Warning: messy feelings

Disclaimer: I don’t own anything.

Summary: Midoriya Izuku couldn’t imagine a world without heroes until he woke up as Midoriya Deku, a kid who’s whole life was nine-parts suffering and one-part tragedy.

Paring: ¯\\_(ツ)\_/¯

A/N: Everyone is OOC. suckers.

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### Notes

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  + <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bh3TcQoWtoM5dTVHaBwCo99U4GfxSwrWJzOlm7-s0NM/edit?usp=sharing>
* Midoriya Izuku
  + Literally just turned 20. And won against AFO, life is great for about 20 min before he dies.
  + And now he wakes up in his 13 year old’s body in a world where All Might never stood up. Actually, AFO/OFA isn’t a thing here. So, he’s quirkless again.
  + Or so he thinks, but the more people he saves and the more people believe in him… well, a regular person can’t ever be that strong, right?
* Izuku -> Deku
  + Born named “Deku” meaning useless.
  + Born quirkless in a world that runs on fear, his mom kills herself in her despair and his dad beats the shit out of him (alcoholic and all), sells him out, etc
  + “But, for all that he beat the shit out of me, he still comes home every day. I’m sure that he also wants to be saved.”
  + Kills himself-which is where Izuku wakes up.
  + “...This life isn’t mine. This world isn’t mine. So I’ll waste it all to save at least another person.” Goes back to working out his body.
  + Not quite a vigilante, since he loses more than he gains (but he always reaches out to the person who was waiting for it)
* World
  + There is no UA. No hero course. No heroes. No villains.
  + A world where "no quirk law" is harsh and punishable by death
  + Police & JSDF are armed and ‘patrol’ but corruption is rampant. Are allowed to use their quirks.
  + Yakuza, in these tiring times, are the apple of public eye to protect them
  + Liberation is super politically active. Growing with number but rarely includes 'equality' but that 'strong wins'
  + Military Govt vs Yakuza vs Liberation, and the civilians who are stuck between
* Middle School
  + Midoriya gets a job in an attempt to get money to fix his life in a cleaner way
    - Graveyard shifts @ Convenience store: Meets Koiichi, his coworker (who isn’t Crawler yet)
    - Early morning truck unloading at the nearby grocery store:
      * Leads to some morning dock shifts.
      * Gang oraca owns a security company. Picked up a lot of strays.
        + Deku actually recommended some of them
  + Bakugo -> the next bully victim, until Izuku shows up at school not dead. (Post-suspension)
  + Next class over -> Shinsou
  + Fancy Private School -> Todoroki & Yaoyaozoru & Iida
    - Todoroki “saved” by Midoriya.
    - Yao won’t get close to them until high school, but she decides to go to a ‘regular’ high school to see it for herself, the world that she has to inherit
    - Iida (literally) saved by Midoriya
  + Other Middle School in the district -> Kirishima, Ashida
    - Ashida charmed by Midoriya.
  + @ home collection:
    - Dad leaves to ‘fix’ himself. Izuku waits and wishes they could have done this together.
    - Adopts Tomura, a guy who is scared of himself and his own quirk. Even though he was a POS to Izuku in another world, he misses that confidence
    - Adopts Twice (Bubaigawara Jin), who is destroying himself trying to hold himself together
    - Adopts Kamui woods, freak of nature (haha)
    - Adopts Himiko Toga, who is dazzled by his light
    - Dabi reconciles with fam. Eventually.
    - Adopts Aizawa & Yamada: who hate each other, and don’t get along at all
    - Adopts Stain (Akaguro Chizome) & Spinner: who both go FULL Bushido on Deku
  + Yakuza Head Chisaki
    - And 8 precepts
    - Normally would have never cared or helped or picked sides if it wasn’t for the fact that Midoriya is quirkless and in the center of every big incident
    - Thriving because everyone needs a drug to stop quirks and he figured it out
* High School
  + 1-A is reunited in this pish-posh school.
  + Bullying should have resumed, but instead class 1-A stands together for the kid that they all know is trying to keep them all together. (gets attacked because they have some very rich kids amongst them and the rest were collateral)
  + Self-planning school trips and the likes. Eventually invites 1-B.
  + A lot of people drop out of school, or are forced to quit or end up in the hospital or die.
* Vigilante Work
  + Officially goes vigilante as a third year in middle school.

### Waking Up

Midoriya Izuku got to have about 20 minutes of peace and between blinks, he found himself in the hospital. He grunted at the pain that laced his entire body, and he looked at the bandages that wrapped around his chest and his arms. From the looks and feel of it though, his legs were in the best condition out of his body. He gave a long sigh.

How? He was literally just walking to school for the graduation party. He was literally just walking. It was peaceful. It was quiet. It was perfect. How???

“Well, Deku-kun,” the nurse next to him said, “It looks like you failed again.”

He frowned, vividly remembering that rush of victory when Shigaraki gave up-when he won, but before he could say anything else, the nurse gave a long-suffered sigh. While he didn’t think he deserved respect, he thought that being treated like this was a little rude.

“But, with a name like Deku, I guess that makes sense. But really, this is the second time you’ve been in here. If you’re not going to get it out, stop coming in and wasting our resources. We have better uses for them.”

And wow. Ouch.

Midoriya, so stunned that someone like a nurse could say that to anyone inside of a hospital, or the fact that someone could say that at all, did nothing but nod along.

What was going on?

The day inched by, and he found a phone by his side. It looked old, like the model he used to have in middle school, and the thought of it made him all nostalgic and warm all at once. It died a sad death in the middle of his second year when Kacchan tossed his bag out into the river. He had come a long way from then. They both did.

And then he flipped it open and stared at it. There was no way. No fucking way.

But indeed, the numbers in his contacts were gone. The articles that he had saved were gone. The music files, all of All Might’s Theme songs, Aoyama’s personal recommendations, lecture recordings, were all gone. Text messages from the late nights, over the past few years, were gone like they never happened. Right when he thought that this might not be his phone, ignoring that the passcode was still the same and his fingerprint worked, he found the gallery.

In place of all the blurry pictures of heroes in action, screenshots of schedules, memes, and pictures where all his friends tried to cram into the screen, were copious amounts of photos of himself, in various positions, beaten an inch into his life, humiliated and mutilated.

His stomach turned, because it can’t be real. That wasn’t something that happened, and even though he recognized the uniform and the person on the screen as his own reflection, he didn’t recognize who he was with. He doesn’t, not even at his very worst, when that little boy slipped through his fingers and died in his arms, did he ever look in the mirror and saw those lifeless eyes look back. His head swam and when he reached to grab his head, felt the bandages against his temple.

There was one other way to check.

He yanked at the hospital gown, trying to catch eye of any available skin to prove that this was a lie, a sick prank, and a single word was scarred and slit into his thigh, right between the slits of his bandage.

< Quirkless >

His hands stilled, a tremble ran through them, and he tried to enter full-cowling. And then, he tried again. And he tried again and again as too many questions ran through his head, and all the answers he managed to salvage together was making it harder and harder for his eyes to stay clear as his throat closed.

This couldn’t be real.

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This was real.

He had to sign himself out, when they said he was good enough to go. They told him that no one would be coming to get him. They told him that his father was working, and when he asked about his mother, they gave him the most disgusted look.

“The least you can do is remember who killed your mother, Deku.”

And just like that Midoriya Izuku learned that his mom was dead. He accepted it at face value, couldn't quite ask him why everyone was calling him Deku, why all his official papers had his name written as ‘Midoriya Deku’, and then walked out with the same bloodied clothes that he apparently came in.

His white shirt was stained with old blood. His pants were ripped from the knee down on the left leg and there were several holes appearing in his gakuen jacket. It was, by no means, comfortable. But it was that for the hospital gown, and he didn’t want to attract anymore attention.

Well, it didn’t seem to matter anymore.

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He didn’t really get it then, but that would be the first day where he was Midoriya Deku, a 13 year old boy who tried to kill himself by pitching himself off a building for the second time that month.

### Coming Home

He doesn’t know what he was expecting when he got home, but the same apartment wasn’t it.

Nor was the graffiti that coated his apartment complex. His place was up on the fourth floor, but the streets were a mess on his way in.

And everything was almost uncannily familiar, from the way the stairs creaked under his weight to the way the second floor railing were still loose. The door and everything looked the same as he remembered, if a little older and he doens’t know what he was he was expecting when he opened the door, but it wasn’t the pigsty he walked into.

And it was here that he learns what kind of homelife Deku wanted to be free from. It was from his own father, stumbling in, reeking of beer, and greeted him with several blows to the face. All the air would be kicked out of him, and he’ll be too surprised to do anything else.

In reality, that was a lie. Deku’s father was the slowest and weakest lowlife scum that he has ever faced. As it was, and this would be his second lesson about this world, his body didn’t listen to him. With his face pinned down against the ground, the blood from his nose oozing out and staining the carpet below, Midoriya is forced the confront the idea that this was now his reality.

### Similarities

The funny thing was always about how similar Deku and Izuku was.

Izuku leaned back and stared at his arms. Just like he remembered, they were carved up. His entire body was, of course, but he remembered the scars on his arms the most vividly. However, where his wounds were a byproduct from using a power he couldn’t control, Deku’s scars on his arms were a byproduct from having no power. It’s not hard to figure out.

But it’s hard to think that this was his body now.

Some, of course, weren’t his fault. They were from glass shards when he fell or when he had been hit or slid against something that wasn’t smooth. There were some burn marks, that was the same in any world, but there were perfectly straight assortments that ran across his arms or followed his veins. They followed patterns and shapes and sizes, varying in time but seemed to have a schedule, and all his time rescuing people from a home that wanted to kill them came to the forefront of his mind.

There were scars too, profanities and insults and slurs of all shapes and sizes. He can’t see his back, but from the way it aches and pulls and itches, he’s certain that it was a canvas to someone with too much ambition and time.

He had an idea on how Deku tried to kill himself, even if no one told him. The fact that no one was here at all told him enough.

He’s not proud of it. But to hide it would be like saying that Deku never existed and that Deku didn’t try fighting. To pretend that it didn’t happen would be to admit that he was ashamed that someone like him, someone who he could have been, had crumbled against a wave of hurt that no one could protect him. He didn’t think he could do that. He can’t pretend that people who were fighting this whole time were actually not. It wasn’t in him. And he didn’t want to be someone like that either.

He was, even if this world doesn’t seem to have them, a hero.

### Re:Zero Middle School

The thing about getting in trouble at school, is that it’s just a big show. It looked really bad on the school if there are suspensions and expulsions, so most schools avoid that route. So instead, they will make this huge fuss about it and threaten to call your parents in. It was a great threat, and he was glad that it was one that he never had to face before high school.

And as cold as it was here, he at least didn’t have to worry about it. For people like him, who didn’t have anyone at home, it was an empty, lofty promise. They could call as much as they wanted, no one would come. Midoriya knew, because if a call was all it took, he’d never be alone.

It was, by far, the most liberating and painful thing he has faced since. Which was saying something because he once punched a robot in the face a hundred-something feet off the ground.

No one would notice that he wasn’t the ‘right’ Midoriya. No one would wait for him if he was out for too long. No one would care if he got sick. It was an isolating thought, but it promised freedom.

Even if he got back home, he couldn’t help but wonder about Deku-kun. Was it really okay to leave it like this?

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At school, in case he didn’t mention it before, it was like he didn’t exist. He can’t believe he was saying this, but he missed back when Kacchan and the kids who followed him used to pick on him all the time.

At least then, he knew he existed.

But this was painful.

Kacchan sat three rows in front of him, and for the most part, Izuku couldn’t see him unless everyone was sitting and he was the only one standing. In all honesty, he didn’t even realize that Kacchan was even in his class until he strolled in the middle of sixth period, an hour before the bell rang to dismiss them.

The teacher broke out into sweats, but didn’t say anything. Kacchan didn’t look at anyone and just sat down. The split lip and bruised face was unmistakable, but the real telling-sign to Izuku was the fact that there was no soot on his uniform, he didn’t smell like burnt hair, but his knuckles were caked with dried blood.

It weighed hard on Izuku, but after about 15 minutes, Kacchan stood up and left. He didn’t even look at Izuku, or anyone for that matter.

He never associated the word pitiful with his best friend, but he came close that day. He apologizes to Deku in his head, and stood up with his hand in the air.

"I gotta use the bathroom!" He called out, and without waiting for anything, ran out after the blond.

The teacher didn't even pause in the middle of his sentence. Thats how invisible he was.

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"Kacchan!"

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One of the first things that Izuku learns is that this is a world where quirks are secrets. People do not share what their quirks are, unless they are amongst friends. People who ask what another person’s quirk is is shunned and usually looked down on.

It was, if Izuku could compare it, like asking someone where their missing parent was, or why their parents divorced, or something along those lines. It wasn't unspeakable, but commonly accepted that people don’t mention it while in polite company.

“Well, I guess if you want to know what it’s like to get hit, you should talk to Midoriya. His dad beats him all the time.”

He looked up at the sound of his name. The boy who was speaking about him was about two rows in front and didn’t look at him. His friends, however, shot both of them surprised looks and Izuku thought it was sweet of them.

It’s been a while since someone called him by his name.

### Dad Leaves

Izuku’s dad was never home. Okay that’s a lie, because Izuku’s dad did his best to do video calls and come home for some obscure weekend, but the time he spent with his dad was way less than the time he spent with Bakugo’s dad.

Because of that, the memories of Izuku’s dad were foggy and hazy. He remembers a man who was worn by his suit, with bags under his eyes and cheeks sunken in. He was thin, and didn’t look much like him at all. Really, Izuku takes much more after his mother. However, even though he couldn’t remember the exact pitch his laugh was, Izuku never questioned his father’s love.

On the other side, Deku’s dad came home every day. He came with the stench of perfume and smoke, with a bottle or a can of some alcohol in his hand. He is thin, and it makes his beer belly look that much more unnatural. Deku can’t recall his mother’s smile but he can sense when his father enters the apartment from his room with earbuds in.

Today was a bottle kind of day.

He swings and hits Izuku with a scary amount of precision and fearlessness, as though he knew exactly how much he could get away with, and it makes his wrists itch. His suit jacket was tossed over his chair, and it was a comforting thought to think that Deku’s dad at least tried to go and work and be a productive human being.

He was an awful dad, of course, and often Izuku thinks that an absent dad would have been better.

Despite the new bruise on his face, Izuku couldn’t help it. His heart ached from the memories that he couldn’t share, and even though this body wasn’t his, he moved out of habit. The times where he was the first one home was few and far in between, and after a childhood where he wanted to make his life easier for his mother, he felt trapped. This was Deku’s dad. This was not his dad.

They weren’t even close.

And just when he thought that, he realized that he never got to cook for his dad.

The thought wrapped itself around his neck like a chain, tightening with every breath.

So here he was, a week’s worth of curry for two, a rice-cooker packed tight with hot, steamy, sticky white rice, a big grin on his face as he called out.

“Welcome back, Dad! We’re gonna eat curry tonight!”

His dad never had that kind of look on his face. It was what reminded him that this wasn’t his dad, but Deku’s. And Deku’s father had this look on his face as though he had socked him across the face.

However, it clearly had him dazed and confused. He came in though, like this was a regular occurrence even though he has yet to hit or yell, and still in his sweaty, alcohol-stained, perfume-stenched suit, sat down at the dinner table. Perfectly happy to pretend that this was his dad, Izuku poured some curry over his rice and set it down.

His black-eye still stung, but he only needed one eye to see Deku’s dad.

“Let’s eat,” Izuku said, sitting down on the left of him and leaving the right open, as though waiting for his mother to come in and get herself some food while complaining about how much laundry the two could accumulate.

It didn’t happen. Izuku didn’t know what he was waiting for.

Deku’s dad stared at the food for another moment, expressionless, or maybe he this was how he expressed something that Izuku didn’t know because it wasn’t something his dad ever did.

He took a bite. Izuku pretended that he didn’t notice.

And then, he swallowed and the tears came. The younger man snapped his head over in shock as Deku’s father, with the same face as his dorky father who used to dress up as All Might with him, started to cry. He gave this open mouth cry as tears ran down his face. Amazingly, it didn’t hit the plate, and instead, he picked up the spoon in his hand and threw it at Izuku.

Izuku winced, and stood up from his seat. He didn’t know what to do, but that moment of hesitance was enough.

Deku’s father didn’t say anything coherently, but he lifted his hands to beat Izuku. He screamed and cried, even though he was the one that was beating Izuku. For a brief moment, he was reminded of a small child trying to beat up a larger child for taking his toys, until the thoughts were beaten out of him when a particularly well-placed kick knocked all the air out of his lungs.

And when Izuku was nothing more but a big bruise on the ground, he finally stopped. His chest heaved as he just walked away into the bathroom, and Izuku hated how normal this felt. He sat up, wincing as he jostled new wounds and sighed.

His eyes looked up to the mess of dinner, and couldn’t quite tear his eyes from the fact that Deku’s dad left his food perfectly alone. Deku’s dad smashed Izuku’s plate of curry over his head and their two plastic cups of water broke against his shoulders. So he stared at Deku’s dad’s leftovers, and wondered what he was supposed to think.

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The following day, since Deku’s dad slips out in the early mornings for whatever it was that he did.

As always, Izuku woke up and winced at the dull ache in his body. Looks like he and Deku had a lot of similarities after all. He took a deep breath, felt like he was suffocating against the pungent smell of cigarette smoke and alcohol, so he teetered over to the window and opened it.

Against the quiet breeze, the cool morning air, he closed his eyes and basked in the fresh morning.

He can’t run with the way it’s hard to breath, but he thinks that the longer he waits, the worse it would get. He wanted to, as soon as possible, see the world that Deku saw and tried to escape from. Perhaps, if he could see something worthwhile and great in this world, Deku would return and he could leave.

He stared at the world outside and got ready for school.

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Izuku didn’t expect to see Deku’s dad come in at five pm, with a bag of groceries.

He stared in open-mouth shock as the man went into the kitchen, and proceeded to make the worst fried rice he had ever tasted. The rice was burnt, the meat was overcooked, and the vegetables were undercooked. All the seasoning clumped to one part of the dish, and chunks of rice were hard to bite through.

It was their first meal together, they sat through the entire thing until all the food on both their plates were gone. It was silent.

And it fueled so much hope inside of Izuku that he felt like his chest would split open.

“Thank you for the food,” he said. And feeling particularly brave, said, “I was thinking of making katsudon tomorrow, what do you think?”

“Fine.”

It would be the first thing he said to him without hitting him. In fact, the whole day, he didn’t get hit at all. Izuku felt his eyes water, something that didn’t happen when he did get hit, and he gave a watery laugh.

“And for the leftover curry, I was going to take it in for lunch tomorrow. Would you like me to pack you some too?”

“Fine.”

Ignorant, naive, and arrogant, Izuku beamed back and believed that everything was going to be okay.

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The katsudon, in Izuku’s humble opinion, was perfect.

“...How did you make this?”

“Hm? I just followed the recipe,” he said.

“...There’s no way…”

Izuku looked up and a pair of chopsticks came singing at him. For once, it seemed like his self-preservation instincts kicked in, and he inwardly sighed at the thought that the katsudon he worked so hard to make was going to go to waste. He managed to dodge the second swing, it was harder than usual if only because the other man was sober and his hits deadly accurate, but he really didn’t want to lose an eye.

This man was good at not breaking bones and stuff, he imagines it comes from a few decades of practice, and Izuku didn’t really think he could ever fight against someone who looked like his father. It was always easier to just wait it out and pretend it didn’t happen again. Yet, he dodged when it came to look like Deku’s dad was going to skewer him with the chopsticks again.

He really, really didn’t want to go back to the hospital. With how well Deku’s body seemed to react and move the way he wanted it to, despite the dull aches, he thinks that it’s a shared sentiment.

“Stop it! Stop being like her! Stop looking like her! How can you cook the same way she does when you have never met her!”

Izuku felt his heart stop, and in his confusion, Deku’s dad made contact. Not with the chopsticks, thank god, but with his fists. Izuku went down when he slipped on the ground because of his socks and his head slammed into the countertop.

It wasn’t bleeding, or it didn’t feel like it, but it was going to hurt a lot when he woke up in the morning.

Then the blows rained, or they would have normally, and he looked up to see what stopped Deku’s dad. Instead, he sees him crying again. In that brief instant, he doesn’t think that he takes after his mother at all. Because where his mother can burst into tears, Deku’s dad cries like a steady stream and his nose runs hard when he does. It’s the same way that Izuku does.

“Inko,” he sobbed out, “Inko please. Inko, please, please, please forgive me. Inko.”

And suddenly, Izuku thinks he knows where Deku’s mom was, why Hizashi was home, why Deku wanted to kill himself.

He wasn't trying to escape. He was trying to reunite with someone.

Deku’s dad ran out, and Izuku took a moment to remain laying down on the ground, wondering how the hell he was going to save Deku’s dad.

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He didn’t.

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There was a note on the table.

