, because Deku-kun died and no one cared. No one noticed. His shoulders shook under the grief. The last person that he, a Hero named Deku, tried to save was a kid named Deku. He didn’t do it. He didn’t even try.

“...If we really only live once,” Aizawa spoke slowly, “then I’m glad I met you.”

Midoriya’s head snapped up to stare at him. Aizawa tucked his hanky into his pocket before turning back to the young man. Gently, so painfully gently that Midoriya thought he would break, Aizawa’s hands came to his shoulders and he pulled the young man against his chest. His arms wrapped around his back and shoulder.

“If we live once,” Aizawa said, his voice vibrating in his chest and echoing through Midoriya’s, “And this is the only time we will ever get to meet, then I’m glad that we still have time together. I’m glad that our time wasn’t cut short.”

Midoriya felt his tears slip out even more as he buried his face into Aizawa’s chest. He could feel himself shattering, and between the cracks, found the warmth of someone else’s kindness seep in.

“I’m glad that you’re here, Izuku.”

Aizawa once told him that he was never cut out to be a hero. For whatever reason, those words echoed inside of him then and there.

-

“Welcome home!”

Midoriya stared in shock. He opened the door to his apartment, and found his friends staring back at him. He had thought it was weird that Aizawa was the only person that came to pick him up, and felt his heart warm at the thought that everyone was waiting at his place instead.

“Aw, come on, I just got him to stop crying,” Aizawa sighed.

“I-I’m not crying!” Midoriya declared, wiping at his eyes.

“Shut up and come in!” Bakugo snapped back, “The pizza is going cold!”

“Pizza!” Midoriya, who was sick of hospital food, leaped at the opportunity.

-

Life was good. It was fine. Touya, who was sitting on the couch with a book in his lap, relished when the quiet of the house finally settled in. Everyone finally left after the massive clean-up process that followed their party. The roommates took turns washing up to head for bed after the eventful and anxious last few days. It was about time to turn in, since he and Takami had early mornings.

He would have to finish this book later. Blue eyes looked from the pages, a story about a kid who can see ghosts and the mishaps he got into everyday because of it, to the kid in his life who got into mishaps everytime he turned around. Still, he was glad that his waiting paid off, and Midoriya had returned to this apartment. He slid the bookmark into the book and closed it.

“Hnngg.”

He looked over to where Midoriya’s pinched expression greeted him. His hands twisted on the blankets, as his face paled. Breathing suddenly erratic, he bit down on his lip as sweat began to bead on his forehead..

While watching, Touya suddenly realized that Midoriya was having a nightmare. Shit. He had to do something. He got up quickly, ready to wake the young man up and comfort him when Midoriya started to cry out.

“Stop…” he whispered, “Please stop…”

All the blood in Touya's veins turned to ice.

“Izuku…?” he quietly approached him. He didn’t want to contribute to the nightmare, but if he woke him up and made his nightmares worse? He didn’t want that. He didn’t want anything that would make it look like Midoriya was scared of him.

“Please… I won't... tell… just stop...”

Touya hesitated, and Midoriya’s nightmares intensified. Tears streamed out of the corners of his eyes and running to his ears, his chest heaved and his breathing turned painful. He thought, once or twice, that he would help Midoriya, because Midoriya made it look so damn easy, but now that he had a moment, he choked.

Ah, fuck it.

“Izuku, wake up!” Touya shouted, grabbing him by the shoulders. “Wake up, please!”

Green eyes snapped open. For a brief moment, Touya swore to himself that he’ll find the piece of shit that haunted Midoriya’s dreams, and he’ll give him a fate worse than death. The young man blinked, his eyes still streaming with tears. His lips trembled, his unseeing eyes slowly focusing on Touya.

Touya could see his own reflection in his eyes, and could pinpoint the exact moment when Midoriya recognized him. His breathing smoothed out, and he sniffled.

“...Dabi?” he asked, his voice hoarse.

“I’m here,” he said, his voice barely a whisper.