Midoriya stared at it for a long time, and for the first time since coming to this world, felt the tears come forward. It was undoubtedly, his father’s handwriting. It didn’t matter how long it had been, how many years, or whatever parallel world he did end up in, it seemed that his handwriting was exactly the same. In his childhood, his father was a pixelated man frozen on the computer screen and loving notes from all around the world. Of course he knew this handwriting.

The note soaked his tears, crumpled in his hands, and he cried.

>> Izuku, I’m sorry. I’m going to go away for a bit.

>>But when I come back, I swear I’ll be a real dad.

He didn’t mind that his father here beat him. He didn’t mind that his father yelled at him and used all their money and drove another him to his death. He didn’t mind, because at least finally, he had a world where his dad did come home. He didn’t mind because he knew how to save people when they he could find them.

Sitting down at his designated seat, he placed his head on the table and cried.

This wasn’t Izuku’s dad. This was Deku’s dad. And like he couldn’t save his other self here, it seemed he threw this man away too.

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Every month, without fail, his bank was updated. Someone continued to give him a generous amount of money, every month, on the same days. Izuku used it carefully. All the bills were paid, the services updated, broken dishes replaced, fridge well-stocked, and small home repairs to the furniture.

But when those were paid, and he didn’t have anything else to spend it on and no willingness to spend it, he kept working out. His wounds healed, they left scars, and he built his body back up. He cooked for himself, cleaned everything several times over, and every morning, opened the window even though there was no smell to banish.

More so than the money, he wished for the people to fill his dining table again. He was sick of eating by himself.

### Baku Bullies

Well, real or not, fake or not, Midoriya was never one to just sit back and watch things happen. Maybe it came from an entire childhood or wishing and wanting someone to come and save him from the shit that he was watching right now.

“What’s the matter, Bakugo? Aren’t you gonna go all explosion right now?”

As it was now, however, he knew that if he stepped in, it would make things much worse for Bakugo. If he stepped in right now, Bakugo would resent him and he would martyr himself. Then, starting tomorrow, both of them would get targeted.

“C’mon, where did your bark go, you stupid mutt. Maybe we should make your muzzle a part of your uniform!”

From the way the teachers weren’t stepping in and the way the bullies weren’t even trying to hide this, this was something that everyone was used to. For his classmates, this was a normal occurrence that no one did anything about or tried to stop. If anything, this was something that was just annoying and they wished that this would end.

"Are you that scared of getting suspended again?"

Which means that the current head honcho of the bullies was either someone with ties to a very powerful someone. Midoriya couldn’t help but snort, why would any of that ever bother Bakugo? Why wasn’t Bakugo fighting back? It was so bizarre.

To Midoriya, the Bakugo has always embodied the word [strong].

He stared, and the blond met his eyes for a fraction of a second before his gaze dropped down to his desk.

But this wasn’t Bakugo that Midoriya grew up with, was it? This was Bakugo-kun, the quiet kid that stood comfortable in his solitude, and not the Kacchan who was like the sun of a heliocentric world.

“...Kacchan!” he shouted out, standing up suddenly. Good, he caused a diversion, “My… My stomach hurts!” he yelled out, and then, belatedly, realized that he should hold his stomach. He wrapped an arm around his stomach and hobbled over to his...friend? Classmate? Whatever, he grabbed his arm, “Help me!”

And his eyes widened and with one good yank, hauled Bakugo to his side and they rushed out of the door. As expected, the teacher didn’t even notice.

Perfect, Midoriya thought, believed.

And then Bakugo snatched his arm away from him, and with a chilling glare, walked away. Too shocked, since that wasn’t an expression he’s seen since they were freshmen at UA, Midoriya stood there limply.

In another world, he would have left Bakugo to his own devices. He would have let him be because Bakugo was strong and he was proud. He didn’t accept help because he didn’t need it. He stood at the top and only looked to higher heights. Nowhere in that visionary did he ever need help. Especially not for him.

But Midoriya spent an entire lifetime chasing after that back.

He knew better than anyone that people aren’t meant to stand alone. That’s why he chased so hard after him.

And so, he hoped that Deku-kun wouldn't mind the fact that he was going to make him a friend.

### Shigaraki\*dumpster

While throwing out the trash, Midoriya finds a human being. A literally human, laying in the dumpster. He takes a deep breath, figuring he has nothing to lose, and grabs the man by his legs and pulls him out. His head makes a painful sound and his arms ram up against the sides twice, but Midoriya gets him out within minutes. It would have been much easier if he wasn’t so weak, but it was a work in progress.

With that said, that pale-blue hair is unmistakable and Midoriya wants to cry.

“...Who are you?”

As Shigaraki Tomura, the man that once stood at the top of the biggest Villain Organizations, stared back at him with no little amount of contempt. Instead, he just looked scared.

But what was he going to do? Abandon him?

“...My name is Midoriya Izuku,” he said, an uncertain smile flitted across his face, “...Do you want to come with me?”

In reality, Izuku became a hero to help people, to save people, with a smile on his face.

-

“It’s a bit of a mess, so please excuse it,” Midoriya said nervously, eyeing the stacks and stacks of books that lined the wall. It looked like Deku-kun’s mom and dad were bookworms too, since this they had all these books.

He wondered if it was something that Deku-kun was used to. And that’s why he never thought it was strange or a mess, until now, because he was so conditioned to think that it was normal to have books piled up like this.

And now that he was the only person that inhabited this place, he didn’t think it was right to make changes to a home that wasn’t his. As far as he was concerned, this wasn’t for him. This wasn’t his. He didn’t deserve to enjoy himself like that.

Still, he thought as he shot Shigaraki another glance.

He thought that it was worse to abandon someone in need even more.

“There’s a bathroom in the back. I have a t-shirt and some sweatpants, but they might be a ltitle small for you. Go ahead and take a warm bath. I’ll throw your clothes in the wash when you’re ready.”

He said that, but Shigaraki’s clothes were raggedly and tattered. He remembered a time when his mother spent all night making him a hero suit out of homemade goods, and felt his heart squeeze. He never really learned how to sow outside of the little trinkets he did with Kosode and Sato, a long time ago, but hoped that he remembered it.

Shigaraki didn’t say anything, but he walked to the bathroom. He stripped out of all his clothes, leaving them in a pile next to the bathroom, and walked in. Once the sound of water running came, Midoriya went ahead to collect the clothes.

They smelled putrid. He almost wanted to throw them out then and there. There were some maggots that had caught onto it. With no choice, he took it to the kitchen sink and plunged it into a collection of disinfect and bleach. There was no other way he could think of salvaging this mess.

...Was he supposed to wash it and then mend it? Or should he mend it and then wash them? He hesitated, wondering and wishing that he could just ask his mom, and wished that this place had internet or that his phone worked and could connect to the internet.

Well, now that he thought about it, he remembered his mom working on mending things late at night, right? So it would have to be after the wash right? He doesn’t remember clearly. Hopefully, he wasn’t wrong.

He tossed the clothes into the wash. He returned to the kitchen, and started cooking the next week’s worth of curry.

-

“Oh, the clothes fit you better than I thought.”

He said that, but Shigaraki was way taller than Midoriya. It should worry the young man that he was thin enough that he managed to fit into the clothes, but the sweatpants came up to his knee and his shirt looked way too short. There was a towel over his head, and his hair was still dripping. It felt too familiar to reach and dry his hair for him or something, so he didn’t do anything.

More importantly, the laundry would be done soon. He would have to sit this uncomfortably just for a little bit longer.

“I hope you like curry,” Midoriya said, getting up to get him some rice and placing some curry onto it. “I didn’t know what you liked, so I hope it’s okay that it’s mild.”

He placed the bowl down at the placement where he normally would have sat, and took a seat across from him. It made his stomach twist around. What was he doing? Why was he doing this? How could he take one look at the guy who once terrorized him and his friends and feed him dinner?

"...Is it okay…?" Shigaraki’s cracked lips barely even moved to speak, and he was so quiet that Midoriya had to stop chewing to hear him.

"... You eat because you're hungry," Midoriya said. “Do what you want, but I would rather you didn’t waste food in my house.”

As it turns out, the world without the Ultimate Evil and the Ultimate Good was a world where he and Shigaraki can sit together at the same dinner table.

He doesn’t know what to do with this thought. He doesn't know what to do with this feeling. But he’s not someone that could look at someone who looks like Shigaraki and turn away. He doesn’t know how to.

When someone looks at him like that, looks at him like they wanted to be saved, Midoriya only has one instinctual response.

### Night & Morning After a Warm Dinner

“Go ahead and sleep on the bed,” Midoriya said. “I get up early, so I’ll sleep outside.”

Shigaraki feels like something is misplaced, but watching Midoriya take the pillow off the bed, presumably his, and give him a wave, he doesn’t think it’s in his place to say anything.

Why was he here anyways? This.. did he die? Maybe he died, and that’s why it was like this. How else could he ever get something this nice? It must be true, that he died in that dumpster, finally starving or because someone knifed him in the back.

But at the same time, if he died and this was a dream, why couldn’t it have been a beautiful woman instead of some prepubescent brat?

With more questions than answers, Shigaraki didn’t know what to do. So instead, he accepted the situation at face value, laid down on the bed and slept. He was full, warm, and tired. There was nothing else for him to do right now, right?

If he wakes up in the morning, and he’s still here, then he guessed that it really is his reality now. He’ll deal with that then.

-

When he woke up in the morning, he understood that this was no dream.

He got out of bed, surprised that the young man was coming out of the bathroom, and kept quiet instead. It sounded like he had… come back inside after a run? From his clothes and the time, Shigaraki thought that it must be that the young man left to go on a run then.

Didn’t he sleep after him? How could he get up so early?

The energy kids had were ridiculous. Still, Shigaraki couldn’t help but notice that it was still just the two of them. The hallway had some more doors, and he assumed that there was another bedroom, but there were only the two of them here. Were his parents on a trip or something?

He didn’t know. He didn’t know anything. He barely knew the kid’s name. He was just some guy in a stranger’s house, after eating their food and spending the night. Shouldn’t he be kicked out by now?

He waisted until Midoriya went back out to the kitchen, and he finally built up the courage to open the door.

On the ground were his clothes, neatly folded and a pair of archery gloves on top of them.

-

“...You’re a middle schooler?”

Midoriya looked up from where he was tying his shoes. He got up and gave a confused smile, before remembering that he’s wearing his school uniform and gave a nod.

“Yes?”

The red eyes stared at him and he looked down at the ground.

“Breakfast is in the kitchen,” he said.

### Bakugo’s eyes -

They’re red.

“What?”

“Oh, did I say that aloud?” Midoriya said, and then he laughed. “I just thought, your eyes are really red.”

Bakugo blinked at him before his face turned just as red. He looked away, a firm scowl on his face.

“Kacchan, your face is really red, are you sick? Maybe you should go to the nurse.”

“Maybe you should shut up,” the man growled out, baring his teeth.

“Kacchan, I have some water, maybe that will help.” Clearly, Midoriya was unnerved by anything.

The blond narrowed his eyes.

Now that he’s met someone who doesn’t cower, even when they know what his quirk was, when he glared at them, he wished it wasn’t someone so annoying.

-

“Kacchan, can we compare answers?”

Bakugo wondered if he died, he would be left alone.

“Kacchan? Did you hear me? Are you okay?”

He closed his eyes, no way. This was a kid that showed up to his house to pick him up so they could go to school together. He doesn't have any idea how he even knew where he lived.

“Don’t you have better things to do?” he tried, giving in.

He would rather the people that poured spoiled milk on him, or the kids that dedicatedly ruined his textbooks. Getting hit by a biker group would have been better than...

Midoriya’s beaming smile squashed any hopes to be left alone.

“What’s better than spending time with you?”

But the worst part was him and his stupid, stupid, stupid self who felt like it was nice for someone to care.

### “Shigaraki” & Deku \*Names

He doesn’t do anything except read. Well, to be fair, it wasn’t like there was much to do in this apartment other than read. He didn’t have a phone, and there was no computer or laptop so it wasn’t like he could play games or surf the internet. Although there was a TV, there was nothing else. No cable box, no satellite, no remote, and the other day, he learned that the TV wasn’t even plugged in, and that there was no outlet for the TV to plug into on the wall it was leaning up against.

But books? It felt like that’s all this place had. Books, so many books (but no bookcases) that there were stacks of books lining up the walls until they came up to Shimura’s chest. From his short gaze, he could see that there was all sorts of books, ranging from children’s fairy tales to plant encyclopedias to fantasy light novels.

Well, it would probably do Shimura some good to just stay the fuck away from the world so…

After spending the first week doing nothing but sleeping and eating when Midoriya left him something to eat, he started to read. Surely, if there was something this guy didn’t want him to know about, he would have put it away by now or told him so. He pulled out books and read them right in front of him, and even though he looked surprise, didn’t say anything. Didn’t even tell him to put it away when he was done.

Weren’t people supposed to be naggy and annoying? Were nosy people who shoved their way into another person’s life supposed to be this quiet?

So far, nothing. Not even a ‘lock the door behind you when you leave.’ Not that Shimura ever left, of course. But who trusted a stranger like this anyways? Shigaraki could have stolen… something worthwhile here, maybe ransacked the rooms or trashed the place, but nothing. Deku didn’t even ask him to clean up after himself. He didn’t ask if he wanted seconds before dumping another fucking bowl of rice and curry into his plate.

(And no one needed to know that Shigaraki scraped that plate clean.)

Fuck, they didn’t even know each other’s name. Damn. Shimura couldn’t even remember the last time he gave a shit about someone and their name.

Shimura didn’t even know his name until he went digging through his schoolbag for his student ID.

… Midoriya Izuku, huh? Well, “Midoriya Inko” was the name that was written on the inside cover of most of the books. So he supposed that it was his family name, and he was the kid or whatever of this “Midoriya Inko.”

Okay, he thought. It’ll be easy, he thought. All he needed to do was say his name. Then, maybe he could fix the misunderstanding that his name was Shigaraki. It wasn’t, by the way. He was Shimura Tenko. He doesn’t even know where Shigaraki came from. Did he mistake him for someone else? He had to have, since otherwise, he just picked a stranger up out of the trash like some lost kitten.

He didn’t think that this guy even knew about who he was related to. Concerning the lack of outside information in his apartment, and modern technology in general, he’s not shocked. In fact,

So, he’ll just suck it up. He can do this. He’ll start with this. It’ll be easy.

And really, if all he needed to do was say that something was easy for him to do it, he would have never ended up in that dumpster bin.

-

“You don’t have to wake up to see me off,” his landlord said, as he slipped his shoes. He straighted up, looking incredibly young in his stupid middle school uniform and a bulging, bright yellow backpack. “But thank you for it.”

‘Don’t be stupid,” Shimura said, rubbing his eyes, “I’m going to go to sleep now,” he said. He sounded so tired that his voice slurred all his words together, but the young man smiled like he spoke clearly and certainly instead.

Shimura shrugged back and ignored that blooming confusion in his chest again. Once upon a time, he once asked his mom why she bothered getting up to say goodbye to her husband or waiting up at night for him to return. She said that it was because they were married.

So what did that make him?

“Then, sleep well. I’ll be back around four,” Midoriya said, like they have been together for a long time.

“Yeah,” Shimura said, waving his hand dismissively.

“Oh, there’s some food in the fridge if you get hungry. Make sure to microwave it before you eat it.”

What, was he six or something? He rolled his eyes, but he didn’t feel annoyed. Maybe it was because Midoriya was two and a half heads smaller than him. Maybe it was because he didn’t care about anything anymore. Maybe it was because it didn’t sound like Midoriya didn’t trust him (like come on, he was just letting him stay here, if that wasn’t dumb trust, he didn’t know what else to call it), but that it sounded like he was just worried.

Bedies, it was just curry anyways.

Midoriya reached for the door and pulled it open. Down four doors, another door opened and a young elementary school child raced past Midoriya and their front door.

“Bye mom!” the kid yelled over his shoulder as his mother yelled after him.

“You have a good day, okay? I better not get another call from the teacher!” she called after him. It was such a normal and average occurrence that Shimura is certain that many other people in the neighborhood use them as an alarm clock. If he wasn’t already awake, this would have done it. Why were all mothers so loud?

“I’ll be back by dinner,” Deku said, waving at the embarrassed mother down the way. If she was so embarrassed, why did she yell in the first place? “See you then, Shigaraki!” he called out as he stepped out.

Who’s Shigaraki? He wondered. Why did he keep calling him Shigaraki? While he was curious about it, he slipped up and said the thing that he had been practicing saying for the last week or so.

“Yeah, bye, Izuku.”

The gentle smile that was always on his face was finally wiped clean off his face. His eyes were wide-open, his jaw hanging uselessly as he stared at Shimura until his grip on the door slipped and it came swinging back to hit his head.

It made an impact with a dull sound, but he didn’t even blink.

“...You… You’re going to be late,” Shimura said, his face turning red.

Oh god, this was mortifying.

“Y… Yeah,” the young boy, Midoriya Izuku, nodded slowly and almost tripped on his own foot on his way out. The door closed and Shimura took a deep breath.

“God, Tenko, you fucking idiot.”

He forgot to tell him what his name was.

Whatever, he’ll do it when he comes home tonight.

And Shigaraki would forget because Midoriya would come home with a blackeye and a lopsided grin decorated with a split lip. He would put those worries into the book he was reading like a bookmark and forget as he entered full panic-mode, even as Midoriya laughed it off.

As it turned out, people didn’t need to know each other’s name to care.

The world slowly continued to unravel.

### Convenience Store

Midoriya is 13 for the second time when he gets his first job. He apologizes to Deku-kun in his head, but he had no way of contacting Deku’s dad to see if there was a way they could figure out a budget, and he wasn’t going to use the money he sent in for himself.

It felt dirty. This was the money that Deku’s father wanted to give to Deku, so Midoriya didn’t want to touch it. And although Deku’s dad somehow paid the rent and bills, it left their grocery bill unattended too.

And so, here he was.

One nice thing about everyone living in the gray-area of the law was that there was always someone that was just as desperate. Midoriya applies and gets the job because they’re in serious need for someone to do the closing shifts.

And Midoriya, who didn’t want to become desperate for money and didn’t want to spend the money that his dad was sending him every month, take the job. To keep it quiet between the law and avoid child labor laws, he and the manager agreed to pay in cash. Paperwork-wise, he didn’t technically work there, but was a kid that came in and helped out for chump change.

He may be paid less than his coworkers (which he expected) but he was also allowed to take anything that was going to expire at the end of the shift. Just like that, his food problems were solved.

And so, Midoriya worked the graveyard shifts between 11pm and 5am. This meant he spent majority of the time restocking and taking care of the shipments.

-

And then, he met Spinner.

He was obviously not Spinner, since he was driving a truck and waiting for Mdiroiya to finish signing off the delivery slip, but it wasn’t like Midoriya really knew his name either.

So he just stared at him, and never realized that the man who was a faithful member of the League back when they first formed, was someone who could look so tired.

“...Can you just sign this?”

“Oh!” Midoriya jolted out of his thoughts, and did just that. He gave a shy gaze upwards and then, despite knowing that he shouldn’t spoke up, “By umh… Uh any chance, would you like an energy drink?”

The older man turned to him and blinked back. “Huh?”

Midoriya could feel his face flush, but he managed to hold his ground, “You uh… you look really tired. And we’re just the halfway point for you, right?” he asked. His eyes flitted to the clock on the side of the wall, it was four am. And Midoriya knew very well how awful some of the last couple of hours can be on shift. “And I was going to grab something for myself, and I thought I could offer. Oh, you don’t have to, if you don’t want to, but I-”

“If you have any cold pocari sweat,” the man spoke up, and Midoriya watched him blush as he turned away. It was weird to not see him with a scarf or knives or the weird eye-mask thing, but he wouldn’t mind replacing those past images with the one in front of him, “...that would be nice.”

“Of course.”

### Monday’s Harder

By itself, his job isn’t hard. Neither is his workout. Neither is school. His emotional stability never existed, and he’s always been good at taking things one day at a time. Which was fine. He was fine.

He placed his head underneath the running water of the outdoor faucet. The water ran down his head and neck, and he reminded himself that he’s not tired. He had to find out a way to get back home. Quickly. Or else he might actually lose his mind.

But he’s not tired. He’ll get through this, the same way he got through everything else.

He wiped down his face and took a deep breath.

Going home, getting back, that was his first priority. That was the most important thing for him to do. That was his absolute first priority, and it must be his only priority. For himself, he cannot let that change.

And so, since this isn’t his world and there are no heroes here, he made the solemn promise to himself. He will not save anyone here. He will not help anyone here. He knew this, and he needed to embody that. He needed to…

Walking by the convenience store, he saw a shock of lavender. He stared, tilting his head as he tried to remember why this felt so familiar when the man with lavender-hair turned around and he felt his heart drop.

It was Shinsho.

It was(n’t his) Shinsho.

It couldn’t be, since Shinsho would have grabbed something off the shelf and pocketed it. Uh what?

No, no nononono.

No Shinsho, in any place, in any world, should ever be shoplifting-

### Alcohol

“Hey, I found some beer. Can I have it?”

For some strange reason, Midoriya felt his entire body stiffen at the mention of the drink. He rolled the words in his head for a bit and then nodded. It was probably a leftover from Deku-kun’s dad, and he never had a chance to clean up everything. He must have missed it completely.

“Uh… Yeah, sure.”

Beer expires right? Well, when Deku’s dad comes back, he’ll tell him to buy some more if he wants it so badly. He knows that it’s bad to waste food, and alcohol isn’t cheap, right?

A wide grin came onto Shigaraki’s face, nearly predatory in nature, and the young man watched him leave dubiously. He didn’t doubt the man, couldn’t find it in his heart to doubt him, but Midoriya really hoped that he wasn’t supporting bad habits or anything like that. He didn’t really know how to deal with alcoholics aside from handing them over to the police after they caused an incident.

Well, one beer couldn’t be that bad, right?

A sharp yelp and a loud crash came from the kitchen, not even three minutes later.

Midoriya abandoned his studies and ran for the kitchen, and promptly blacked out.

-

The next time he came to, he was bent over the toilet bowl, staring down at vomit floating around in the water. Someone’s hands were on his back, and he stiffened as a gut-instinct fear that he was going to be kicked to death instead. His eyes turned and found Shigaraki’s wide-eyes instead. Pale-faced and trembling, he never knew that the man could make that expression and when he realized that he had probably caused that expression, felt a flood of guilt and relief all at once.

Like, good, Shigaraki can still feel concern. But bad, because Midoriya never wanted to be the one to trigger it.

“...Sorry,” Midoriya said, his voice hoarse.

“Yeah, you should be,” Shigaraki replied back, but his voice was too shaky to come off as heartless as he intended it too. “W-What the hell is wrong with you? If it bothered you this much, why did you keep it?”

The smell of alcohol was pugnant, and Midoriya couldn’t remember ever smelling something so awful before. He wasn’t much of a drinker where he was from, but he was no stranger to it. It has never smelled that bad before.

“I…” he what? What could he say? “I thought I was stronger,” he decided instead.

Right when he thought that he was getting stronger and that he was getting used to the life he tries to have here, it seems reality is hellbent on making sure he couldn’t. He clenched his jaw tightly.

“Sorry,” he said. “Go ahead and enjoy a drink, I… I think I’m just going to go to bed early today.”

-

The following morning, he found several empty bottles of alcohol in the trashcan. The sight of it makes his heart heavy with an emotion that wasn’t his, and he wonders if Deku-kun was actually alive somewhere deep and far away in Midoriya’s subconsciousness or something. If this was a gut-reaction from being in this body, then Midoriya despaired for small Deku-kun to have these kinds of reactions.

“Aw shit, I missed some,” Shigaraki said behind him. He startled and spun around to see those piercing red eyes land on him. “Sorry about that. I’ll take care of it.”

“No, it’s okay,” Midoriya shook his head, “Sorry for ruining the mood. I don’t… I don’t want you to think that you have to change yourself for me. It’s not like I can just live without ever interacting with alcohol, so don’t worry-”

A gloved hand, the gloves that Midoriya got him, landed on his curls and ruffled it.

“You know, I would have never ever thought that I could ever touch someone like this,” Shigaraki spoke up instead, silencing the younger man. He stood there for a moment and took a deep breath, “If it’s about change and stuff, you’re way too late.”

Curious green eyes stared up at him and the man gave him a small smile. The stretch of lip was clearly uncomfortable, and he wasn’t used to it, and the smile looked awkward as a result.

“Let’s both live selfishly, alright?”

His eyes welled up with tears, another similarity between Deku-kun and Izuku. And if Deku’s life is even half as hard and awful as he thinks it is, he’s glad that he still has the capability to cry.

“...Are you… crying?”

“No, no,” Midoriya said, sniffling, “I’m just glad.”

“Huh?”

Green eyes met red eyes and Midoriya couldn’t believe that a day where having a (not) villain in his house could make him so relieved.

“I’m really, really glad that we met.”

The man quickly looked away, as though suddenly uncomfortable with the situation. And he walked away.

“God, what a farce. Hurry up and go to school,” he said, but Midoriya was observant. So even if he would never point it out, he could see that Shigaraki’s ears were bright red with his blurry vision.

That morning, when they ate curry for breakfast, Midoriya made sure to give Shigaraki the biggest cuts of potatoes.

The older man ate all of it without complaint, so Midoriya has reason to believe that his gratitude reached him today.

Shigaraki didn’t know it, but he saved Midoriya.

### Aizawa \*My Teacher is a What?

Life was fine and almost okay and right when he thinks he can get used to living here, something like this happens and he has to pretend that he is willing to accept this as the New Normal.

He was walking back from the convenience store, and in his plastic bag was the ice cream that he wanted to share with Shimura.

He is quickless. This is a fact of life that seems to be constant wherever he goes. It’s something that used to really bother him, but these days, he only regrets it in moments like this.

“What’s the matter? C’mon, if you don’t fight back, I’ll just cut that fucking face of yours-”

And Midoriya thinks that Deku has always wanted to be saved. He has always wanted to be saved but that was never an option for him. It’s a shame, but for the guy that he could have never saved, he swears up and down that he will save anyone and everyone that he stumbles acorss.

In a world where there are no heroes, there are no villains, everyone is lost and it’s just a matter of when Midoriya finds them. But those that he finds, he swears that he’ll save them.

“Hey!” he snapped out, pulling a Power Ranger mask over his face as he ran into the alleyway at full speed. He tackled one of them down and quickly got up to his feet.

He moves faster and he is stronger. His hard work was really starting to show.

He stood there and pulled his fists up. His mind and heart raced a thousand miles a minute, but he wasn’t going to just abandon someone to this.

“This is uh… really bad!” he yelled out, hoping that the sound will attract more people. “So uh! Don’t do it!”

He has never been good at talking to people. Since coming here, it feels like he constantly puts his foot in his mouth.

“Who the fuck are you-”

“I already called the police,” Midoriya continued, pocketing his phone, “You sure you wanna stick around?”

“Fuck… whatever it’s not worth it.”

“Yeah, c’mon Kiina.”

And they left.

Midoriya took a deep breath, dropping his hands to his side.

“Wow, to think I’d be saved by some virgin kid. But thanks,” the familiar voice came from behind him, sounding overly sarcastic in a way he thinks only a villain could manage. “A host’s face is his livelihood.” Midoriya felt all the blood in his body turn to ice. He turned in absolute, gobsmacked horror, as his former Homeroom Teacher stared right back at him.

The last time he saw Aizawa Shota in a suit with his hair pulled back, he was standing in front of cameras and apologizing for something he had no control over. Tsuyu once mentioned that he their teacher was a handsome man if he would just clean up, but he couldn’t see anything past the guilt. Since then, the only time Midoriya saw him ‘cleaned up’ was when someone died and they saw each other at the funeral. Needless to say, Midoriya does not have good connotations with a ‘cleaned up’ Aizawa.

As it was, the sight of him right now made his stomach coil uncomfortably and his eyes water instinctively.

“...You know, you’re the one that jumped in. Why are you the one crying? Was it that scary?”

The man stood up, towering over him as he tugged on his tie and stared down at the young man. His voice started to come out as a low purr.

“So what, should I be comforting you, then? Should I take you on a date while I’m at it, my heroic savior? You’re a little young, so I bet you want something sweet before , don’t you?”

He took a bold step forward, and Midoriya froze where he stood. A fear he couldn’t name crept up inside of him, making him feel as though time stopped.

“...Well?”

“Uh…” Midoriya’s brain short-circuited as he tried to find his words. He tried to remember who he was, what he was doing, where he was going, but all he saw was the red eyes of his teacher and felt his heart break. “No, I’m okay. I need to go home now.”

And with a control he didn’t think he possessed, he left the alleyway, scurrying out like a rat and right when he got to the place he abandoned his shopping goods stoped. He reached into the bag, where he had bought some new bandages and ointment to replace the ones that he used up at home, and turned over his shoulder. The man stared right back at him, watching him in a way that made his skin crawl and stomach churn. Did his teacher always look that heartless? Was he able to look that heartless?

He marched right up to where the man with the face of his former homeroom teacher stood and thrusted the bag towards his chest.

“Ah,” he said. And the man stared at the bad and then back up at him. “Uh. Ah…” he blinked, words failing him but all he could see was that there was no scar under his eye.

If people could miss someone so bad that they could get sick, Midoriya was about to die.

His eyes watered as he remembered the teacher who once told him that he would keep an eye out for him. He tried to remember that dead-eye smile that only Aizawa could manage, and trusted the bag into the man’s broad chest. His eyes watered and burned and he turned on his heel without further fanfare and ran.

-

He made it home, and Shigaraki came out to greet him, as he always did.

“There you are. Well? Did they have the mayo…”

He trailed off, and Midoriya looked up at him.

“...Who made you cry?” he asked, voice low and dangerous.

“...I’m not crying,” Midoriya said, sniffling. “I’m hungry.”

The older man looked like he didn’t believe him for a second.

“...Alright, so where’s the groceries?”

“I gave it to a guy on the street.”

The taller man blanched. “What’s the point of helping people if we’re the ones that suffer because of it?” he asked.

Midoriya shook his head.

“It’s suffering because no one got helped,” he said.

### Jun\*Recovery Girl

Recovery Girl is Recovery Girl. Except, where he remembered everyone’s favorite nurse, was this angry woman that chased people away by throwing candy at them.

Huh.

### Heat \*ShiMi

“Aren’t you hot?”

Midoriya wiped at his chin, where the sweat from his face seemed to accumulate. It was a gross feeling, to be dripping in sweat and stuck in damp clothes, but he didn’t mind it too much. There were worse fates.

“Yeah, a little,” he said with a nervous laugh.

Why would Shigaraki ask that? He didn’t think that Shigarakiwould notice, or even care, about Midoriya and his level of comfort concerning the weather. Oh, wait, could it be-

“Oh, are you hot? Do you want to get a fan?” he asked. Electric fans were all the rage, even if their apartment was equipped with an A/C unit. He doesn’t like raking up the bill to the place that isn’t his, but he didn’t want Shigaraki to be baking here if he could help it. That would just be rude.

“I… no, it’s not that,” Shigaraki said. His face flushed darkly, and Mirodirya frowned, was he sick? Was it heatstroke? The apartment was much cooler than it was outside, but he didn’t want Shigaraki to be too uncomfortable. Still, he shook his head, “It’s nothing, nevermind.”

Still, Midoriya cranked up the A/C. His scars got itchy when it got too hot.

### Shopping Together \*ShigaMido

“...What?” Midoriya gaped.

“It’s… heavy right?” he said, “So I’ll go too. Since we need rice.”

The old image of Shigaraki, laughing as people and buildings and society disintegrated at his fingertips, seemed so far away. And Midoriya nodded back, even though Shigaraki was looking at the wall, his bangs carefully covering his eyes, the young man could see that he was blushing from his ears to his neck.

It was so cute.

He pursed his lips, afraid he will say something dumb.

“It’s just around the corner,” he said, breathless.

“Then, let’s get going. C’mon, I’m hungry,” Shigaraki muttered back.

Since he got here, Shigaraki finally took his first steps out of the apartment.

-

“Oh, and Shigaraki,” Midoriya said as the door closed behind him. He waited for the taller man, who was sweating and panting a little after their walk, to look at him before he continued. “Welcome back.”

The red eyes widened comically, and if the circumstances weren’t so sad, Midoriya would have laughed.

Often, he had wondered if there was a way to save Shigaraki. These days, he was coming onto a conclusion that just made him sad.

“When someone says that to you, you should respond with, “I’m back.’”

“I…” he started, hesitated, stopped himself, but Midoriya patiently waited at the doorway. He would wait as long as he needed to, and was rewarded when Shigaraki took a deep breath. “I’m back,” he said, his voice as quiet as the breeze.

The time when Shigaraki broke into his school during a training exercise seemed so goddamn far away.

Midoriya grinned at him, and headed into his home. He didn’t know how long Shigaraki planned to stay, but he didn’t really care. Shigaraki could stay as long as he needed to.

In another world, he didn’t even know that he could be saved. That’s why, in this world, he won’t make that same mistake. Even if this wasn’t his body or his life or the Shigaraki that crippled so many heroes, he couldn’t turn away.

### Dabi \*the other stray

Midoriya was on his way home from school when he found a man slumped against the wall. It was raining, and with his new black-eye from a stray elbow during gym class, Midoriya knew that he had hell to answer when he came home and Shigaraki saw his face. It’s already been an hour longer than it should have been, and no matter what he said, Midoriya knew that he’s probably been watching the clock since noon.

And at the same time, he can’t pretend he didn’t see this man. It’s a face that he’ll never forget, if only because he used to be haunted by him. The staples are gone. He had some burn scars, but nothing as bad as what he remembered. It was a small mercy, he supposed.

He looked exhausted, and as though he was waiting for death itself. He had nothing to live for, no reason to even try to avoid death, and looking at him, Midoriya would never wish this upon anyone.

“...Hey,” Midoriya said, tipping his umbrella over him so that he got a temporary reprieve. He waited, and watched as lifeless blue eyes finally looked up at him. “If you don’t have any place to go, would you like to come with me?”

-

Why did he do that? Why did he just ask him to come with him? Why was this his new gut reaction to a familiar face? How come he still doesn’t know how to say no?

However, the most important question was standing right behind him.

Why did Dabi come with him?

If, after he had offered help, Dabi had said no, Midoriya could have said that he tried and would have left him there and would have forgotten about him… No, that’s a lie. Even if Dabi refused to come with him, Midoriya would have bought him something to eat and left his umbrella with him. To stick his nose into other people’s business is what he’s all about.

But those were actions that he would take. Those were things that he did.

Still, and he risked a look at Dabi, who didn’t even pretend to notice, he didn’t know what to think about Dabi. He seemed to be Dabi, but his scars were nowhere as bad as he remembered. For one, there was some discoloration, but they looked like old scars. There were no metal staples to be seen either. He wasn’t a medical expert or anything, but maybe it meant that he wasn’t as injured? Or never had to be that injured?

But the part that bothered him the most was something else. He was… like a doll. Tthe ease that Dabi followed him was unnerving. When they got to the staircase for his apartment though, he was a sweating, panting mess.

He stared for a moment longer before he crouched down in front of him and pulled him onto his back. He slumped like he couldn’t keep himself up anymore. The man was running a fever, was that why he wasn’t putting up a fight? Does that mean that he did want to live?

Deku carried him up two and a half floors. The heat that Dabi emitted was unnerving.

This man, who once laughed as he set fire to their summer vacation, seemed to be staring off into space. But when Midoriya could feel his gaze. It was heavy, and it took everything inside of him to keep from getting jittery. He could only hope that he didn’t come off as nervous energy.

Please, Midoriya begged inwardly, please just say something. The suspense was awful and bad for his heart.

“I’m back,” Midoriya said, opening the door as best he could while making sure he wasn’t dragging parts of Dabi. Honestly, he was so… long. He shoved the thought to the side, as he heard footsteps coming closer. Somewhere inside of him, he still felt a little fluttery at the thought that he had someone waiting for him.

“Oh, Izuku, welcome back. What took…”

There was a short silence before Shigaraki’s hand shot out to grab his cheek. Even without looking at him, he could feel the piercing stare landing on his black eye.

“Who did this,” he demanded.

“I did. You know how clumsy I am-”

“Clumsy enough to bring home another man? What’s that.”

If possible, his voice turned even colder.

Times like this, Midoriya thought that coming from another world is useless, since he still had no fucking clue what made Dabi work for Shigaraki in the first place. They had to have gotten along to some degree, right? As it was, he just wanted to put the man down. He was not nearly as light as he looked.

“No idea,” he said, “But he’s staying with us until he leaves. C’mon, let me come in, okay?”

With us. It came out without him really thinking about it. Should he ask? Did Shigaraki have plans? Why was he in that dumpster all those weeks ago? Was that something he could push for? Did anyone miss him? When was he planning on leaving?

Midoriya so caught up with everything that was happening at school and work, totally forgot to ask anytime before. The fact that he had started to look forward to their dinners together and gentle greetings had nothing to do with this.

Well, Midoriya had a good idea on what the answer to those questions must be. So, for the time being, he supposed that it was fine if Shigaraki was here, no matter how long that would be. He doesn’t know why Shigaraki became a villain in the first place, so maybe it was better that he was here, so he could keep an eye on him and stuff. Then, maybe Shigaraki could help him with Dabi, and eventually the others, and then the whole ‘League of Villain’ thing could be totally put down.

Midoriya placed his dripping wet umbrella to the side, pushing pas Shigaraki and took a step in. In times like this, he couldn’t falter. He toed of his shoes (they were soaking wet and he was so grateful that he had hardwood because that’ll be easier to clean up), and as gently as he could, placed Dabi onto the ground. He leaned the man against the wall.

“I’ll get you a towel, and then something to eat.” He turned and gave a smile to Dabi, “Make yourself comfortable.”

Right now, he’ll leave the last choice to Dabi. Without looking backwards at the man, he meandered to the kitchen. It’s Dabi’s choice if he comes in. If he doesn’t come, it’s not Midoriya’s problem anymore. Yup.

And then, to his surprise, Shigaraki walked by him and threw a towel at him, and another towel to the man against the wall…

“You’re dripping everywhere. Stop that.”

Dabi stayed, huh?

He could think of a thousand reasons why this was a bad idea. Dabi’s quirk is cremation and there were a lot of books here. And this apartment would be ash in a second, then what will Deku’s dad come to? Augh, in addition to that, it was clear that Dabi had nothing. No clothes, currency, possibly injured. Midoriya was barely able to keep himself and Shigaraki floating above water, but another person?

Dabi was silent and shuffled into the kitchen, dripping wet with a towel over his head and those tired blue eyes remained on the ground.

Of course, Midoriya doesn’t think he’s a burden.

“Is curry okay?”

He didn’t respond, and Shigaraki scowled.

“I can’t fucking believe you just brought in some random fucker,” he sighed, running his hand through his hair. He started grumbling and griping under his breath, and Midoriya distantly remembers a time when Shigaraki gave him shit for mumbling so much.

Progress was a strange thing.

-

The three of them sat down to eat dinner. It was the same curry that they have been eating since Monday. He doesn’t like how unresponsive everyone is, and he felt his stomach knot at the thought that his cooking was trash. Shigaraki has been mechanically eating and avoiding all of questions about his day.

Introduction! Midoriya could slap himself in his stupidity and lack of foresight.

“Uh, Dabi, this is Shigaraki,” he said, motioning at the man next to him. He turned to Shigaraki with the most patient smile he could manage, “Shigaraki, this is Dabi. We met earlier today.”

Dabi wasn’t even eating, and Shigaraki stopped to give Midoriya this Look. While he applauded himself for getting a different reaction out of the two, he didn’t think this was any better.

They could be quiet but Midoriya swears that it’s never been like this. Please, he wanted to beg Shigaraki, please work with him. The silence was reaching an unbearable amount and he children’t taste dinner anymore.

No, no, Midoriya, he tries to tell himself. He needed to calm down and think. Why are they so quiet? Let’s see…

The curry was made two days ago, and now that he thought about it, he and Shigaraki have just been changing flavors of curry, but essentially, they’ve only been eating curry since he came to this world. Was he tired of it? And this was how he was going to show it? He could just say it. Shigaraki once destroyed the foundation of a building so that it fell on him, so surely he’ll be able to tell him that he wants to eat something else. Unless...

Could it be… that his curry tastes bad? He knows his cooking could… be questionable at times. He once spent four months once in Kacchan’s Brutal Cooking Training From Hell and it was fucking awful. He had diarrhea for weeks. His mom was so worried about him that she started to try and teach him too, and that led to the Disaster of May that made Kamui Woods come to help them out. But he thought he got better.

Uuuu. Facing the past is as hard as trying to make a new future.

He looked up at Dabi and then the food and was certain that whatever Dabi’s facing is 1000x worse than having to explain to Aizawa why he was in trouble with the law for the second time that week, but when he thought about the people he used to have, he felt cold.

He missed them.

“...Help yourself. And if you’re not hungry, you don’t have to force yourself,” Midoriya said. “I selfishly brought you here, but you are free to do what you want to. You can stay, you can leave, I don’t really care. If you want to live selfishly,” he slowly brought his eyes to the man who only stares at him when he wasn’t being stared at, “then I think that’s fine too.”

He stood up at that.

“I’m done eating,” he said, even though he has no idea when he finished eating. What a waste of seafood curry, he thought to himself, if he doesn’t even remember what it tasted like. He turned to Shigaraki, “Thanks for the food. I’ll be studying until work. Let me know when you’re done and I’ll do the dishes.”

Shigaraki didn’t even look at him, and Dabi’s eyes never left his bowl.