The confirmation was more than enough, because the anxiety and fear escaped out of Midoriya like air out of a balloon. He gave a shuddering sigh, and gave him a watery smile.

“Yes,” he said, “You are.”

Truly and honestly, Touya wondered how someone could wake up crying, see his face, and smile.

...He wouldn’t trade it for anything.

“...C’mon, you want some warm milk?” he asked, stepping back.

He jerked to a stop when a hand came to grab his shirt. He arched an eyebrow at the young man.

“S-Sorry,” Midoriya said, yanking his hand back and cradling it against his chest with his other hand. He looked confused, like he didn’t know why he did that. Touya’s heart twisted at the thought that the man who readily extended his hand out to anyone nearby was the same person who was surprised that he did the same. The young man, still pale and still shaking, stammered out, “I-I’m fine. Sorry, I-I didn’t, I didn’t…”

He shivered even though Touya could feel the heat radiating off of him. Calmly and slowly, like he saw in the books and the webs when he was preparing to welcome Midoriya back, he reached his arms around him and tugged him against his chest. He readjusted his position to kneel next to him, and kind of hoped that he didn’t have to hold this position for long.

“...I’m here,” Touya said. Coming out of the shower with a towel on his head, his eyes met Shimura’s.

Midoriya’s hand came to hold the bottom hem of his shirt. He could feel his shirt dampening. A head came to his shoulder. Touya changed his mind. He was ready to hold this position until time stopped.

“I’m sorry,” Midoriya whispered. “I’m sorry.”

“Nah,” Touya said, readjusting his hold to cradle Midoriya’s head against his shoulder. “Don’t worry about that.”

“I’m sorry,” Midoriya repeated again, until he got too tired of his apologies and guilt so he fell asleep. Briefly, he wondered how someone who could beg for an [unseen someone] to stop would apologize so profusely to.

Touya’s shoulder and knees were about to go numb, but he didn’t dare let go. Eventually, he slowly let him back down into the sheets, tucked him in and wiped his face when Shimura passed him a soft handkerchief. Sitting down on the other side of Midoriya, Shimura peered over at the sleeping young man.

“...Nightmare?” Shimura asked.

“Yeah.”

“Hopefully the last one,” he said. The words were cold, but his fingers pushed some of Midoriya’s curls back. “Go take a shower. You smell.”

Typical Shimura, Touya thought wistfully. He was glad that they weren’t alone. If he was, he might have lost himself while pulling someone else back-up to their feet.

“Hope you didn’t use all the hot water,” he shot back, like it was ever a problem. He made his way to the bathroom, while Shimura flipped him off

Midoriya’s first night back went like this. Touya couldn’t believe how exhausting it could be to try and look after someone else’s mental and emotional stability. To think that Midoriya did this for all of them at the drop of the hat made something burn inside of him.

Since when did kindness become such an arduous task? It made the Midoriya who gave up his umbrellas and always split his pay that much stronger to him.

### **Dabi's 'Return to Normal'**

"Oi! Deku! Let's go to school!"

The door suddenly swung open, and Touya stared down at the group of high schoolers at the door.

Blue eyes, colder than a glacier, stared at them before he slipped a pair of sandals out and stood to prop the door open by leaning against it.

"...And Deku?" Shouji asked.

Touya stared at them for a moment longer, and for a brief second, he was scared that something was very, very wrong.

"Oi, Izuku, your friends are here," he called out to the home. "You guys coming in?"

Bakugo shook his head, "It's fine. If we go in, we'll end up skipping again. If we do that, sensei's going to cry."

Touya snorted. "Serves him right."

"I-I'm here!"

Midoriya came up to the door. His eyes were bright, and his friends relaxed at the sight of it. Their eyes caught to the bags under his eyes, the only sign that he had a close encounter with death again. Surely, under his uniform was a long story, but at the very least, his eyes were as bright as they were, a week ago, a month ago.

"Kacchan! Shouji-kun! Good morning!"

"Shut up, we're going to be late," Bakugo snapped back. He reached his hand out.

Green eyes blinked at his extended hand, and tilted his head in confusion.

"Your bag, you goddamn cripple! Give it!"

"C-Cripple?"

Touya facepalmed, but dragging his hand down his face to reveal his exasperated expression and tired grin.

"I-I can carry my own bag!"

"Oh shut up," Bakugo snapped back, reaching over to grab his bag and yanked it out of Midoriya’s grip. Cheeks splattered red, he slung the bag over his shoulder. "Now you won't have an excuse to not get better. Come on."

Bakugo, with two bags now, walked off. Shouji eyed his classmate and sighed deeply.

"Morning, Deku," he said to his friend. "Ready to go?"

"He just took my bag!" Midoriya pouted, but took a step out. He gave a thoughtful expression as he looked up at Shouji, "How long do you think I can get him to hold it?"

"Well, just pretend that your side hurts or something," Shouji added, a smile under his mask.

"Oh! That's terrible!" he said, a laugh bubbling out. He turned back to his roommate, who was still watching them. "I'm going. Have a good day!"

Shouji wondered if there was a word that could encompass the look on the older man’s face, as Touya ruffled his hair. "Yeah, yeah," he said. "Just be careful."

Green eyes, as certain as the earth itself, stared at him for another moment before a smile bloomed across his lips.

“Deku! Good morning!”

Touya leaned against the doorway, waved them goodbye, and watched Midoriya's face of shock as he looked over the railing to see that almost all of his classmates, the classmates next door, and the kids in the private school down the street from their school, had all assembled at the front of their apartment gates with wide smiles and bright greetings.

“We’re here to walk you to school!”

“Get down here before we’re all late!”

They were loud enough that some of the other neighbors were frowning and pointing at them, but whatever, teenagers. That's what they did.

Midoriya, Shouji and Bakugo right at his sides, rushed down to greet them, a catastrophic mess of sounds for an early Monday morning. Birds flew away, startled out of their quiet mornings, and Touya rubbed the back of his neck as he stepped out.

Leaning against the railings right in front of the apartment door, blue eyes swept across the students, landing and anchoring when he saw a specific smile. When their eyes locked, he gave a lazy wave at them. It was probably wistful thinking, but he thought that Midoriya’s smile turned brighter.

When they were gone, he headed back in. He closed the door, knowing that he needed to get ready for his day at work.

"Damn, they're so fucking loud," Shimura said when he came into the kitchen. He folded his apron and hung it on the oven handle. He stifled a yawn. "Your lunch is in the fridge. Don't fucking forget it again. I'm going back to bed."

"Yeah, sweet dreams," Touya agreed.

"...He smiled, right?" the man asked over his shoulder.

"Ah, he looked pretty happy."

"...Yeah, whatever," Shimura muttered as he walked off to pass out on the couch again.

Midoriya really does surround himself with dishonest brats, doesn't he? Touya thought to himself as he filled up the travel mug with fresh coffee. Shimura really knew how to make a cup. The aroma wafted up and warmed him up. He took a gulp before he closed it up. He'll drink the rest when he got to work.

He flipped his phone, there was no need for him to think that they were already at school, but he hoped that Bakugo would let him know when they made it to school safely. He's such an idiot. It was just paranoia, but it really felt like Midoriya was tousled and tossed into a hospital every time he turned around. It was exhausting, but he didn't know how to not care anymore.

He got ready. He cleaned up the kitchen and then he checked his phone. No new messages. After a trip to the bathroom, he checked again. Then, he got dressed. He slipped his shoes on, and checked his phone again. He left the apartment, the door auto-locking behind him when his phone dinged and he whipped it out.

A text message that read: <School.>

An attachment with the text message that showed a blurry picture of Midoriya, riding on the shoulders of his friends, the red-headed meathead, with the school in the background.

At the same time he felt his anxiety pop and deflate with relief, he felt annoyed.

He's offered to give Midoriya a piggy-back ride all the time. His boss said that he could take as much time as he needed to, but how could he take more time off when Midoriya was determined and bull-headedly moving on?

Of all the dishonest idiots that Midoriya had gathered, Touya knew that he was one of the worst ones.