“...You can take a bath, too. Just toss your laundry in with the others. I’ll get you something to wear.” Midoriya said, more to Dabi. Shigaraki was, apparently, bigger than his dad, and Dabi was bigger than Shigaraki, but surely they’ll have something that could fit, right?

Despite having people at his dinner table, it was stifling.

-

When Midoriya got out of the shower, he saw that everyone had finished eating and put their dishes in the sink. He’ll get to that, and he’ll start on his homework.

Shigaraki was reading on the ground against the wall. It looked uncomfortable, but he didn’t know if he had enough money to get a sofa. The thought ran through his head and he swallowed it down. This wasn’t even his place, he shouldn’t do anything like that.

The bathroom door was closed though, he hoped that Dabi was taking a much needed shower.

When he got out, he will need to rest, fever and all. With that in mind, he went ahead to grab some blankets. Realizing that he didn’t have any pillows (and he didn’t want to enter Deku’s parents room under any circumstances), he gave up his. It’s fine, he didn’t really need a pillow anyways. The weather wasn’t too hot, but he knew that the man would need a blanket.

Hopefully, Dabi will find some comfort here.

-

Midoriya nearly jumped out of his skin when he realized that there was someone climbing onto the futon he was in. He could feel cold sweat dripping down his face and closed his hand into a fist. His mind raced for a memory, but he couldn’t find anything.

And then, he realized that it was Dabi.

He blinked and sat up. The man had laid down on top of the futon, pinning the blanket down and making it hard for Midoriya to make any adjustments without losing the part of the blanket he had. He’s not sure why that made him wake up in a fright, so he chalked it up to some lingering trauma Deku had that he had to deal with. And honestly? He was really tired and just wanted to sleep at the moment. He doesn’t want to deal with unseeable nightmares or strange strays that were giving him mixed emotions and conflicting thoughts.

His emotional state was making him run on fumes, and today really didn’t help. Still, he caught a shiver run down Dabi’s body and knew he had to do something.

“...At least get under the covers,” he sighed, tugging on the blanket under him, “You’re going to catch a cold.”

Shockingly, Dabi obeyed. He kept facing away, however, and Midoriya did the same. At least he brought his blanket and the pillow too.

“...Thank you, Dabi,” he said quietly.

He’s not too sure for what. Was he thankful that Dabi showered? Was he thankful that Dabi listened to him? Was he thankful that Dabi hadn’t lit his entire home on fire? He didn’t think that was it. Laying on his back, he thought a little longer about it. It wasn’t like he was going to be sleeping anytime soon.

Sharing the covers with someone that once made every effort to kill him and all his friends (even if it was from another world) made him uncomfortable. Still, as someone who had never had another body in the bed next to his since he was a child, the warmth at his back felt overwhelming and too little all at once.

The last thing he thought was that he was thankful that Dabi was letting him try to save him this time.

-

“...Hey, how come you guys were having a sleepover out here?” Shigaraki asked at the breakfast table.

Midoriya yawned back, still tired after the plaguing nightmares and the uncomfortable feeling of someone sleeping next to him. The morning run he had was particularly gruesome, failing to refresh him for the first time. He didn’t think he would be so uncomfortable with it, but he had woken up every ten minutes or so. As sad as it made him to think it, he had to chalk it up to something that Deku-kun’s body had learned.

It might take some time, but he would like to unlearn it for this body. Then, Deku-kun would have an easier time living in the future. It was one of the only things that he could do for the guy he stole the body of, and hopes that it’ll be enough to warrant forgiveness.

“It just happened,” Midoriya replied back, stifling a yawn behind his bowl. “It’s probably hard to sleep in a new place anyways.”

“So he slept with the guy who brought him here?”

The young man frowned. Did Shigaraki sleep wrong or something? It’s been a while since he’s sounded so… grouchy. “Don’t word it like that. We barely even touched,” he said. It wouldn’t be good for those kinds of rumors to start dogging Dabi. “Besides, between the two of us, I’m harmless.”

The older man thought about it, “Still, that’s just weird. Like, we don’t do any of that either. I’ve been here longer, too.”

There was a beat of silence as Midoriya’s mouth unhinged in his shock and Shigaraki’s ears turned red. He looked absolutely mortified, and briefly, the younger man thought it was endearing. Not grouchy then, he thought to himself.

“I-I didn’t mean-”

“Well,” Midoriya said, in a shocking moment of courage, “There’s plenty of room if you bring your own blanket and pillow.”

Shigaraki stared back at him, and Midoriya tried his best not to look at him in the face, knowing that his face was just as red. He stood up and put away his dishes.

“Let Dabi know that he’s welcome to the books and everything, okay?” he said.

-

When he came back, they were still tense and uncomfortable with each other. Or at least from Shigaraki’s end. He was glad that Dabi’s fever had subsided and he was better already.

Now that he thought about it, his Todoroki once explained to him that he and his father could outburn their fevers. Maybe it was something that people with fire-based quirks could do.

-

That night, Midoriya slept in between two S-class criminals, although they were just a pair of lost boys here. He wondered what had happened in his world to turn them into criminals, and wondered if all it took to stop an S-Class criminal from becoming a criminal in the first place was a warm meal and safe place to rest their head at night.

Hah, if only.

To his left, Dabi was curled up so that his back was a few inches away from him, and on his right, Shigaraki laid on his back, stiff as a board. His living room must be more cramped than he thought, if there was barely half a foot of space between them. It must be the books, he decided, since there was nothing else in the room to blame.

“If you sleep like that your back is going to hurt when you wake up,” he whispered quietly.

“I can’t believe you just invite men to sleep with you,” Shigaraki hissed back.

Midoriya huffed a sigh and burrowed deeper into the covers. Fuck this, he’s going to bed. “You agreed, so what are you doing, jumping under the covers with some stranger? For all you know, I could drug you and sell your organs or something.”

For the record, he wouldn’t.

“You wouldn’t,” Shigaraki snorted back, “If you did, you would have done it by now.”

Proving him right made him upset, but proving him wrong would be awful and Midoriya didn’t think he could live with himself afterwards. Well, whatever. He pouted and turned towards Dabi’s back. At least Dabi’s silent back wouldn’t tease him.

“Izuku,” Shigaraki said quietly, and Midoriya wondered why he was calling him by his first name to begin with. Why was the only person who called him by his name *him*? “Why’d you let me in?”

Honestly, he has no idea. Sometimes, he wished that he could go back in time and slap himself silly, but he knew better. Despite better judgement, Midoriya turned all the way around, to face Shigaraki, and watched the way his ashen bangs parted to see that Shigaraki’s eyes were closed. Since the curtains for his veranda did nothing to keep light in or out, the moonlight poured in. Against Shigaraki’s light blue hair and pale complexion, it looked like he was glowing.

“...Was I supposed to leave you there?”

“Everyone else did.”

The words stung Midoriya much more than he thought, and almost bitterly, he scowled. That kind of piss-poor inaction is the reason why so many people suffer everywhere. He doesn’t consider himself a saint, and in this world, he doesn’t want to take anymore from Deku-kun, but the thought of abandoning someone down on their luck because it wasn’t convenient made him upset. That was why Deku-kun was driven to such an awful mindscape. He couldn’t help but think that it was so easy for someone to just reach out their fucking hand-

“Whatever, that’s dumb. I didn’t do that because I…” he looked at Shigaraki and sighed deeply, expelling all his misplaced anger in a second. “I don’t want to be someone that pretends it’s okay when it’s not.”

He sighed, feeling way too riled up to sleep, but too tired to get up. He laid flat on his back.

“Don’t read too deeply into it. I just… don’t think,” he said. “G’night.”

There was no response, but he’s not shocked. In the time it took for Midoriya to formulate a response, he probably fell asleep.

And then, right when he was about to fall asleep, he swore someone wished him a good night back.

### Dabi \*Eyes

His eyes caught Midoriya, sitting on the couch with a book in his lap. Midoriya blinked at Dabi, and Dabi stared right back. His eyes were green, and he didn’t know why he focused on that. His expression twisted into something amused, and Dabi’s mind went blank. What was he reading again?

“...You know, that’s the first time you stared at me first.”

Midoriya grinned at him, and Dabi quickly averted his gaze.

His entire being warmed, like he just had a cup of hot chocolate. He’s certain that this must be embarrassment, since he had been caught staring, but he hadn’t felt embarrassment since he was a kid in that awful house. Somehow, he didn’t think it was this feeling.

He turned away, knowing that the young man was probably getting a kick out of getting a reaction out of him, but he couldn’t help but think that this wasn’t a loss.

Right when he fell asleep that night, he thought of those green eyes again. And wondered how being haunted by something could feel so pleasant.

### Convie \*Spinner’s Friend

“Oh, you’re working today too?” Midoriya asked when he came to get his signature.

As always, he signed it as though he was the manager.

“Yeah, thought I can say the same to you,” the lizard man said.

Midoriya gave a small laugh. “Bills aren’t going to pay themselves.”

The two gave a tired laugh in response. And this became another new thing that Midoriya started to look forward too. Once the paperwork was filled out, they began to unload the delivery.

“Are you a student? You look young,” Spinner said, handing some of the boxes down so that Midoriya could stack them onto a wheelaway.

“Yeah,” the young man nodded, “That’s why I only work during the weekends.”

“Oh, I see,” Spinner nodded back, “Me too, I only work deliveries on the weekend. I have a different job during the week.”

Midoriya, between school and work, honestly thought that he was too to function at times. He knew it was primarily because he always overestimated his body, and whenever he thinks he’s strong enough, he gets a rude awakening instead. Running two jobs just to make ends meet? He offers his quiet thanks to Deku’s dad for taking care of majority of the bills again in his head.

Green eyes found the gecko man working as hard as he always did, and then turned back to the cardboard box he was stacking. His hair was pulled back tightly into a ponytail, and he had a towel around his neck to wipe at the sweat that formed. He moved efficiently, despite the tired slump to his shoulders, like he had been doing this for a long time.

This was better than a life a villainy, wasn’t it? Working hard for a greater purpose, being a functioning member of society?

Then, suddenly, Spinner’s walkie on his belt went off.

“Hey! Iguchi! You better not be slacking off! I told you that we gotta cut our hours, so if you go overtime, the gas is coming out of your pay!”

“Yes sir, I’m well aware-”

“Well-aware! Then get moving! We don’t have the time to waste! I know thats probably very hard for someone like you to understand, but most people …”

The supposed manager kept talking and talking. If anyone else were to talk at the volume Spinner’s direct supervisor was talking out, they would be yelling, but Spinner’s hollow eyes made him think that this was his regular speaking tone.

Between Villains and Heroes, Midoriya has never met someone who looked the way Spinner did. That hollow emptiness in his eyes was something he didn’t realize a person could look. He had saved people on the cusp of despair, took on their unresolved conflicts, and mourned the loss of life with others. He had never seen that kind of look.

If he had to describe it into words, then his was the face of someone who survived day-to-day and has nothing in their life aside from that.

But surely, this was better than a life of crime, right? It was better than terrorizing thousands and millions of people?

These days, Midoriya didn’t know. He’s certain that, when he gets back, he still wouldn’t know.

### Dabi Speaks

All of his exhaustion seemed to melt right off of his shoulders when he opened the door and saw light in his home. He wondered if he’ll ever be able to live without this warmth now that he had it, and walked in.

“I’m back,” he called out.

“Izuku! This guy! Fuck him!” Shigaraki snapped back, storming up to him. He grabbed his school bag out of his hand, all while snarling about how unresponsive Dabi was today too.

The young man didn’t bother suppressing his smile as he took his shoes off and followed him in. Midoriya watched as Shigaraki carefully placed the bag down in the living room and flopped down onto the couch, all while scowling and glaring at Dabi on the other end of the couch.

The man looked as impassive as he remembered leaving him in the morning. Midoriya was just glad that he was moving around like a person would, it made him less dolllike, and told Midoriya that he did have some form of will to live, and wasn’t going to just kill himself by not doing anything.

Ah, home sweet home.

“Really?” he asked, taking off his jacket. “Sounds like you guys got along great today, too then.”

“Who said we’re getting along!?” Shigaraki snapped back.

Midoriya smiled back, and the older man scowled even harder. Surprisingly, making people this flustered was actually a lot of fun. He’s beginning to see the appeal.

“Hm, I was thinking curry today,” Midoriya said and the other man groaned.

“All we eat is curry.”

“If you want to eat something else, you should make it,” Midoriya replied back sweetly.

With some more grumbling, Shigaraki and he started dinner.

-

Dinner is a quiet affair, as it usually is. It was almost endearing how focused his enemy-in-another-world got when it came to slicing onions. He still tried to measure everything perfectly with the cups instead of dumping everything into the pot, despite how many times they’ve done this now.

Today, however, their topic of discussion was about the next thing they should put in their curry to make it taste different.

“Hm… we don’t usually put chicken in it, maybe we should try it with the Extreme Spicy flavor.”

“God no, my ass still hurts from that,” Shigaraki replied back, groaning at the memory. Midoriya giggled in response and avoided the taller man’s lazy swing to him. “Are we ever going to stop eating curry?” he asked again. “Like, maybe we can eat fried rice? Sandwiches? Literally anything else? God, all we eat is curry.”

Still, the man eats everything off his plate, scraping it down like it was something delicious, and Midoriya was grateful.

“It’s all I know how to make,” Midoriya replied like he always did, a smile on his face like this was something particularly endearing. “It’s hard to teach an old dog new tricks, you know.”

Shigaraki blanched. “You’re in middle school.”

He took a big mouthful and chomped down happily, ignoring that empty pang in his chest at the reminder.

“We should get more potatoes next time.”

“We have rice, why are you adding potatoes to the curry anyways? Isn’t there already enough carbs in there for you? What are you going to do if we get fat?”

“Potatoes are vegetables,” Midoriya replied, “so it’s healthy. I’ll just run harder.”

Shigaraki made a face, but before he said anything, the man next to him spoke up.

“It’s good either way.”

There was a long silence and they both spun around to face him. Dabi looked up at them, blue eyes flitting between Midoriya then Shigaraki and then back to the dish in front of him. He put another spoonful into his mouth.

“You can-”

“-fucking speak?!”

The two exploded almost simultaneously.

“I thought you were mute!” Shigaraki snapped out. “You little bitch, you could talk this whole time?!”

Dabi shrugged back, leaning away from the yelling man. His expression was blank, as he shoveled another spoonful of curry into his mouth. He looked so familiar in the moment, but Midoriya couldn’t quite place it.

“I’m glad you like the curry,” Midoriya spoke up suddenly, beaming brightly. He’ll just focus on what he does know.

The sight of him and his smile had them pulling back on their emotions, and something quieter settled into their being instead.

From then on, Dabi spoke a little more. Not a lot, but a little more. It would be a long time before the damage that took Dabi’s voice away was fully healed, but it was a small nudge in the right direction. In those moments, Midoriya honestly wondered if maybe they were in the wrong this whole time.

Perhaps people could be saved by kindness. Perhaps anyone could be someone that needed to be saved. Perhaps those who became villains became so because they had no other choice.

Then, perhaps, Midoriya could save them in this world, when he couldn’t in the past.

-

Coming out of the baths, Dabi yawned and rubbed the back of his neck.

He didn’t know why he spoke during dinner. It wasn't like his opinions were important, and it wasn’t like they were expecting him to speak. He doesn’t know why he felt that anyone wanted to hear him anymore.

But, he thought as he walked into the room, watching as Shigaraki and Midoriya argued about adding sweet potatoes into the curry before turning to him. It just might be different this time.

This time, there was a dumb kid who didn’t know how to keep his nose out of other people’s buisness.

### Yamada & Shirakumo \*My Other Teacher is a What?

“My oh my, I didn’t realize that my little hero was a part-timer.”

Midoriya physically jerked when the voice snapped him from his book. He stared in gobsmacked horror as his former homeroom teacher stood before him. Next to him was his English Teacher from freshman year. And on the other side was another blond he has never met before.

“Oh, Shota, is this the stray you were talking about?” the never before seen blond said.

“He’s young,” Yamada added.

“Hey, leave my little hero alone,” Aizawa’s familiar voice came out, ruining the image he once had about his former homeroom teacher.

Before he knew it, his eyes were watering.

“Aw, you made him cry.”

“Hey, now, don’t cry,” Yamada said, lifting his hands in a placating way. He turned to hiss at his long time friend, “Oi! Apologize, you made the kid cry.”

“This kid,” Aizawa said slowly, “I think he’s retarded.”

“No, I’m pretty sure it’s normal to be terrified when a guy with a face like yours comes for them.”

“Ooh, Oboro got you there, Shota.”

The two blonds grinned at each other, and Aizawa shot them a tired look. It was familiar in a painful way, and Midoriya did super well keeping back his tears.

“If this is all, the total-”

“I want some cigarettes too,” Aizawa said. “Hizashi, you’re paying.”

“Ehhhhh?”

“Yeah, you made the least today,” the other blond laughed.

Unlike the others, Midoriya didn’t know who this was. But as it was now, the sight in front of him was too nostalgic, all he needed to do was blur the some of the features and he could really believe that he’s a dumb first year with lofty ideals all over again.

“Wait, shouldn’t you be paying since you made the most, Oboro? Why’s the poorest one of us paying?”

“You agreed to the terms.”

Yamada groaned loudly.

Midoriya checked them out, hoping that they had completely ignored them. But when he went to hand them their receipt (Yamada paid), his former English teacher grabbed his hand. His eyes snapped up to the eyes behind the shades, and he felt a chill run down his spine at the intensity of his gaze.

“Shtoa looks like a sourpuss, but it’s because he is,” he said. Midoriya tugged on his hand in an attempt to free himself, but it was futile. He watched in absolute horror as the man turned his hand to press his lips against his knuckles and give him a wink, “But I’m a very gentle man.”

Another shudder rolled right down Midoriya, one that he recognized from a lifetime of being blasted for sticking his nose where it didn’t belong.

Fear.

They left with this laugh. It was the same sound he heard in the corridors as a first-year. It was the same sound, but he couldn’t suppress the fear that locked his body into place. What was the matter with him? No matter how strange, how weird, how bizarre everything was, Midoriya had no control over his body.

What was going on?

### Dabi \*late night

“I’m back,” Midoriya said, more out of habit than anything.

“Welcome back.”

He stared blankly back as Dabi had poked his head out to greet him. It was a little unsettling, to see that scarred face in his house after a lifetime of fear and battles, even if the scars weren’t nearly as bad as he remembered, but Midoriya closed his eyes and forced himself to relax. He had to relax.

The Dabi in his memory was the epitome of calm and power. The eye of the storm, if you would, as the entire world burned to ashes around him.

But the Dabi in front of him could barely meet his gaze last week but now he was trying to.

“...Yeah,” Midoriya said, repeating himself, “Yeah, I’m back.”

People, he reminded himself, are not inherently evil. It’s the recognition that he has about people who share their voice and face that will make him believe that they are something they are not.

At the same time, if someone had saved Dabi, he wonders if the Dabi who burned himself into nothing in his world could have been saved. The thought made him feel lonely.

“Dabi, you know, I think that’s the first time you looked at me before I looked at you.”

“...I thought this earlier, but you say some embarrassing stuff, huh?”

“Huh?”

He didn’t answer him, leaving for the living room and leaving Midoriya behind in the doorway.

In his surprise, he tripped over his shoes and sprawled onto the ground.

### Lunch: Shinshou + Bakugo + Midoriya

It was an unspoken law that Midoriya sat alone at lunch. He sat at one of the empty lunch tables in the furthest corners of the cafeteria. He sat by himself and far away.

Shinsou placed his tray on the table in the seat across from his. Destroying his silent world with the screech of metal scraping against the ground, and sat down. He looked at Izuku and then arched a brow.

“...What? Is someone else sitting here?”

“No, no, no,” Izuku said, shaking his head. “No one ever sits there.”

The purple-haired male stared at him, as though expecting something else, and Izuku gaped back like a fish.

“...Aren’t you afraid of speaking back to me? I could just control you.”

“Ah… Yeah, I guess you could,” Izuku responded, nodding his head, “But… Caring about something like that is too tiring to do,” and then he quietly added, “for both of us.”

Shinsou’s face was blank, devoid of all emotions as he looked at his store-bought bento.

“...I could ruin your life with some well phrased commands,” he said, not that he’s ever done it.

He tried not to stare, wondering how it was possible that someone could become more and more relaxed in his presence when it was usually the opposite. It was especially worse if they knew what his quirk was, and Shinsou couldn’t honestly remember when the last time he talked to someone who knew what his quirk was.

His own parents tried not to talk to him.

“Then you would have by now,” Izuku replied back, he flashed Shinshou a smile, “But you haven’t.”

“...Like you said,” Shinsou said, picking up his sandwich to bite into, wondering why he felt like he was flying, “It’s too much of a hassle. There's not much of you left to ruin anyways."

Izuku laughed back, the sound was quiet, and Shinshou almost joined him. He’s never felt like this before.

A bag dropped down to Izuku’s right and Bakugo scowled at both of them.

“Fuckface,” he said to Izuku, and then turned to Shinsou and squinted, “and whatever the hell you are.”