-

"Todoroki?"

Here he came.

"Todoroki, you ungrateful piece of shit! Why the hell are you at work!?"

"Morning, Boss," Touya deadpanned back. "Good to see you, too."

"Don't you 'good to see me'! Why are you here?!"

"To... make money?"

"Shut that smart mouth! What about Izu-chan!?"

"He's at school."

His boss stopped cold, and the branches on his hand came to Touya's shoulders. He held the young man, and Touya met his gaze evenly.

"He can go to school now?"

"Yep. Saw him off this morning."

The man took a step back. "Wow, kids are... really strong. He just," he made a motion to his ribs, which was not at all where Midoriya was shot, but Touya wasn’t going to correct him, “and bounced right back.”

Touya gave him a dry look, but couldn't disagree.

"Yeah, I was never that tough as a kid."

Like seriously, who else other than Midoriya could recover from four bullets to the chest in a week? Well, he had about eight different people come by with their various-miracle quirks to help out, but still... Actually, Touya didn't know if it was more impressive that Midoriya knew all those people that would rush to the hospital to help or the fact that Midoriya tried to discharge himself three minutes after waking up from a coma.

Touya was certain he would have locked himself in a room and never come out, if he had made it out at all.

### **Height - 2 weeks later [Shirakumo]**

“Oh, well, what do you know?”

Midoriya looked up as a hand came to the top of his head and ruffled it playfully. Looking up, Shirakumo’s crooked grin looked back at him.

“You grew, didn’t you?”

It was a compliment. It was a good thing.

It was also the physical evidence that he had that this was his after all. This was his body. This was his reality. This was really his now.

It wasn’t Deku-kun’s, or anyone else’s, body that he was trashing anymore. Just his. No Deku-kun here.

“Are you that happy that you cried?”

Midoriya’s hands flew to his face, “Oh,” he said uselessly as he felt the unmistakable wetness. “Haha… I guess I am.”

He couldn’t go home anymore, could he? The thought permeated through his entire body, but he strangely didn’t feel sad. He wasn’t nearly as broken up about it as he thought. He couldn’t believe it. Shouldn’t he mourn this more?

But maybe his mom was right.

Maybe, a world without heroes would have been better. Maybe, he shouldn’t have been a hero, and he (and everyone else) had gone about this the wrong way. A world where he chased after those colors wasn’t safer and better for him.

They didn’t save people because they were heroes. They were heroes because they saved people.

And Izuku was no hero.

“You think I’ll get taller than you?” he asked.

Shirakumo’s handkerchief came up to his eyes, wiping at his tears as he chuckled.

“If you do grow, I hope you never change though,” he said.

“Eh?”

“Well, don’t tell Shouta I said that,” he continued, “Really, I just want you to live a long, long life with us.”

His grin was absolutely blinding, and Midoriya often wondered where this man was in his original universe. If at all possible, he hoped that the blond would be this happy there too.

“I don’t care how big you are, haha!”

### **Future With Deku - [DabDek]**

Touya grabbed the bag of groceries out of Midoriya’s hand as the two made their way home.

“I could have-”

“I know.”

“Then why-”

“I felt like it.”

“At least let me-”

“Nah.”

The young man pouted back, and Touya grinned back. His old scars didn’t hurt, and were fading away a little more everyday.

He hoped that these moments wouldn’t.

-

“So, what are your plans? Just going to stay here forever?”

“That’d be nice,” Touya said, taking a sip from his latte.

“...What if he doesn’t want it?”

“Then I’ll leave when he does,” the older man replied back.

Natsuo frowned back, but seeing how calm and relaxed his brother looked, bit his tongue.

“And that’s it? You… You’re okay with that?”

Before Touya became someone’s Dabi, he and Natsuo spent their days chasing after make-belief monsters in the forests behind their home, they were invincible. They ruled the world and saved it and protected it when they were children, and came home to eat chocolate chip cookies with their mom and sister. They believed that nothing would change when they grew up, and that the world was just waiting for them to come and take it.