“...Bakugo,” Shinshou narrowed his eyes back. “The name is Shinsou.”

Midoriya, a sensing that there would be a battle of epic proportions depending on his next words, spoke up. “Hi Kacchan, how was your suspension?”

“A fucking joke,” the blond replied back. If he thought he was upset at the fact that Shinsou was sitting with them, he was absolutely livid at Midoriya. “It was an in-school suspension, so I got to hear about all your fucking shit,” he said. He grabbed the man into a headlock, “You dumbass! I told you I’d come back you in any fight, and your fucking shitty ass just had to get detention and now I see you eating lunch with the fucker that put you in there?!”

“Ow, ow,” Izuku winced, pawing weakly at his arm, but despite what he said, there was a smile on his face, “I’m sorry for worrying you, Kacchan, I promise I’m okay-”

“Don’t you ‘Kacchan’ me! Who said I was worried!?” He pulled harder on the young man’s neck, uncaring at how Midoriya wheezed.

Shinsou, until this moment, never realized that someone could laugh while being strangled. While he had always wanted friends to call his own, he also hoped that their craziness wouldn’t rub off on him in the slightest.

(In a few years, he would think back to this moment and have a good laugh. To think, he used to be so naive.)

-

“On a more serious note, though, if you sit with me, people are going to start saying … bad things about you.”

“Like they don’t already?”

Izuku opened his mouth and then closed it.

“Point. But, just saying.”

“More importantly,” Bakugo said, turning his scowl against him, “Once you start hanging out with this piece of shit,” his arm slung around Izuku’s shoulders, trapping him and his stupid smile under his arm, “you’ll never have peace again. This fucking calls at all hours in the morning and nags worse than my mom. You better prepare your ass because your life will never be the same again and you’re going to gain at least twenty pounds.”

“...Duly … noted.”

“I’m not that bad,” Izuku whispered, but was promptly ignored.

-

"I… I think you're pretty courageous, Shinsou-kun," he said. "You have the courage to come and sit with someone you didn't even know."

### Todoroki-kun

And nothing in the world could have ever prepared Todoroki Shouto for the natural disaster that was Midoriya Izuku.

“Wait, where are your… friends going?”

Todoroki looked to the side, where indeed, he was suddenly the only person except for Midoriya here now. Cowards. They probably ran at the first sign of trouble. He might have taken a hit, but he wasn’t going to lose.

“Hey, they left. Are you sure you want to keep going?”

The anger, that fire, boiled up inside of him again. He scowled, the fire licked up his arms and when he saw the gentle gaze of Midoriya, almost lost his grip to his rage. How dare this up-start look at him like that? How dare this person assume that the leeches that attached himself to Todoroki were his friends, his equals?

“They aren’t my friends,” he scowled back.

“Then,” Midoriya said, a frown on his face, “Who is?”

“I don’t need friends,” he spat back. No one was strong enough to handle him. Everyone wanted him because he was powerful. He was influential. He was everything that everyone wanted for themselves and he knew it. “No one is good enough!”

The fire burst out of him. If this bastard isn’t careful, he’ll get charred. He better use his quirk.

“...Todoroki-kun…” Midoriya whispered back, staring at him in a way that Todoroki had never been stared at before.

No, that wasn’t true, someone looked at him like that before. Someone looked at him like he did, someone who was gentle and distant, but he couldn’t remember who.

“Now, come at me with your full strength!” he yelled out.

Well, it didn’t matter. None of that mattered. Their fight was going to end in the next hit. Their fight will end, and Todoroki will win and none of this would matter anyway. Midoriya was nothing. He’ll burn like everyone else before him, and he wouldn’t put up enough of a fight for Todoroki to burn away instead.

-

Who said it? Todoroki had heard it before, but he couldn’t remember. His memory was hazy. It was like a cloud, and every time he reached out for it, his hand passed right through it. He knew what it looked like, and he had a vague idea, but he couldn’t grasp and truly remember the details.

Who said it to him? What exactly did they say? Why did it mean so much to him? Why did he forget it?

Laying on his back, tasting bitter defeat for the first time since he started fighting like this, Todoroki Shouto was alone. More than anything, he felt oddly reflective, as though something had been liberated inside of him and that he could think about it now.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” Midoriya asked quietly, “How do you see yourself in five days, five months, and then five years?”

Normally, people would be angry. They would be pissed if they weren’t scared shitless, and they would come at Todoroki with the same kind of blind, prideful anger. All these people, who claim to be different and grew up differently and looked a little different, but they all were the same.

Then, those people would have screamed and cheered at the thought that he lost to them. When they saw his back hit the ground, blood spewing out of his nose and mouth, unable to even stand back up, they would have taken shameless advantage of it. He would have had all his fingers broken, gained traumatizing scars, and probably humiliated in several different ways.

There was nothing normal about Midoriya. Todoroki learned this as he laid on his back. Next to him, Midoriya looked down at him.

“What kind of man do you want to be?” he asked.

Why would anyone beat the shit out of someone, and then ask about their future aspirations? Most people would have humiliated him or abandoned him by now. Just look around, Todoroki was alone here.

“...What about you?” Todoroki asked quietly.

“I… In about five days, I want to do well on the group project between me and my friends. And in about five months? Well, I…” he hesitated, “I’ll have my friends. We’ll hang out and work hard. Then, in five years, I’m going to look back at this time and think that I was crazy.”

“...And then?” he asked quietly. His breathing was labored, a doubled effect after getting his ass beat and his nosebleed. “What kind… of man do you want… to be?”

Midoriya’s grin was blinding when he turned back. “I want to be a hero!”

Even though it sounded like something a second-grader would say so proudly, Todoroki lost to this man. When he lost, he retained his dignity and his pride. He’s certain that, if their situations were revered, he wouldn’t have been able to do the same. He’s never lost, but those fights never felt like victory.

Laying on his back, a weight lifted off his chest by the kid next to him, Todoroki didn’t realize that losing could feel like victory.

“That’s dumb,” he said. “Why a hero?”

“Because heroes are cool and awesome! They’re strong and reliable. When you see them, you immediately think that everything is going to be okay! I want to be that kind of hero. Someone that can always save people with a smile on my face!”

It was so corny. It was so cheesy.

And Todoroki laughed for the first time in years. It was a quiet thing, choked by the pain in his sides as he tried to digest this information.

[ “You can be your own man.” ]

His mom, he realized. His mom said that to him, didn’t she?

“...Five days ago,” he started quietly, “There’s been a lot of fights. Even more than usual. They said they’re trying to prepare for graduation.”

He didn’t know why, but he was certain that Midoriya would listen to him. He was certain that if he spoke freely like this, it wouldn’t be something that he would be pitied for. It was a foreign concept, to think that someone was there for him, but Midoriya was more of a solid person than anyone else he met his age.

“Five months ago…Everything was the same as now. I got up, went to school, skipped and fought or played at the arcade all day, and got home once it was dark.”

Midoriya was here.

“And… five years ago, I… I wanted to be a hero too. I wanted to save my mom from her miserable marriage. And I thought that I could do it…”

Todoroki Shouto told Midoriya everything.

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Just like that, Todoroki found himself getting crepes with this strange boy named Midoriya every Monday. On occasion, two others joined them. On other occasions, they met up even more often.

### (Sept) Enter Stain

"...uhm… Uh… Hey!"

Something inside of Midoriya, something foreign that didn’t belong to him, bubbled over and his eyes turned to the man in front of him.

These days, Midoriya had a new theory. Maybe, people live like this because there are no heroes. There is no hope that a stranger can come swinging out to help. As a result, people operate with the idea that they and only they could survive. People began to think and believe that they are alone.

And they believe that the only way to stay afloat would be to drown someone else.

So Midoriya took a deep breath and swallowed everything down.

He extended his hand out to the person on the edge of the bridge. He definitely doesn’t recognize him with a nose, or his red-scarf or his array of weaponry, but he did recognize the lost expression on his face. He’d try. If It didn’t work, he’d go home and pretend that it didn’t bother him.

“I… I don't know what you're doing here. But I… I don't want to be the kind of person that pretends I don't see that there is something wrong. So uhm… Do… Do you want to talk about it?"

“...Does it look like I want to talk?,” and Midoriya almost jolted when he heard his voice. He knew this voice. He could swear that he could just hear someone mocking him up above, and he felt all of his inside shrivel up inside of him.

“...Well,” Midoriya said through the lump in his throat. “I want to listen. And… if it really is the last thing you’re going to do, telling someone your story can’t be that bad.”

He thought that he knew who this was, but now that his mind was calming down from the initial shock, understood that it couldn’t be.

“Kid, didn’t someone tell you to not talk to strangers?”

“You’re not a stranger.”

He paused, slowly turning to face Midoriya.

“Alright,” he said, “Then who are you?”

“A hero.”

This was a world without heroes and villains. So in this world, there is no Stain. There was never a need for a man to stand up to try and tear the peace of the world. There was nothing to stain here.

Right now, the lost businessman standing at the edge of a bridge, looking at him like he had two heads, was Akakuro Chizome. And if Midoriya ever goes back home, he wondered if he’ll be able to look his Iida in the eye and let him know that he had a dream where he gave Stain a choice.

And Stain chose him.

-

“...And this is…?”

He looked to Aizawa and then to Stain next to him, and then back to Aizawa.

“Uh….” he couldn’t call him Stain, now could he? “A guest?” he replied back.

“Don’t answer my question with more questions,” he replied back, voice dry as he arched an eyebrow at him. “Whatever, we got another mouth to feed, right? There’s no way we have enough rice.”

Midoriya shrugged back, “We can order some pizza.”

“You want,” Aizawa leaned in and squinted at him, “Curry with pizza?”

Green eyes traced his former teacher’s face, and no one would know what he saw, because he softened up further.

“Yeah, that sounds great.” He turned to Stain with that same tender expression, and the returning gaze, the fascination and curiosity, that Stain had made him feel dirty.

“I’ll order it then,” Aizawa said. He stepped to the side, presumably to let them in, but his narrowed gaze didn’t leave Stain’s face.

Midoriya dropped his eyes as his courage and his voice deserted him. He gulped dryly and felt his fingers tremble. What was he doing?

“The bathroom is down the way,” Midoriya continued, taking his shoes off and sliding his jacket off. He stared at the plastic bag in his hand and then gasped. “My ice cream!”

At that, the spell or whatever dispersed the tension and Midoriya ran for the kitchen.

“Ahhhh! My ice cream!”

Aizawa stared at Stain for another moment and then turned away.

“...I don’t know what he did to you,” he said, slowly. His eyes flickered red as they met his gaze again, “But know that you’re outnumbered here.”

Despite everything, the absolute scorn on Aizawa’s face was enough to solidify Stain. In all honesty, the look of disdain on his face was something he was used to, and it was comforting. He could deal with rude assholes. He could deal with misplaced anger and people being upset at him or because of him.

He cannot handle the kindness that Midoriya exudes, and at the same time, thinks that it’ll be so easy to lose himself to it.

-

Dinner was a whirlwind of an affair. It was just as loud as an office drinking party, despite having a quarter of the number. However, there was no alcohol, and all the insulting thoughts were said at face-value while making sure everyone ate their fill. Prickly people but kind gestures, he realized suddenly.

“Here’s my number,” Midoriya said before he left, “Give me a call whenever you wanna chat.”

Akakuro nodded, numbly, and looked down at his phone. Among the sea of coworkers’ numbers that were shared out of necessities, there sits a name that doesn’t belong. He could imagine the gossip and ridicule that would come out if someone figured out that this was his.

He knows this, and yet, doesn’t think he’s ever had something more precious.

When he got home, his phone buzzed and his immediate thought was that it’s work and his heart dropped to his stomach. The warm feeling from dinner dissipated in an instant. When he checked his phone, there’s a message from Midoriya wishing him sweet dreams and a sticker of a small bear sleeping.

Akakuro slept with his phone in his hands that night. When he woke up, it was the first thing that he saw and for the first time in a long time, felt peace.

### Warmer nights -

Midoriya wasn’t too sure what he should be thinking, was this normal? Maybe this was normal villain behavior? Should he excuse it? Should he stop it?

He didn’t know. No wait, maybe he did, he just needed to retrace his steps.

Let’s see… School ended and after a quick outing, he came home at about 4 pm. Then, Shigaraki and Dabi informed him that they were going to buy some more eggs, and he joined them. By the time they came back, prepared and ate dinner, it was 7 pm.

He didn’t have work that night, so he was sitting at the floor table doing his homework, like he normally did. Dabi was on the tattered couch behind him, sitting in the corner with his legs extended to take up the entire cushion. It was their normal, at this point, and their quiet was comforting. The sound of his pencil scratching paper, pages being turned, and the occasional rambling mess that Midoriya became when he got way too invested in his work.

But Dabi never complained. He assumed that it was because he was super engrossed with his book. He’s glad that someone was enjoying the books. He’s seen Dabi read just about every single genre, like he was just going through all the books. Midoriya, on occasion, joined him, because he thought it was sad that all the books were just waiting to be used.

And after his post-dinner bath, Shigaraki would join them, usually with a book of his own. He really likes manga and light novels. But today was different, and led up to the biggest dilemma of his life right now.

Shigaraki, after his bath, grabbed the novel he was reading earlier, sat down next to Midoriya, and then laid his head down. In Midoriya’s lap.

Midoriya stared at him, watched as Shigaraki forced his arm up a little and laid his head down on the thickest part of his thigh. Was this normal? Was this normal, acceptable villain behavior? Is this how villains were and he just never knew because he never knew any before he became a hero?

Opening the book, Shigaraki placed it on his head, so that Midoriya’s vision of him was obscured by the gaudy cover of a busty swordswoman with a shaggey looking man on her shoulders.

He stared for a moment longer, but the warmth on his thigh was comforting. They were both alive. It was a striking thought, and he didn’t understand why that was the first thing that came up in his head.

“...If you're not going to read, put the book down,” he said, “that’s bad for the spine.”

Why did he say that?

Better question, he thought with shock as Shigaraki did just that, why did he listen?

He stared for another moment, before he dropped his hand onto Shigaraki’s head. Red eyes widened comically, but didn’t stop him, even if he froze. The manga rested next to his head, closed and in arm’s reach. Did he trust him? Was that what he was showing? That he trusted Midoriya? It was…

He didn’t know what this feeling was.

He ran his fingers through his hair, it was even softer than it looked. His own hair wasn’t that soft, but they use the same hair-products, right? Amazing.

“Don’t… look at me like that,” Shigaraki said. “Don’t you have to do your homework?”

Flustered, Midoriya jerked back to attention. “R-Right,” he said. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.” He looked back to the problems, they were so easy but he had lost all focus. It was hard to read in terms of math and equations when, out of the corner of his eyes, he saw how red Shigaraki’s face had turned. It must have pissed him off. It honestly surprised him that he was still laying there. No, the most surprising thing was that Midoriya hadn’t been turned to dust.

“It’s… fine,” Shigaraki replied back, too quiet for Midoriya to hear over his muttering.

Dabi, on the couch, snorted.

-

From then on, he couldn’t help but think that they had gotten closer. Was this… normal? This had to be normal villain behavior right? Even if they weren’t villains because villains weren’t real in this world?

Just this morning, right when he finished breakfast, Dabi reached over to collect his plate.

“Huh…?” he looked up, and the older man placed his hand on his head. He ruffled his hair, and then walked to the sink, and started to wash the dishes. Absentmindedly, he reached his hand up to touch where Dabi just did, feeling it tingle all the way down.

Did he do something to him? He didn’t know.

“You’re going to be late,” Dabi said.

“Oh, oh!” Midoriya sprung up to his feet, “Oh!” He ran out of the room, and promptly forgot about the strange way his housemates were acting until it happened again.

And then, this too, became normal.

### New Neighbors

“Hey! What a coincidence!”

Midoriya felt all the color drain out of his face as he realized that he recognized the people moving in to the apartment complex next to him. When did the Otoshis’ move out anyways?

The two blond, devilishly handsome grinned at him as they pulled boxes into their apartment, accompanied by a cloud that held a stack on its own. He didn’t like this. Yamada pushed the glasses up higher on his face while Shirakumo visibly brightened at the sight of Midoriya.

“Stop yapping and get to…” Aizawa trailed off as he walked out.

He looked more like Midoriya was used to seeing him, with his hair all out and covering his face, exhausted looking bags under his bloodshot eyes, and the sight made his eyes water. He felt himself freeze, however, his heart churning uncomfortably as he gulped uncomfortably.

“...Ara? Izuku-kun?” His voice didn’t drip in as much sarcasm as he was used to hearing since he got here, and if Midoriya closes his eyes, he thinks that he could pretend that he was back home and was going to be lectured for sticking his nose in someone else’s business again. “What a lovely coincidence.”

That image shattered, leaving just the host next door that had the same face and name as his former homeroom teacher.

“Our lease just ended,” he explained, “but we were just so lucky that there was an opening here. We just had to move in.”

His words dripped in sarcasm and every bit of his demeanor felt like poison hidden under a layer of honey.

“Oh,” Midoriya said.

“Oh? That’s all you have to say?!” Shirakumo started to pout and Yamada started to stomp his feet. However, all other sounds seemed to slowly drown away though, and the entire display felt like it was a thousand feet away instead of eight.

“C’mon, throw us a party!” Yamada said.

Sometimes, Midoriya feels unbearably lonely.

-

Letting the hosts next door meet his roommates… letting people with the faces of his teachers’ met people with the faces of the worst villains in history, went a lot better than he thought.

For one, no one died. And then, no one got hurt. They were snarly and glared a lot and made a lot of back-handed comments, but no one died.

Amazing.

### Unwanted Job

Midoriya looked from the mess of the living to Yamada’s face, the bright thing he was, and then sighed.

“Fine.”

And so he got another job, taking care of the apartment that his high school teachers (from another lifetime) and their friend, rented out.

He said job, but really he was paying back a debt. They’ve helped him out plenty of times since he’s gotten here.

For example, they were a physical, constant, breathing reminder of what he had left behind.

### Dabi & Fire

It was a complete accident that occured after a series of unfortunate events happened to line up. From the fact that he didn’t sleep well, the fact that he was beyond exhausted and felt a bone-weary tiredness that he couldn’t explain, his bad mood seemed to only get worse from there. The book he had been going through had a shittier than usual ending, Shigaraki was extra-moody, and everything just seemed to be wrong.

So, when Shigaraki bumped into him, even though he knew it was an accident, he unleashed his fire.

In that instant, he could have killed Shigaraki. In that brief instant, he would have burnt the apartment into a crisp.

And instead, Midoriya stood in front of him. Shigaraki was sprawled out behind him, as though he was yanked out of the way, and Dabi stared in shock as Midoriya’s eyes met his. The young man stood, a grimace on his face as he raised his arm to take the direct hit from Dabi’s hand against his forearm.

In games and stuff, it’s so obvious that fire wins against earth. As an example, fire could torch down a forest and leave nothing but ashes in their wake. Dabi knows this and has lived that life. He’s burned almost everything he’s ever known in his life. From his homework to his family members, he’s burned anything and everything until he just ran away from it all. Surely, now that there is nothing important to him and he had nothing, he wouldn’t burn anything anymore.

So the last thing he expected was to realize that he cared, as his fire reached out for someone so kind and dumb and gentle that they invited a stranger into his life without any questions. The idiot, in this equation, was him.

But at the sight of those green eyes, his fire extinguished itself.

His mouth is dry. The ashen remains of Midoriya’s sleeve remained on his tattered arm, before the young man dropped it. If Dabi wasn’t acutely aware of how much pain his fire caused, he would have said his housemate wasn’t injured at all.

And instead, he took a step closer, his eyebrows furrowing closer together as he put the burned arm behind him and extended his other hand towards Dabi. In his eyes, he didn’t look angry or upset. He wasn’t scared. It was an expression that he remembered seeing on Midoriya’s face before, but seeing it was too strange, he couldn’t believe it.

“You good?” he asked, like Dabi was some lost cat that was too scared to come out from under the couch.

Concern. Midoriya was concerned.

“I-I-”

“Don’t fuck around, you need that looked at!” Shigaraki shouted, surging forward. He grabbed Midoriya, but the young man didn’t tear his gaze away from Dabi. In turn, the older man just felt even more lost.

“It’s okay,” Midoriya tried, and Shigaraki scowled back.

“It’s fucking not, let’s go-” he hissed, dragging him out of the kitchen.

“I…”

“And you,” Shigaraki said, pointing at him, “Sit down and take deep breaths!”

Normally, he hated listening to this guy, but somehow, his body did just that.

-

“It’s okay,” Midoriya said quietly. “It’s not your fault. You don’t have to take responsi-”

“Can you just,” Shigaraki snapped back, “just-just shut up.”

His hands were trembling, and Midoriya sighed. He placed his hand on Shigaraki’s shoulder. Slowly, agonizingly slowly, he wrapped it around his back and pulled him in closely. With the man as stiff as stone, it was probably the second more awkward hug he ever had to do in his lifetime.

“Thank you,” he said quietly. “It’s okay. It doesn’t hurt.”

It didn’t. He’s way too accustomed to pains much worse than this. And it seemed that this body of his was the same. Pain, he wasn’t a stranger too. And besides, nothing hurt more than the expression on Shigaraki’s face right now.

“But, more than me, Dabi’s going to be shaken. Do you mind checking in on him for me? I think your voice can reach him.”

“...Aren’t you angry?”

“Why?” Midoriya frowned back, “It’s not like he did it on purpose. I jumped in, on my own. Why would I blame anyone else for my own actions?”

Shigaraki’s red eyes stared at him for a long moment, before he stood up, and left.

-

Midoriya had, apparently, chased Shigaraki away. And so, the other man rubbed the back of his head as he came back to the kitchen a few moments later.

“He said it’s fine,” Shigaraki explained.

What a lie.

Dabi spent his entire lifetime with his own flames. He knew how awful they were.

After a brief second, he looked at Dabi’s face and back down to the ground. He leaned against the kitchen counter, opposite to where Dabi sat at the dining table, and the arsonist didn’t look up from the ground.

“...I didn’t think you could make that kind of expression. That’s good.”

He jerked at that, his eyes coming up to glare at Shigaraki. Looking at him from between his bangs, Dabi couldn’t keep the gaze and dropped his eyes again.

“....It’s a good thing,” he said, “It means you’re human. For a long while, I thought you were just a doll.”

His hands flinched under the table, and he’s certain that Shigaraki didn’t notice. He didn’t seem like the type to pay that much attention to him like that.

“...Why aren’t you answering me?” Shigaraki asked. “What, do you think that you’re undeserving to live since you singed the guy who took you in? You’re a lot weaker than you look, huh? Are you going to run away now, hide away until the next dumbass takes your sorry ass in?” Dabi’s eyes lifted at that, a cold look as though his eyes were replaced with ice. The other man rolled his eyes, “Don’t be so conceited, you piece of trash.”

With that, the man pulled his archery-gloves off and picked up a spoon next to him. Dabi’s eyes widened as it disintegrated to nothing. Shigaraki opened his hand up, as though to show that there was nothing in his hand as his lips curled up into the most unfriendly smile he’s ever seen.

“You’re nothing.”

The coldest words were also the ones that were the most comforting.

-

“...I won’t use it anymore.”

“Eh?”

Midoriya stopped peeling the potatoes to stare at Dabi. After a long moment, he figured that he had hallucinated hearing Dabi speak and turned back to the task at hand. He was lucky that the skin on his arm was burned, instead of his hand, because it would have made this much harder than it needed to be. Shigaraki left to use the bathroom, and Midoriya dutifully ignored everything that he said before so he could start dinner. Right as he began cutting again, Dabi did speak up.

“I won’t… use my quirk anymore.”

Ah. It would have been better to be hallucinating.

Midoriya turned to Dabi again, thought about the uncanny resemblance he had to someone he couldn’t place, and gave him a smile. He thought about all the times that they’ve spent together, and all the things that he’s heard about this man, from this world and the last. And then, he came to stark realization that the more he learned about Dabi, the less he knew about him.

And well, if that’s the case, then he knows what he should do.

“...I think that’s fine. You should do what you want to do, and I don’t think you came to that decision lightly,” he said, “but it's a little sad too.”

“...What?” Dabi gave a pointed look at Midoriya’s arm, sloppily bandaged and showing some of the tender skin underneath.

“It’s a little presumptuous of me to say it,” Midoriya said, scratching his cheek a little nervously, “but I thought it was a little sad since that means it’ll be colder.”

The older man paused for a little, letting the words ring sink in.

He wonders if Midoriya knew that the family made of fire quirks had some of the coldest dinners. A family forged from ice that had some of the most heated fights. They were a family who found it suffocating to be alone, but they were cursed when they were together. It’s been something that Dabi never realized until he was found by a stranger in the rain.

“...You don’t want to kick me out?” he asked.

“...Why would I?”

Dabi’s expression twisted in a way he’s never seen before, but he looked away. Midoriya, figuring that he wouldn’t be speaking for a while, spoke up instead.

“Dabi,” he said, “I’m thinking of making the curry extra spicy today.” He gave him a small smile, “Don’t tell Shigaraki, okay?”

The taller man stared at him for a longer moment, and finally, cracked.

The first victory Midoriya would ever have against Dabi was the laugh that he let out, quiet and wheezy, in his kitchen one Thursday afternoon when his arm was stinging from a burn.

### Aizawa makes Dinner

When Midoriya came over to his neighbor’s home this time, he smelled food and it suddenly reminded him that he hadn’t eaten anything since breakfast. In response, his stomach rumbled and his mouth salvated. He barely managed to get his feet out of his shoes and ran right into the doorframe but he stumbled in, his heart in his throat.

And saw Aizawa.

Aizawa looked at him, looking surprised, before his eyes went to the pot In front of him and he looked away instead. In another world, Midoriya would have swallowed his tongue in shock at seeing his former homeroom teacher sheepishly making food in his kitchen.

In this world, after all this time, Midoriya is faced with a crushing amount of disappointment when he realized that it wasn’t his mother or his father. And then, slowly, that feeling was replaced with something else, something just as warm when Aizawa started speaking.

“I… got hungry, but I … made too much,” he mumbled out, staring at the pot with all his thoughts, “You can have some, I guess.”

Someone had made dinner for him. In his home.

Someone was waiting for him, in his home, waiting for him to come home so that they can eat together.

His eyes felt hot, and his throat constricted painfully. He couldn’t see well anymore, and when Aizawa looked up from the pot, a rare expression of alarm crossed his face.

“I… You don’t have to if you don’t want to!” he blurted out.

“I want it!” Midoriya yelled back, covering his face so that he couldn’t see how hard he was starting to cry, “I want it! I want it!”

“O-Okay, I got it just shut up!” Aizawa snapped back. And after a moment yelled out, “And go wash your face!”

“I will! Whatever!” Midoriya snapped back, running to the bathroom. He spilled a couple of more tears while he washed his hands and scrubbed his face.

And then, he came running back out. When he saw Aizawa placing two bowls of steaming soup down, he felt his eyes water all over again.

“I told you that you don’t have to eat it, stop crying!”

“No, I’m going to eat it!” Midoriya snapped back, unable to help himself. “You can’t stop me!”

The man gave him another look, and then sighed back, as though forcefully expelling the fight out of him as he took his seat. He picked up his spoon, already digging in and stopped as he looked at Midoriya.

The young man stared at the soup, the meager thing made of water, pepper, some chicken, and potatoes, like it was so much more and it made Aizawa even more uncomfortable. He knew that he didn’t put a lot of effort into it. He knew that he probably should have just gone out and gotten take-out instead of subjugating this kid to his cooking, but it was clearly too late.

And he wanted to do something for him. This is what he gets for having such a half-assed attitude about this.

“Thank you for the food,” Midoriya said, picking up his spoon and taking a bite.

And no matter how many recipes he googled and tried, he really regretted the fact that he didn’t put in real effort. Some of the potatoes weren’t fully cooked. They were all lopsided. It tasted like water with pepper. The chicken was stringy.

Bu before he could stop eating and make Midoriya stop eating, he looked up and noticed that the young man had cleaned his bowl.

“It was delicious,” he said. “There’s more, right?”

“Wha… don’t fucking patronize me,” Aizawa growled back, “What do you mean it taste good? There’s nothing-”

“It’s fine,” Midoriya said, taking his bowl to the pot on the stove. “I think it’s fine. It’s everything I ever wanted.”

“You-”

“I haven’t had homemade food made for me in a long time,” he said. “Please let me have this.”

“...If you get an upset stomach, it’s not on me.”

-

Midoriya wanted to go back to all the people in the world, either one, and shake them hard. He wanted to laugh and cheer and rub it in their face that no one is a lost cause. A good deed can roll over to propagate more good deeds. Kindness isn't a dead end.

Hard work doesn't lie.

He wasn’t wrong. All Might wasn’t wrong.

Saving people is more than pulling them out of a burning building or answering rescue calls. It wasn’t about cleaning up beaches and parks, and it was more than just following the laws like anyone would. It was helping someone out and remaining by their side with unconditional trust and watching them return that trust with kindness of their own-

That was why Midoriya tried so hard to save people.

Laying on his side, groaning as his stomach rolled and twisted painfully, Midoriya thought that this was kindness.

“I told you, you shouldn’t have eaten that. I can't believe you ate all of it,” Aizawa sighed, and despite complaining and constantly reminding Midoriya of his shortcoming, he ran his fingers through his hair and brought out another blanket for him. They were careful to keep a wastebasket nearby.

“But if he lives, we will finally have someone in the world that can live through an entire serving of your food,” Yamada replied back, rubbing Midoriya’s back. “You sure you’re quirkless?”

Midoriya mumbled something back, but it came out as incoherent garble.

“Problem child,” Aizawa said, the same way his Aizawa would have.

This time, when he buried his head against his lap and cried, it wasn’t because his stomach hurt.

### Weather \*clothing

“It’s going to start getting cold,” Midoriya said when he came home. “I don’t really know what you guys like to wear and stuff, but to not have anything at all is bad.”

It was still hot, but winter will be here before they know it. With that in mind, Midoriya wanted to make sure that they will be ready.

“...I don’t know if you guys want to go outside,” he said, “And I don’t want to pressure you. But I do need to know. Do you want to go shopping together or should I just bring something home and hope it fits?”

“Whichever is easiest,” Shigaraki said.

Midoriya was scared he was going to say that. But, remembering how he found him, didn’t blame him. He nodded back, “Alright. Dabi?” he called out, “We’re going to head out on Saturday. Do you want us to pick anything for you?”

“...I can pick my own clothes,” Dabi said, “Those host guys already came by with a bunch of apparel anyways. Shigaraki can’t fit in most of them, but it works fine with me.”

Midoriya made a reminder to get them a gift in a few weeks, maybe some oranges or something.

“Wow, that’s nice of them,” he said, overwhelmed by their kindness.

The other two exchanged a glance, clearly not agreeing with him.

“Yeah, they definitely did this out of the ‘goodness of their heart’,” Shigaraki deadpanned.

### Meeting Eri (and Chisaki)

-

A car rolled up, and Midoriya stood up.

“Sorry, Eri-chan,” he said, eyeing the new guests that were stepping up to him, “It looks like things are going to get a little bumpy, alright?”

“...Izuku...ni-chan?”

“Ah, I see you found my niece.”

His stomach dropped as a painfully familiar memory overlapped over the one he was seeing right in front of him. Except, with Eri clutching to his pants leg, and them being by the riverbed.

But here he was.

“I’m sorry for all the problems she must have caused. C’mon, Eri. Let’s go home.”

Oh fuck no.

Midoriya stood in front of Eri, protective and determined. He tensed his body, and regarded the way a specific light seemed to gleam on Chisaki’s eyes. Surely, it must have been a play of the light, because the Chisaki, the Overhaul, that Midoriya knew only showed anger and annoyance. But right now, he clearly looked interested in something.

“I’m not going back!” Eri shouted.

Chisaki took a deep breath, looking as though to wonder why he was even here at all. For a moment, he looked like an overworked young man instead of a villain with a terrifying ambition. “Eri-sama, no one is angry about the pudding-”

“No, you’re lying! I didn’t even know that it was yours! If you wanted to save it that badly, you should have eaten it first!”

Midoriya blinked slowly and then clapped his hands once to gather the attention back to himself.

“I… I’m really sorry, but what’s going on?”

“You don’t know what’s going on but you’re a part of this?” Chisaki asked, squinting his eyes at him.

Midoriya shrugged helplessly, “This black benz has been following her around and tried to take her before. I thought you were a part of that.”

“...A what?”

“Yeah! You can’t be mean to Izu-nii! He saved me!” Eri shouted out, standing defiantly in front of Midoriya.

His heart ached at the sight, and wonders how the Eri back at home is doing. If given enough time to heal the wounds on her heart, would she become this outspoken? Would she throw fits over eating pudding and then try to run away from home?

“Then, princess, would you like to head back to the estate with us? I’ll let him go if you come back home with us. The boss, your grandfather, is very worried as well.”

She hesitated, and looked up at Midoriya. The young man moved to stand in front of her. He’s not a fool. Taking on Chisaki right now, especially if he fights the way he remembered him to, will result in a painful demise. That wasn’t taking into account the people behind them. If he wanted to survive, the best and easiest thing to do would be to hand Eri over. His next best option was to call the cops and delay enough time for someone (if anyone) would come.

However.

“Eri, do what you think is right,” he said simply. “And I will take care of the rest, okay? Trust me.”

He used to be a Hero.

There was a brief pause, as Eri’s eyes stared up at Midoriya. She thought carefully about something and her eyes dropped to the ground. Her hand gripped his pants leg, and then, she took a deep breath before releasing him. Midoriya, truly and honestly ready to fight to the bitter end and run away with Eri from the Yakuza, looked down in surprise.

Her large eyes turned to Chisaki, “I’m sorry for eating your pudding. I’ll go home now.”

Chisaki’s eyebrows nearly touched his hairline in his surprise as he eyed Eri to Midoriya and then back down.

“..Eri-hime, are you sure?”

“...I don’t want to be a coward,” Eri said, her eyes shining as she stared at Midoriya. “So when we meet again, you should buy me a candy apple since I’ll be stronger!”

Her eyes were filled with a strength and conviction that Midoriya found inspiring. It was a little embarrassing, that he could be so easily moved by a few words, but a tight knot in his heart loosened. In a world without heroes and villains, she doesn’t want to go home for a few hours because she ate someone’s pudding. In a world without heroes and villains, she thought that doing the right thing was apologizing for eating someone’s pudding.

Midoriya smiled back at her and stepped back. He crouched down in front of her and extended his pinky out to her. Where he was from, he had to explain this to her, but here...

“Let’s pinky swear,” he said.

“I’m too old for this!” Eri protested, her cheeks flushing a bright red. “I’m not a baby!”

Midoriya blinked back in surprise, “Ah, really?”

He must have looked terribly pathetic though, because the four year old extended her pinky out. “But I can make an exception,” she said.

Their fingers locked, her tiny finger barely able to even curl around his, and he doesn’t know how to explain this bittersweet feeling in his heart. If Eri had never experienced what she did, would she be more like this Eri in front of him? The Eri that never needed a hero, was this her?

“Thank you,” he said. “I’ll be waiting.”

She grinned, proudly showing off her pearly whites before she turned to Chisaki.

“Le… Let’s get you into the car,” Chisaki said, barely managing to recover as he gave a curt nod to one of the other men. She climbed into the car, with one last wave to Midoriya, but without complaint. He looked back at Midoriya, who stepped forward with his phone out.

“Here’s the picture of the vehicle make, model and license plate,” he said, feeling a little sad that there would be no place for him in Eri’s life here. But still, he hoped that a world where Eri tried to run away from home over pudding is kinder than the world where Eri couldn’t run away. He smiled and gave a polite bow, “Thank you,” he said. “Please take care of Eri.”

Where he was from, Chisaki Kai was the boss of the Shie Hassakai. Here, Chisaki Kai is the exasperated underling of the current Shie Hassakai boss, and possibly the primary caretaker of little Eri. Meaning, Eri is still the blood granddaughter of the Shie Hassakai, and instead of the Eri he knew, was a young girl with an alright amount of control over her quirk.

“...If you have a moment, would you like to get some coffee with me?” Chisaki asked, “I would like to ask you some questions about this vehicle and who you are.”

“I couldn’t do that,” Midoriya said, shaking his head, “Please enjoy your evening with Eri-chan.”

“...You would be doing me a great favor for this,” Chisaki said, positioning himself to stand between Midoriya and the car, effectively blocking his eyesight of the young girl. “I do not want to ask twice. I promise to guarantee your safety. I would like the opportunity to discuss this. Of course, I suppose I can’t force you, and we can schedule another date instead.”

And Midoriya was a curious kind of guy. More than anything, he was a little hypnotized at the sight of his former enemy, the way he was. After all, in a world where he woke up and ate breakfast with Shigaraki and Dabi, maybe Chisaki wouldn’t be an enemy either. Still, his eyes drifted to the gloves on Chisaki’s hands, the black face mask on the bottom of his face, and his heart wavered.

Still, the fact he could see Eri’s bright eyes and loud laugh with clarity was probably the only reason why he agreed.

(And also the fact that he was certain that Chisaki wouldn’t let him go if he left. And he really, really, really didn’t want to weather the storm of trying to explain how he got involved with the yakuza to Shigaraki.)

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“Please, this is on us,” Chisaki said, motioning at the seat in front of him. Midoriya eyed the menu and politely ordered some hot tea. It would do well for his nerves, and it was the only drink that didn’t make him balk when he saw the price.

Golden eyes didn’t move from his face, even as he ordered a coffee. Please, Midoriya wanted to beg, please stop staring at me. Even the waitress looked uncomfortable.

“Let’s start with the basics,” Chisaki said once their order came.

They sat down in a far corner of a family restaurant, right by the window, and Midoriya figured it was so that they remained in clear view of many people. He didn’t know if this was done for him or for Chisaki’s underlings, but didn’t mention it. He counted the number of people here, and was grateful that no one was seated in their immediate vicinity. While he’s relatively certain that he can escape alive, he didn’t want to destroy the venue or sacrifice civilians in the meantime.

“My name is Chisaki Kai. I’m a member of the Shie Hassakai. Eri-sama is my boss’s granddaughter. As it may be, I’m in charge of her for the time being.”

As thought to demonstrate what the Shie Hassakai was, he pulled his sleeve up just slightly, showing the tips of a tattoo that Midoriya is certain that the Chisaki in his world never had. He took a drink of his coffee, as though to place in a pause for Midoriya to make his conclusions.

Interesting.

He was careful not to stare too long, and at Chisaki’s inquiring stare, realized belatedly that he was yakuza. He was showing Midoriya, as discreetly as possible, that he was yakuza.

Was he giving him a way out?

“Oh,” Midoriya said, oddly touched at the rather humane action that Chisaki took. “Is that why that van was following Eri-chan?”

Gold eyes lingered on his face, looked almost perplexed and he nodded curtly. Given to him like that, and knowing that Eri didn’t want to go home because she ate someone else’s pudding, Midoriya opened his mouth to give a very detailed account of what happened. He told them the near exact timestamp of each and every instance he caught that van tailing them for the better part of two hours. He told them of the thugs that tried to take Eri out, and how Eri chose not to go to places with high population density.

The older man looked even more surprised, and Midoriya stopped too.

“...Is something wrong?”

“...I can’t help to notice how attentive you are to details,” Chisaki said, “Yet you have yet to tell me anything about yourself.”

“I’m just an anyone,” Midoriya said, “Just some random guy that saw a girl getting tailed by a suspicious car.”

“In all honesty, I think that’s what makes you the most suspicious person. You didn’t even blink when you saw my tattoos. You knew who Eri was, from the moment you approached her, didn’t you? So tell me,” Chisaki asked, his gaze sharp enough to cut someone, “who are you?”

“If you have to call me a name, Izuku is fine,” Midoriya said, hoping that their search will come up with nothing. He wasn’t lying, per se, after all. He could feel his heart quiver in fear, but he swallowed it all down. In this battle, the one who broke composure loses. “And I don’t feel comfortable giving a stranger my personal information.”

There was a long pause. And Chisaki suddenly started to laugh.

“Is that so?” he said, laughing so hard he covered his face as though to smoother the sound. He looked so deceivingly young and innocent that for a moment, Midoriya didn’t see any overlap with the bastard that experimented on children. “Yes, I suppose I am a stranger. Then, this stranger shall answer any question of yours. As a thank you for giving me such ample entertainment.”

The light danced in his eyes. On another person, it wouldn’t have worried him as much.

“...Any question?” Midoriya asked, unable to stop himself. Nervously, he licked his lips.

“Yes, I would like to leave the ‘Strangers’ label behind, and to do that, I must first earn your trust, correct?”

It made sense, but Chisaki was the one to say it. Well, Midoriya wasn’t going to look this gift horse in the face and in his anticipation, went all in. He had to know, and he had a feeling that Chisaki wouldn’t lie about this. His family’s reputation was on the line, after all.

“What do you think about quirks?”

“Quirks?” the man looked surprised at the question, like this was something outside of his expectations. He took a moment to collect his thoughts and recompose before answering it. “They’re just another part of us. Some are... more useful than others, admittedly, but that’s just a matter on how well a person is equipped to use it. Many are thrown away because of their quirks, and others are used for them. My boss often says that anything that could be done with a quirk can also be done without. Personally, I share that sentiment,” he explained.

Midoriya, momentarily, felt so incredibly light-headed that he took a slow, shaky breath. The world around him slowed down for a moment, and he leaned in with a desperation that he couldn’t control. The older man arched an eyebrow at him, but didn’t move from his position.

“So you don’t… think that quirks are a disease that should be purged from the world any means necessary? Even if that means you have to experiment on kids?” Midoriya asked in a sudden rush of words.