Touya looked at Natsuo, a relaxed smile on his face.

His little brother didn’t know it, he didn’t think that anyone did, but that was fine. Touya was content and he was happy here. Touya knew that his entire world was sitting, pouring over notes with his youngest brother under the careful guidance of his sister in the other room, and that was more than enough.

He already had everything.

He handed Natsuo the plate of snacks as he grabbed the plate of drinks.

“Yeah,” he said, a crooked grin on his face. “I am fine.”

-

“...Esteemed Customer, you should hurry up and leave if you’re not going to buy anything,” Touya called out.

Enji stiffened.

“I’ll be buying a bouquet,” he spat out, his expression scrunched up to show his displeasure.

“Damn, serious?” Touya frowned back. He sighed, “What do you want?”

“...Something beautiful,” Enji replied back, “It’s in celebration of Fuyumi’s class play.”

“Oh yeah,” Touya nodded, “We’re going to get dinner afterwards. I remember.”

Enji’s head snapped up and Touya snickered.

“Guess you didn’t get invited again, huh?” he said, with more bite than he meant to. If Midoriya was there, he could already see the frown on his face.

Come to think of it, he hasn’t gotten any alerts. Wasn’t it time for him to go home from school? That Bakugo kid normally texts him if they’re on their way back. He could only hope that he forgot and didn’t end up in a bad situation already.

“How is it?”

“I don’t know, don’t you live with her?”

Enji eyed him, and took a deep breath in. Touya didn’t know who it was, but whoever they may be, they deserved a pay-raise if Enji is finally learning patience.

“I meant Midoriya,” he said. “...Is he well?”

Touya felt something prickle under his skin. His smile dropped as he narrowed his eyes into a glare. It really wasn’t his business. Knowing that he might lose his job (or the store, knowing how hot-headed both of them could get), he clenched his jaw tightly shut instead.

He was done putting the bouquet together, so he can leave, right?

“...Don’t look at me like that,” Enji scowled. He took a deep breath and pulled his wallet out. He pulled out two cards. His credit card for the flowers, and a business card. Both of them were on the counter and he pushed it forwards to his son. “...Should anything happen and you or he needs the help,” he said.

Touya frowned back, more confused than anything. He ran the payment and passed both of them back.

Enji left his card on the counter.

“...I hope you never need to use it.”

And it killed Touya, it really did, but it was a future that they both knew would be imminent.

Midoriya was just a guy like that.

### Future plans

“Hey, hey, Midoriya, what are your plans for the future?”

Midoriya looked up and blinked.

Future?

Shit, he had to worry about the future.

He was so busy trying to get back to his original home, that he totally forgot that this was a thing. He had a future here, since he had a life here. He just sort of said things before, but now that things were different, he didn’t know.

He opened his mouth, and then closed it.

Originally, he would have been a cop, if he couldn’t be a hero. And now, that didn’t sound like it was an option available for him. He… He didn’t know what else he could do. Mirio and Nejire (as well as the oldest Todoroki) were aggressively trying to recruit him into their business firm, and he knew that he would be okay there, secure and well-paid, but he didn’t know if he wanted to get into Business. Hakamata offered positions, should he go into fashion, and both Ryuku and Nine looked excited to share their medical textbooks with him, if he wanted to go into medicine instead.

Miruko was leaving more and more travel packets with him, claiming that traveling together was more fun and that she’d split her pay with him, but he didn’t know if he could manage a life with Miruko like that. Everyone at the UA Host Club (and he never thought that he’d ever get used to saying that) were dropping hints for him to move onto the floor instead of being confined to dish-duty. Chiyo’s son mentioned once or twice that he wouldn’t mind more hands at the farm.

Some job prospects, he had an easy time shutting down. Chisaki never said it, but Kurono and Irinaka have all but begged for him to consider a life between shadows. He really, really didn’t want that. And whatever it was that Chojuro kept insinuating wasn’t something that he would be interested in. Likewise, he wouldn’t fit into a bodyguard-like position, no matter how hard Sakamata (and all of his employees) tried to convince him otherwise. Rappa joyfully explained to him that the pay was shit, but he would welcome Midoriya into the fighting ring with open arms anytime.