To his defense, the thought was suffocating him.

-

Chisaki is a man who had learned that being surprised is a weakness. He had lost men to that weakness. As it was, he was careful to keep all the emotion off his face and remain as calm and as collected as he was when he first came in.

“Izuku-kun,” he said very slowly, “I… Where the fuck did this come from?” he asked. And as soon as the words left his mouth, closed his eyes.

He took a deep, slow breath. In order to remain calm, he must get oxygen to the brain. He clearly spoke much too loudly, as the entire restaurant seemed to fall silent. He took another breath, pinching the bridge of his nose with his fingers. He waited for the ambient noise of other patrons to return before he tried again.

In front of him, those green eyes stared at him earnestly. The stare was so open and honest that Chisaki felt like he was intruding on his private thoughts. At the same time, it made the entire situation even more strange, since this was clearly something this kid was truly invested in. Did Eri say something? Shouldn’t most kids ask for a favor from the yakuza? Maybe a dumb couple of questions, like if he killed someone?

“My apologies, I didn’t mean to… make that outburst,” he said, finally able to regain his tight reign on his emotions.

He took a sip of his coffee and finally managed to compose an answer.

“No, even if I managed to... do all of that, why would I execute it? That would mean that I would have to get rid of myself, and my quirk, as well. At best, it’s hypocritical, and at worst, it’ll change society as we know it. Nothing good comes from a sudden overhaul like that.” He really tried. He really should be getting a bonus for dealing with the shit that he deals with. Because. What the fuck.

How did this conversation derail so badly?

The young man stared at him for a while, his eyes welling with tears as though he was the one that was saved. His eyes dropped to his lap, and Chisaki doesn’t think he’s ever met someone (or ever given news to someone) who cried because they’re happy.

“Yeah,” the kid said, breathless as he sniffled, “That would be, wouldn’t it?”

Great, the kid who saved Eri and put the entire Shie Hassakai under his debt was a fucking nutjob. However, to not do anything would bring upon shame onto Oyaji’s reputation, he didn’t mention it. Instead, he sighed and hoped that this kid had a lot of worldly desires so they can fix this as soon as possible, and hopefully cleanly.

After all, Chisaki has been in this business to know well enough that the scars on Midoriya’s hands came from a particular kind of trouble. He would have to do his own digging later. Maybe he could pawn it off to Kurono or someone.

“So, what would it be?”

“Pardon?”

Maybe he was just stupid. It would explain a lot of things. Like how calm he looked in the presence of a yakuza man, because in reality, he didn’t understand what was going. He can work with stupid. He doesn’t want to deal with crazy. Resolutely, Chisaki made a decision.

“What would you like in return for saving Eri-sama? We would like to repay this debt of gratitude.”

“...Debt of gratitude?” Midoriya repeated and then tilted his head, like it was a foreign concept. Right before Chisaki could open his mouth to offer some examples, he crossed his arms in front of his chest and then tilted, “I don’t have anything that I want from you,” he said.

Shit, Chisaki thought. This would get dirty if he’s not careful.

“...Is that so?”

Midoriya nodded, “Anything that I can ask for, I can do myself,” he said. “And the things I can’t do by myself,” his expression turned exceedingly warm as he regarded the yakuza man in front of him, “has already worked out for me.”

Indeed, no one would look at the young man and think that he was some young student sipping coffee in the late afternoon with some yakuza scum.

“Thanks, but I’m good. I’m glad Eri’s safe, though. That she will be safe. That’s… more than enough.”

He gave a grin to Chisaki and he chuckled, like they’ve known each other much longer than these last few hours. The experience was foreign, and it made something twist in his gut.

“Thank you, Chisaki-san,” he said, like Chisaki did so much more than buy him a drink (that he didn’t even touch).

And just like that, Midoriya left, somehow leaving Chisaki with way more questions that he knew what to do with.

### Shigadeku \*watching

Deku didn’t know it, but for a long time already, Shigaraki’s eyes were always looking for him.

“Something wrong?”

Shigaraki blinked at him, and then frowned. “No, why?”

“You keep looking at me.”

Midoriya placed his pen down and stared at him.

“What’s up?”

“....It’s nothing.”

The young man stared at him for another moment. It was clearly not ‘Nothing.’ Not being trusted stung a little, but he’s not too sure why. Even now, after everything, the questions persisted in his head.

Was this okay? Was this really okay? Is this really okay? Should he even save Shigaraki? Even if he did, could he live with himself when he gets back?

No, this and that are different. This Shigaraki wasn’t a villain. This Shigaraki was some kid he found in the dumpster.

He looked at Shigaraki and patted the place next to him. After a moment of reluctance, the older man moved from the couch to his side. He looked back to his homework.

“...Your quirk only activates when all five of your fingers touch the target, right?” he asked.

“Uh… yeah…? How did you-”

Midoriya, boldly, grabbed Shigaraki’s arm and placed it on the table. If Shigaraki wasn’t fighting him, then he had reason to believe that he wasn’t opposed to this. Well, now that he thought about it, the question was dumb. Shigaraki was still in the archery gloves he always had on. The ones that Midoriya got for him.

With his hand on the table, and ignoring Shigaraki’s wide eyes, Midoriya’s wrapped his fingers around the back of Shigaraki’s hand. It was almost annoying how much smaller he was than Shigaraki, but he supposed that the less of his hand he took up, the better. As it was, he squeezed the hand under his, feeling it twitch like Shigaraki didn’t know whether to slap him away or not.

As it was, he didn’t move.

“Take your time,” Midoriya said, “I am here.”

One day, Midoriya knew that he wouldn’t, but today and tomorrow probably. Maybe even next week and the next month. Up until he leaves this world, he will be here.

Shigaraki’s entire form trembled next to him, but Midoriya pretended that he didn’t notice and went back to multiplying.

### Officer Stain

"You…. You did what?"

Akakuro looked at him and grabbed his cap before giving him a small bow. He looked at his badge, like he couldn’t believe it himself, and then gave a shy smile. Midoriya felt his brain short-circuit at the thought that Stain could feel shy.

This was (one of) the last things he expected to be confronted with on his way home.

"I became a cop. I… I wanted you to be the first to know." He took a deep breath. He wasn't the type to get nervous about things like this, but something about the way Midoriya looked at him always made him feel vulnerable. "I just wanted to thank-"

"Oh! You did it!" Midoriya threw caution to the wind as he rushed to run up to the older man. As though remembering something, he jerked to an awkward stop, just a few feet apart. His arms were outstretched, like he wanted to hug him or something, and Midoriya quickly pulled his hands behind him. The excitement in his eyes hadn’t diminished in the slightest. Standing so close to him, Akakuro is suddenly reminded of how small Midoriya was. Shouldn’t the sun be bigger?

He stared at him for a moment and dropped his hand onto Midoriya’s head. He ruffled the deceivingly soft curls in his hands, and wished that expressing his gratitude was easier than cursing someone out. He wanted to grab Midoriya and spin him around. He wanted to laugh as loudly as Midoriya did and tell him about the test and how hard it was and that his smile was what kept him going every day.

"Yeah."

"We were going to order pizza, do you want something else?"

"No."

"Plain cheese, right?"

"Yeah."

Midoriya beamed back, his smile so big that Akakuro worried he would hurt himself, and moved to start walking in the direction of his apartment. His hand went for his pocket, probably to pull his phone out and call Shigaraki about the change for dinner.

Suddenly, Akakuro grabbed him by the shoulders to stop him. He knew that, if he didn't say it right now, he would never be able to say it. He knew that, and even if Midoriya didn't believe him now, he was prepared to spend the rest of his life getting him to.

"...Stain-san? You change your mind on dinner?"

There, he said it. His nickname. The first thing that Akakuro felt like was finally his.

"I…" he took a deep breath, like he could suck the courage out of the air and convert it into his own. It must have worked, because he was able to force out, "I didn't know what else to do. But I want to make the world a better place. There's a stain on the world, and it has gone too far unnoticed. I want you to live in a safer place. And I want to… to be a part of that future with you."

Akakuro took a step away from Midoriya, and gave him a full, proper salute.

"Thank you again," he said. "Truly. I will never forget what you did for me that day. I swear to you that I will definitely repay this favor-"

"This is what you want to do, right?," the young man asked, cutting him off, and then waiting for Akakuro to straighten. His smile, impossibly kind and patient, somehow turned brighter, "You don't owe anyone anything then. Congratulations on your hard work and achievement!”

“...Thank you,” Akakuro said, hoping that his smile was just as bright.

### Shigaraki’s Job

Shigaraki got a job at a family restaurant in a rougher part of town, ironic since it’s next to a huge hospital. It doesn’t care about service and things like that, so he ends up fitting in a lot better than anyone expected him to.

For a guy who was too lazy to tie his hair so it was out of his eyes, the owners never expected him to work hard. The way he collapsed into his seat during breaks, and the way he glared at people but didn’t half-heartedly do his work said a lot about him. This was a kid who never worked before, but now has a reason to.

However, the clincher for this was that Shigaraki was unofficially getting lessons on how to cook.

-

“Kid!”

He scowled, a feral look but turned to glare at his new boss. The woman took one good look at him and laughed brightly.

“That’s a good look on your face!” she laughed. “You’re not shit, so I’ll see you tomorrow at the same time!”

The kid looked dead on his feet, a thin layer of sweat on his brow. Still, he hasn’t complained once since they started, and the Boss could appreciate that kind of honest and earnest energy. He gave a curt bow, and it was clear that this was someone that never had to show proper respect like this before.

-

“Hard day at work?”

Shigaraki, his face buried in Midoriya’s lap as the young man did his homework on the couch, grunted back. The student laughed, his hand moving from flipping the page of his textbook to ashen locks.

“Good work today.”

Somehow, between the gentle ministrations on his head and the warmth of the body under his head, the tensions melted off of his body. Just like that, he was asleep.

His neck ached when he woke up, but he still felt refreshed.

### Dabi’s New Job

“And your… quirk is cremation.”

“Yes.”

“And you want to… work here. In a flower shop.”

Dabi paused and sketched a nod.

“...Why?”

“I… I wanted to learn how to be gentle,” the young man said, lifting his hand up to stare at it. “There’s someone I don’t want to disappoint.”

“Yeah, but that doesn’t mean that we’re going to let a liability into our store.”

Dabi’s hand curled into a fist on his knee and he nodded. The man made a fair point, and now that he had something he could call <precious> to him, he understands what the man meant. At the same time, he didn’t want to look Midoriya in the eye and realize that he had disappointed him.

“Get out of here, we don’t need any help from the likes of you.”

“I…”

Dabi stood up and turned to leave when the sudden, persisting image of Midoriya holding a package of curry in his hands. No, they couldn’t eat like that anymore. He didn’t want to let Midoriya think that this was an alright way of living. His pride? His dignity? He threw all of that away the moment a middle school brat found him like an abandoned cat and he willingly followed him home.

He turned around, losing himself for a moment he dropped to his knees.

“I…” he bowed his head forward, not close enough to consider that it was on the ground, but enough to express how much he needed this. “Please,” he said. The words felt foreign coming from him, and for a moment, he felt like he was someone else.

“Get out of here, kid.”

His heart in his stomach, Dabi gritted his teeth and got to his feet. His fingers itched with the urge to burn, but his heart just felt cold. He grabbed his things, and walked out to the front so he could leave. He felt his throat constrict painfully, and his stomach churned as he tried to figure out what he was going to say to Midoriya.

He had very little solace to know that he had the entire walk home to formulate an explanation that wasn’t, “you picked up a fuck-up, kay I’m going to go drown my woes away with all the grape juice in the apartment.” He clenched his jaw tightly, it sounded bad enough in his head but to say it aloud to Midoriya?

Day 18 of the Job Hunt and he’s finally gotten a call back. He finally got an interview. And he just. He put his head down and fucking begged and he...

And as though sensing Dabi’s growing dread, Midoriya stood outside of the florist stop. His back was towards the glass windows and Dabi hesitated.

“Get outta my store if you’re not gonna buy anything,” his interviewer called out.

Dabi wanted to glare at him. He wanted to stomp and yell and burn this whole place down. He wanted to live up to the stereotype people had when they saw people like him, scarred and a high school flunkie. Instead, he took a deep breath and stepped out.

“Hey,” he said, breathless as Midoriya whipped around to stare at him.

He doesn’t know what kind of expression he had on his face, but a smile bloomed across his face as their eyes met.

“Dabi,” he called out, and Dabi didn’t realize that someone could put that much emotion into a single word. As it was, he managed to pull a little smile when the warmth exuding out of Midoriya reached his chest. “...I saw you in there but I didn’t want to interrupt. But I figured we could walk home together,” he said.

Dabi stared at him, quietly wondering how long Midoriya had to be waiting out here, and then wondered if he had been worried or something. The thought that someone was worried enough that they would come out to find him, however, had his heart betraying him. Pounding incessantly loud in his chest, he wondered if Midoriya was able to hear it. He better keep his distance just in case.

“Yeah,” Dabi nodded, “Let’s go home.”

Midoriya didn’t pry. He didn’t ask. Dabi was thankful for that, and then the door behind him swung open.

“You start Monday, part-timer! Get here by noon!”

Dabi froze, spinning around so fast that he almost got whiplash, but by the time he locked eyes with his interviewer, the man was sneering at him as he closed the door and flipped the ‘open’ sign to ‘close’. On the inside, the interviewer’s wife waved at him with an amiable smile.

What had happened?

“You got the job?” Midoriya gasped, pulling his attention back to him.

“I got the job?” Dabi was confused.

“You got the job!”

“I got a job.”

And so, Dabi started working at the local florist.

-

“...I can’t believe we’re taking him in,” the older man sighed back. “Why did you decide to change your mind?” he asked.

Next to him, his wife giggled as she leaned against his arm. “Didn’t you see it? The way he looked at that boy? You used to look at me like that.”

The older man flushed darkly, and clicked his tongue. “Whatever. We’ll see if he’s really for real.” He flexed his hard wooden muscles, muttering under his breath how awful it was that their little flower shop lost their little boy but gained a fire child instead.

She laughed, a sound that made him smile even after all the years that they spent together.

### Middle school graduation

Middle school graduation was a lot happier here than he thought it would be. It was definitely a louder affair than the last time he did this, since the last time it was just him and his mom in their little apartment surrounded by All Might effigies.

There is no mother Midoriya this time. Actually, none of his blood relatives are there.

Not his father or his mother or anyone. It’s just him and his friends, and their families.

The people that used to pick on Deku stayed away. He’s glad that they have enough sense to not try and taint this nice memory for all of them.

-

That’s what he thought until he realized that he was asked to go to his classroom. Something about his homeroom teacher calling him in to give him his graduation-note, signed by him. Midoriya didn’t think twice and gave a nod to the young girl that came for him and he headed up.

“Izuku, where are you going?” Aizawa asked.

“Oh, my homeroom teacher is calling me,” the young man said.

“Alright, hurry up. We got reservations at the restaurant you like so much.”

“You guys can just go ahead,” he said.

The man reached out and smacked him upside the head, it didn’t hurt or anything, but the gesture was so familiar that he felt his eyes water up.

“If you have the time to cry, get going. Hurry up.”

The young man stared at him for an extra moment, taking in his clean features and his three-piece suit. He doesn’t mean to, but sometimes he gets so lost between this world and the last. And sometimes, he can’t help but think that he was going to miss this Aizawa-san when he goes back.

“Okay,” he said, a smile on his face as he turned around.

So when he gets to the classroom, he’s already distracted by other thoughts. It’s probably the only reason why he failed so specatulously at recognizing that the classroom wasn’t empty, or that the door locked behind him, or that his teacher wasn’t there at all, or the chair that came swinging at his head.

Really, if he wasn’t so used to physical trauma, he might have been knocked out by that.

As it was, he turned around to stare at the person that tried to knock him out with a chair.

“...Really?”

Then the others came yelling and swinging. The thing that was nice about his class was that there weren’t people with bright and loud flashy quirks like Bakugo. He was really an exception. So, things like longer fingers or detachable limbs, wielded by children no less, doesn’t feel threatening.

It helps that most of these kids have never experienced a fight before. Smacking them in the nose, causing a sudden gush of blood to come dripping out of their nostrils, is a surefire way to end the battle with minimal casualties.

In about 15 minutes, Midoriya will leave the classroom, blood splattered on his uniform, a lump on the back of his head, a split lip and bruises on his knuckles.

A fitting graduation gift, he supposes.

-

“Izuku, there you…”

Midoriya gave a nervous smile, shrinking back a little at the way Aizawa’s words trailed off.

In an instant and three loud explosions later, Bakugo’s hand grabbed his chin. He jerked Midoriya’s face, left and then right, with the promise of death in his eyes.

“Who?” he growled out, low and quiet in complete contrast to the explosions coming out of one of his hands.

“Nothing, nothing,” Midoriya said, pulling his face out of the grip. He lifted his fist up, displaying all the bruises he collected, “and I already returned the favor. Let’s go, Kacchan.”

He walked up to Aizawa and gave a smile.

“I’m hungry after that.”

### (Apr) High School: Debut

Okay, Midoriya told himself, for certain, he was going to have a normal, easy high-school experience.

He took one step onto school grounds when he heard a window shatter. He stared in abject shock as someone drove a motorbike through the school building, shattering all the windows with a baseball bat.

Midoriya’s first day started here.

### Day 2 -

On the second day of school, Midoriya stepped out of his apartment and made a decision.

This was a world where he didn’t have his friends to remind him that he needs to live. It was in times like this, where he can swear that he can hear Iida tell him to focus on his school, and Tsuyu’s stern reminder that breaking rules to show that rule-breaking was bad was hypocritical, that he misses them the most. So instead, he apologizes to Deku and leaves the apartment.

It’s rash and a shot in the dark, but thinking of that lonely lady in the candy shop, he knows that he has to at least try.

-

He left his phone on purpose, and had a couple of bills in cash. In hindsight, he probably shouldn’t have just put all of his cash and taped it to the refrigerator, but he knew that Dabi and Shigaraki needed to eat something.

Hopefully, they like take-out. Concerning all they’ve been eating is curry since they got to his apartment, he supposed that it’ll be a welcome change.

Well, them eating is more important than the comfort of his transportation since he’s cutting class anyways. Don’t worry Deku-kun, he tried to comfort himself by comforting the man whose body he’s in, he will get the highest grades ever. That way, at the very least, Deku-kun will be able to choose whatever he wanted for the future when he returned.

And so, he made the long hike, hitchhiked when he could, saved a drowning dog for a kid, and helped a grandma cross the street. And yeah, someone driving by stole his wallet, and someone else mistakenly poured dirty water on him, and he slept under the bridge by the highway for three days straight. There were also a couple of incidents where these older men kept running into his butt, but they apologized and left him alone.

Which was fine. He’s just glad that he wasn’t a girl, or else things would have gotten a lot worse by now.

More importantly, the letter that he was holding onto was still safe.

“Hey kid, are you okay?”

On the third day of his travels, he barely makes it to Nagoya. He’s been running on a water-diet, and thanked the government everyday for instating public drinking fountains. He’s picked up some enough change to buy a map too.

The last thing he expected was Toyomitsu Taishiro.

“Whoa there kid, you alright?”

He stared at him and squinted. He knew this man. He fought with him several times, saved a lot of people together and all. If Deku hadn’t met him after he lost all his weight fighting crime before, he wouldn’t have recognized him.

The blond stared down at him. And his tratorous heart fucking fluttered as he leapt up to his feet, and then the vertigo of being so hungry for so long hit him and he toppled hard to the side. The large hands that grabbed him were sorely missed, and he did his best to get Deku’s native reactions to being grabbed in control as he stared at him with stars in his eyes.

Fat Gum, he thought, thank god this man is okay. He was in a tracksuit.

“Yes,” he nodded. He straightened out and gavea polite bow, “Thank you for your help. I’m okay-”

“You don’t look okay,” the older man replied, a frown on his face. “...You want a meal? Actually, I have a coupon here, but it doesn’t work unless I bring in another person.” He gave a grin at that, wide and blinding in its radiance.

Midoriya thought that it’ll be easy to get lost in those eyes and smiled back. The kindness seeped deeply into his bones.

“Ah, I eat a lot,” he said, “So, I don’t think I could impose-”

“Really? I want to see that for myself. C’mon, I promise I won’t do anything strange. Just a meal.”

His stomach gurgled loudly back, answering, him and Midoriya felt his face flush in response. He bowed his head.

“Please excuse me then.”

-

“Ah god, I can’t believe you.”

Fat Gum is every bit a passionately compassionate person that Midoriya remembers him to be. Despite how awfully this world probably treated him too, he’s glad that this exorbitant amount of positive vibes hasn’t been tainted.

Right now, as he pays for Midoriya’s all-you-can-eat buffet, he was tearing up as Midoriya told him about his trip.

“And you’re… you’re going to deliver this letter from a grandma to a grandson? Because she didn’t know where his address was but that he was farming in Osaka?”

He smiled back.

“She’s helped me out a lot, it felt wrong to not help when I could.”