But the worst was-

“It’s fine, you can just bum off of me,” Hawks laughed, waving his hand.

“Give me a few years, and I’ll make plenty of money,” Bakugo mentioned.

“I-I wouldn’t mind having a kept man,” Yaoyozuro said bashfully.

“You know how to cook and clean, so just move in,” Amajiki told him off-handedly once.

“My folks all love you anyways,” Tensei said brightly. “I don’t see the problem.”

"The music will be worth the wait," Jiro said with a nod, twirling her pen in her hand, "But where do you wanna go for tour?"

-all the people that acted like he didn’t need to do anything other than go to his new designated home as a well-kept man.

And he didn’t know how to tell the whole world and everyone in it that he wanted to be a Hero.

“If you’re paid to be it, are you really a hero?”

“Yeah, I thought you’d say something like that,” Midoriya sighed. He snapped the wooden chopsticks open as he started to dig into the udon.

Across the way, Akakuro stared for a moment longer before he sighed.

“Well, how would it work?”

“Eh?”

“Your hero… agency or whatever. It would have to be official since you need it cleared with the government, If it’s private, it’s just a glorified security company. Still, if it’s public, than the government will have a hand in it, and at that point,” he pointed at his badge, “You should just be police.”

Midoriya hesitated. He didn’t know how to explain how this would work. The world, this world, was one that figured out how to survive just fine without heroes. They didn’t have heroes, they didn’t have villains, and sometimes, Midoriya felt like they also didn’t have hope or peace. But, he supposed that wasn’t something that he was meant to do.

He didn’t even have a quirk. The point of heroes were that they were registered individuals who protect the peace with their quirks.

The two took a moment to eat some more. Or at least, Akakuro took another couple of mouthfuls, his eating slowing down considerably when he realized that Midoriya was just staring at his noodles.

“I’m not saying it because I don’t think you can do it. If literally anyone could make this a hero-society, it would be you,” Akakuro said, “If that’s what you want, I have no doubts that you’ll find a way. But I want to support you. And I don’t know how to support you without figuring out things like this first.”

“No, I think you make a valid point,” Midoriya replied back. “I should be more realistic with my-”

Akakuro’s chopsticks caught his. He looked back, and piercing red eyes met his.

“Izuku,” he said, “You’re already a hero. We just need to figure out the societal logistic part of it.”

His heart clenched painfully. Akakuro started to chase his noodles around his bowl with his chopsticks as he continued.

“Unless you’re planning on making money through donations, which might be good for you considering the web of people you know, you’re going to have to make money through services, or toys. TV shows, YouTube viewers…” Akakuro trailed off. “Hey, what kind of hero do you want to be?”

“I want...To be the Symbol of Peace, I guess,” Midoriya said. “Like, someone that people could look at and know that everything will be fine because I am here… something like that?”

The man’s shoulder relaxed, his gaze softening, as he looked back to his ramen.

“Yeah, if you don’t go in with a business mindset, I can’t imagine this working out. But, you, and your hero ideology, I don’t think that’s a bad thing. It just doesn’t fit in with the whole, making money to survive part.”

Midoriya nodded.

“Who did you want to save?”

“Just… just the people I can reach, I guess,” Midoriya said. “I want to save everyone, but I don’t… I know that it’s impossible.”

Akakuro nodded, thinking of a time when he thought a bridge would be the end of his world.

“But the people you did reach,” he said, “You saved. Don’t know about the whole, hero-ing as a business, but you got a fan here.”

Tears sprang to Midoriya’s eyes, but the police officer didn’t say anything.

“Now, eat your udon before it gets cold. I promised Shigaraki that I’d bring you home before eight.”

-

"You're really struggling with the whole future-goals thing, huh?"

"I've never really thought about it this seriously I guess. I didn't think that I would still be here."

And it was really telling, if Midoriya had dropped his guard so much that he would casually let something like that slip.

### **A**