“But… school and you’re not even packed or prepared.”

He shrugged back, “If you wait for ‘sometime’, isn’t that just code for never? She last heard that he was in Osaka. There’s my first clue, the faster I get there, the better chances it will be that I will find him. It sounded urgent, so I don’t think that it would be a good idea to wait too long.”

“It sounded urgent? Was she on her deathbed?”

“Oh no, she’s in good health, thank god,” Midoriya said, laughing a little. He stuffed two more rolls into his mouth before taking the tea. After chewing and swallowing, he continued. “But good health doesn’t last forever. It’s better to do it while you still can then when you only have regrets.”

Toyomitsu looked at the letter that Midoriya placed on the table. “So, do you even know what’s written on this?”

The young man tilted his head curiously. “Eh? Well, yeah, it’s not for me. Why would I read it?”

The blond gave him a look.

“...Is this your grandma?”

He shook his head, “I call her that, but Chiyo-san just lives down the street for me. Actually, one of my friends shoplifted from her store once or twice. He stopped now, but she didn’t hold it against him when he came back to apologize.”

Toyomitsu arched an eyebrow.

“An eldery woman that you know because your friend stole from here, huh? And you’re on this reckless pursuit, penniless and sleeping under bridges, skipping class and going hungry, to get this letter to her grandson because she asked you to?”

He blanched, “It sounds really bad when you say it like that,” he said, taking one of the bowls of soups to lift to his mouth. “And she didn’t ask me. She wouldn’t. That’s why I had to do it?”

“You had to force your way into her life?”

He shrugged back. “It’s what a hero would do.”

Toyomitsu stared at Midoriya for a long moment before he looked at the address.

“Well, you’re in luck. I know where this is, and who you’re talking about?”

“Eh? Really?”

-

Toyomitsu Taishiro was a normal guy who was bright-eyed and optimistic about the future. He joined the police department straight out of high school because he wanted to make the world a better place. He wanted to make the world a safer place.

Training was brutal, and there were plenty of times where he didn’t think he would make it, yeah, but a recent case ruined his thought process.

>> took break from case because injury + partner was in critical condition after a case went really, really really bad

>>like a kidnapping case that ended with one of the girls who was kidnapped snapping & killing everyone. All the other kidnapped kids, the kidnappers, and brutally maimed some of the police officers (including taishiro & partner). Ending with her imprisonment, even though she was just in a very, very bad place with shit decisions to choose between

### Shuzenji Chiyo’s Grandson Shun

Midoriya has a swollen finger that’s probably broken, a split lip, and three rips in his jeans by the time he finally finds Recovery Girl’s grandson.

“Here,” he said, handing the letter over. “Your grandma wanted me to send you this.”

Said Grandson looked suspiciously between Midoriya and the letter and snorted. He gave this shaky laugh, but Midoriya could feel the last of the Grandson’s defenses slipping away, revealing a desperate child who just wanted someone to be by his side began to slowly appear.

“What, and who are you? Her hired help?”

“No, I’m just a guy who can’t keep my nose out of other people’s business,” Midoriya replied frankly. And then, he gave a large grin, “I did all I could, so it’s up to you now, okay?”

With that, he rubbed the back of his neck and yawned. Walking out and onto the street, he waved at Toyomitsu, who sketched out an uncomfortable looking bow and fretted over the young man with a first-aid kit.

On the other hand, Midoriya gave him a pleasant smile.

“Hey, wait!” Shun the Grandson called out to them. He hesitated when they turned around and then beckoned them closer, “It’s pretty late. Why don’t you guys spend the night?”

He’s never had unexpected strangers come into his house like this. A thousand bad things could happen due to this. But at the same time, he’s never met someone who traveled from Tokyo to Osaka just to deliver a letter from his grandmother with nothing but the clothes on his back.

-

“Tokyo is literally like… three hours by train,” the man said, squinting at him. “And you walked here? How long would that have taken?”

“It took longer than I thought,” Midoriya agreed, “About three days?”

He grimaced back.

And you just… went for it?”

The student laughed back, “It was a good run.”

Shun stared for a moment longer before he gave this heaving laugh. “Oh my god,” he said. “You’re absolutely crazy.” He looked at Toyomitsu, “Please tell me he’s not serious.”

The blond shrugged, “I found him under a bridge.”

Shun covered his face. “My grandma did this to you?”

“No, no, no,” Midoriya shot to his feet to refute that claim. “No, she’s only ever been supportive and kind to me! I did this. I selfishly put my nose where it doesn’t belong and did this. Please, this is on me.”

The grandson shook his head. “That really doesn’t help the situation.”

### Return

Midoriya was beyond exhausted when he got home. Rubbing the back of his neck, he pushed the door open and suppressed a yawn.

“I’m home,” he called out.

The last thing he expected was for the twin sounds of pitter-patter and the disheveled looks of Dabi and Shigaraki running out to greet him at the entrance. They stared at him, and Midoriya felt all his exhaustion melt away into something sharper as he regarded the wild look in their eyes. He hasn’t seen that expression on their face since he found them, after all.

Who could have put such a lost expression on their face?

“Hey, is everything okay?” he asked, toeing his ripped shoes off, “You guys don’t look so good-”

“Where were you?!”

His jaw clicked shut, as he stared in wide-eyed shock as Shigaraki shouted at him. His shoulders were shaking, head bowed, and Midoriya looked to Dabi’s emotionally blank face leaning against the wall a little further back.

“I had to run an errand,” Midoriya continued. He tilted his head, confused as he tried to figure out what else to say. It couldn’t be… “I left a note on the fridge.”

“You mean that note that said not to look for you? That you’re okay and will come back?” Dabi asked, his voice shaking. Actually, now that he knows what to look for, he can see that Dabi’s hands were shaking even as his arms were crossed over his chest.

“...I came back,” Midoriya said, “Just like I wrote I would. What’s the problem?”

“The problem is that there was no way of contacting you! There was no build-up to this! You left your phone! And taped your money to the fridge! We didn’t know where you were going or when you were going to come back! For all we knew, you went to school and-and-and got kidnapped or something! How were we supposed to know? How the hell are we supposed to understand anything if you don’t say anything to us? We can’t read your mind! How could I ever believe that someone would come back just because they said they would?!”

There was a long pause, as Shigaraki ran out of steam, and his arms hung limply by his side instead. Midoriya stared at him, and maybe he was living under that fantasy and really did want to go home. But looking at Shigaraki now, he understands that there were now people that waited for him.

In this world or another, there was someone who was waiting for him. It no longer mattered if this was <real> or not, or if this was his world or not, because that expression on Shigaraki’s face, the way Dabi looked wasn’t something fake. The emotions that they felt weren’t fake.

And Midoriya was a hero.

He bowed his head.

“I’m sorry,” he said, “I didn’t mean to worry you. I won’t do it again.”

The older man took a deep, long breath, showing more patience in a single motion than Midoriya has seen from him in a year. He clenched his hands tightly.

“Okay, as long as you understand,” he said at last. “Hurry up and take a shower, you smell like fucking garbage.”

“Yes sir,” Midoriya laughed back, stepping in and feeling as though he came home.

“We have dinner up,” Dabi added as he walked by, “Welcome back.”

“...Yeah, I’m home.”

The words sounded much lighter than he thought.

“...Dabi, Shigaraki,” he called out, “Thank you for keeping an eye on this place.”

“Go shower.”

### First Dinner Back \*

“And so,” Shigaraki said, placing the two plates of omurice onto the table, “I don’t trust you to cook,” he said pointing at Dabi, and then he pointed to Midoriya, “And I’m sick of eating curry.”

He gave a wolfish grin.

“Dig in, you filthy swin-”

“Oh my god, it tastes so good!” Midoriya cheered, talking over their resident chef in an instant. “The rice is so fluffy! The egg is so thin, but the texture is so smooth! The meat is cooked perfectly and the seasoning is so good! I can really taste how all the ingredients came together! I-”

“Okay, I get it!” Shigaraki suddenly snapped back, cutting him off. He turned away sharply, his ears bright red as he scowled. “God, just shut up!”

And just like that, he stormed back to the kitchen, presumably to get more food.

“...He’s really bad at taking compliments, huh?” Midoriya commented, watching where he had left.

Dabi shot him a look, and then snorted. It didn’t go unnoticed by the young man.

“W-What?” he asked, confused.

“Nothing,” Dabi replied back, dropping his gaze to the rice as he started to dig in. “Just… you’re a lot stronger than I thought,” he said.

“Eh?”

After coming to this world, quirkless, lost, alone and small again, it was the last thing he ever expected to hear. He dropped his gaze, shame filling his face. He had been so caught up in this world that he had almost completely abandon his. Strong? Far from it.

The people around him, who are trying to rebuild their life instead of getting distracted by every lost child around them, they were the strong ones.

“Oh no,” he said, shaking his head, “I’m not strong at all. I’m just… I have a long way to go.” He gave a nervous laugh, hoping that he didn’t ruin the soft ambiance with his needless chatter, and dug in. He gave a happy trill at the taste, deftly ignoring the weight of Dabi’s gaze by babbling instead, “Man, this omurice tastes really good though.”

Homemade food is a special thing. After going so long without it, Midoriya really appreciates it. If possible, he would like to make his mom a proper meal one day too.

“I… I think she’ll like that,” Dabi said suddenly.

Midoriya looked up at him, and gave out a surprised, “What?”

“Your mom,” Dabi said, “I’m sure she’ll like your curry.”

The young man stared, his eyes watering as he looked down at his plate. If all it took was a sentence to save someone, and the only way to be a hero was to save someone, then Dabi and Shigaraki had it down pat.

“...Don’t cry. Shigaraki worked really hard to make the perfect omurice.”

Coming back from the kitchen, Shigaraki looked just as red as he did when he left, “I didn’t do any of that shit-”

“It was awful, Izuku,” Dabi said, a slow smile on his face, “I’ve had nothing but omurice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. At this rate, I might have to learn how to cook-”

“Then learn, you damned flowerman!”

“All flowers got a time to bloom, Shigaraki,” Dabi replied, waving his hand at him. He lifted his eyes to regard them and sighed, “You’ll learn eventually, kid.”

Shigaraki’s lips twitched, and Midoriya, unable to help himself, laughed.

It was a quiet sound, and if they didn’t grow up in a household where these sounds didn’t happen, they wouldn’t have thought twice about it.

As it was, it just became another treasure.

### Back to school

Now that he was used to it, he supposes that if UA was a poorman’s school run on taxpayer money.

“Where the fuck were you?!”

He nearly jumped out of his skin when Bakugo’s voice came for his hearing.

“Morning, Kacchan,” he replied back, more out of habit than anything else.

The blond’s glare didn’t diminish in the slightest, but he looked visibly calmer than before. His hands came up, and Midoriya tensed without meaning to. The blond paused at that, and then dropped his hands. Burying them deep into his pocket, he scowled.

“What are you doing today?” he asked instead.

“Huh? Uh… probably go straight home?”

“Okay,” Bakugo nodded, “I’ll come over so you can copy off.”

“Eh?”

Midoriya blinked, and watched his childhood friend (or at least what should have been his childhood friend) flush uncharacteristically (or maybe it was in-character for this one?) red. He scowled back and gritted out between clenched teeth, “What? You don’t want my notes?”

Overwhelmed with a friendship they never got to share, Midoriya eagerly nodded as he raised his hand up high in the sky.

“I want it!” he shouted out. “I want it! So come over!”

The blond spluttered, “Shut up!” he snapped out, “God, you embarrassment, just say yes quietly!”

Midoriya grinned back, unbashased at the thought that any Bakugo could be so easily flustered, and laughed, “Okay, Kacchan!”

“You guys are as close as always.”

Any semblance of pleasantries evaporated off of Bakugo’s face in an instant, but Midoriya turned around to flash a grin at the person who approached him.

After all, no matter the universe, Uraraka Ochako was a great person, right?

“Good morning, Uraraka-chan!” he said.

The brown-haired girl blinked back, as though she wasn’t expecting him to say hello. Still, she gave a little smile and nodded back.

“Good morning… Midoriya-kun, was it?”

Oh Midoriya realized belatedly, he hadn’t been in class for a few days, had he? It wouldn’t make sense for him to know everyone’s names yet, right?

Well, he’ll let bygones be bygones.

“Yes, nice to meet you,” he said brightly, hoping that he didn’t give away how nervous he felt. Somehow, he couldn’t shake the fact that something was wrong, but he didn’t know what.shaking it off, he decided that, for now, he needed to play along and be a good student.

He shouldn’t tarnish Deku-kun’s good name, after all.

“Good morning, Sero-kun!” he said, slowly but surely greeting each and every single person that he came across in his class.

That is, until Bakugo grabbed him by the shoulders.

“Izuku,” he hissed, “You fucking freak!”

“W-what? What did I do?”

“Why do you know everyone’s name?!” the blond snapped back.

“Because they introduced themselves?”

Red eyes narrowed, and Midoriya couldn’t believe that he didn’t immediately start to explode. Instead, the blond closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“You’re the creepiest sonofabitch I know.”

“Eh?”

### Laid off & Belated Pay-Day

“...I didn’t think you were that kind of kid, but you really disappointed me. You just didn’t show up to work, for two weeks, no prior notice or anything, and you think that I’m just going to let you back? No, get out of here kid.”

In hindsight, it made perfect sense that he got laid off of his convenience store job. His one regret would be that he didn’t get Spinner’s contact information, among other things.

-

At the dinner table, where Shigaraki slid a plate of dumplings next to the tamogayaki while Dabi got the rice for the three of them, it still felt surreal. Was this real? He poured the hot tea out for them, and after putting the kettle away, took his seat with the others. Shigaraki sat on the left of him, and Dabi in front of him, just like they always did.

Sometimes, Midoriya had to double-check himself.

Today, however, he got to rid this particular wave of shame in his heart. His roommates had been pretty calm since he came back, so he didn’t think that it mattered much if he disappeared for a bit or whatever. Thinking back on it, he supposed it was a pretty big deal after all. He just didn’t think that his roommates would care.

The thought made him a little lonely, but he knew that it was better for things to be like this.

More importantly...

“So uh. I got some bad news,” Midoriya said slowly, before he started to eat.

“Eat first, I’m starving,” Shigaraki said.

“And we got some good news too. Let’s share after dinner,” Dabi said.

With a heavy heart, Midoriya did just that.

“...It’s delicious,” he said, eyes wide. He didn’t know why he was so surprised. He could feel his eyes water and he gave a breathless laugh. Maybe he was more tired than he thought. Maybe he was fucking exhausted from the entire train wreck that was his life. Right now, as he bit into the rice and savored every sensation of taste across his tongue, he lost focus on everything else and just worried about the current moment.

It was so fucking delicious.

If he had looked up from where he was inhaling the food, he would see the twin looks of relaxed content on Shigaraki and Dabi’s faces.

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“So, bad news first-”

“Wait,” Shigaraki said, “We’ve been waiting longer.”

“Huh?”

“Last week, actually,” Dabi said, a rare grin stretching on his face as he and Shigaraki pulled out envelopes from behind their back. “We got paid.”

“Hey, I wanted to say that!” Shigaraki hissed.

“...Paid?” Midoriya whispered.

Bad mood apparently forgotten, Shigaraki surged forward with a huge grin like a kid who scored particularly high on the last exam. He waved the envelope in Midoriya’s face.

“Yeah! We finally got paid!”

“Paid,” Midoriya repeated again, just as breathless.

“Yeah, we just said that.”

“F-from the job, right? Not something… less savory?”

Dabi snorted, “Like we’d get away with it anyways. Here,” he passed his envelope into Midoriya’s hands.

“Taxes are a bitch, but it’s something,” Shigaraki said. His words contradicted his actions, as he placed his hands on his hips and stuck his chest out in obvious pride. Even in the subdued, warm light of the Midoriya residence, his eyes shined like the sun was in their room instead.

Midoriya stared at the envelopes, as Shigaraki unceremoniously dumped his envelop on top of Dabi’s, feeling the weight of it in his hands, and he felt his eyes water all over again. They did it. They were full functioning members of society now. No one died, no one had to die, no one got hurt, but they looked proud of their accomplishments. In his hands was the physical manifestation of how far they came.

The weight of their humanity was a few grams at best, but it felt like so much more to Midoriya.

“That’s amazing,” he breathed out, his voice coming out much more shakily than he intended he coughed awkwardly, reigning his emotions in. “Really,” he said, “That’s amazing.”

He grinned at them, and seeing it mirrored back in an unfiltered manner could have blinded him in their radiance. If, in another world, they didn’t have to be villains and could smile so brightly, he felt relieved. Surely, in his world too, they could be that happy without ever killing someone, right? But the moment stretched, and the envelope remained in his hands. His smile turned a little more confused as he looked to it and then back to them, and their amused smiles. Wait...

“Wait, I don’t get it,” the young man said, trying to smile through the confusion. “Congratulations on your first pay, but why is it in my hands?”

“It’s for you,” Shigaraki said, easily. “As thanks for letting us bum off you.”

Next to him, Dabi nodded to confirm.

“Oh. Oh!” Midoriya brightened at that, and gave a little laugh.

A rush of warmth enveloped him at the thought that they wanted to repay him. They? Wanted to repay him? They knew and understood gratitude and they wanted to express those feelings to him? He was so happy he felt like he could burst out. Still, it felt all too silly, and he wanted to make sure that this was done correctly.

“I don’t want your money.” He stood up and pushed the pay back to the other men’s hands. Too shocked at the sudden turn of events, the other two numbly held the envelopes. “I don’t need this. This is the money you worked at the job you found. You should use it for yourself.”

There was a moment of silence before there was an eruption.

“What the fuck are you saying you don’t want it? Take the fucking money!” Shigaraki snapped back, shoving the money right back into Midoriya’s chest.

The younger man kept his hands up and away, and shook his head. He kept his expression calm, in sharp contrast to the increasing amount of ire that Shigaraki was building up. Right before he could start yelling again, however, Dabi spoke up.

“Why not?” he asked, his voice cold and eyes narrowed. His posture remained deceivingly calm and relaxed, but one look at his face let him know that he was one word from blowing up. “You just got laid off, didn’t you?”

Midorita sucked his breath in. He could feel his blood turn to ice as he stared at him.

“How…”

“It’d be more impressive if you had kept your job there after leaving for two weeks without prior notice,” the man said. His eyes felt cold and sharp, like he was armed with an icicle and ready to strike. “So why don’t you want this? It’s our token of gratitude-”

“I told you, I did it on a whim. You don’t owe me anything-”

“What the fuck you mean we don’t owe you anything! Then, fine! Here’s my selfish demand now take the money!”

Midoriya smiled back, touched by the gesture of kindness, and shook his head. In his world, Dabi and Shigaraki didn’t feel like they were capable of empathy, but there they were, expressing their heartfelt sincerity. It was more than enough. If they could move on and live, comfortable and happy without expending others, there was nothing more that Midoriya could want.

“No,” Midoriya said firmly, feeling more certain about himself as he overlapped the Shigaraki in front of him to the Shigaraki he once knew, “You’ve done more than enough. So, I really think you should have this money for yourself. Isn’t there something that you want?”

There had to be. In another world, Shigaraki wanted the whole world. He can only imagine that this Shigaraki also had to have some amount of desire as well.

“Yes! Of course there is!” the man snapped back.

“Okay,” Midoriya said, his heart warm and his smile warmer, “Now’s your chance.”

But neither of them knew what the price of Midoriya’s gentle smile was, and had no means of figuring it out.

“Still, you’ve been laid off. So you need money,” Dabi tried.

“I don’t need your money,” he replied back. “I have some savings if we need it. But we’ll be fine for a few months.” He would work hard to earn back all the money that he was stealing from Deku and his family. It was the least he could do for the kid he couldn’t save.

Shigaraki took a threatening step forward, but Midoriya’s smile didn’t falter. His face scrunched up, looking ready to beat his gratitude into Midoriya’s face, before he gave a loud sigh. Running his hand through his hair, he scowled back.

“I don’t understand you at all! Then why did you help?”

“Because I’m a hero,” Midoriya said on reflex, “Helping people is what I do.”

For the second, the anger and frustration was momentarily forgotten as both of them turned to stare at Midoriya with mirrored looks of shock.

“What?”

The grin he gave them was blinding, but it did little to assuage their feelings.

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In the end, Midoriya didn’t take the money. However, Shigaraki and Dabi figured that there were other ways to repay him.

They figured that they could presumptively pay the rent or utilities or whatever. Except it turned out that it was automatically paid for and covered by Midoriya’s dad, the name on the rent. When asked who they were, they didn’t threaten the rent-owner as much as they would have and walked away.

Well, whatever, there was plenty of other things that they could do. Except paying for groceries didn’t work since Stain and several other people always gave them freebies, and while they were busy taking the groceries, Midoriya always ended up paying in their moment of distraction. It was like he planned this or something.

But that was fine, there were other things. Like clothes. Except they rarely saw Midoriya out of anything other than his uniform and his tracksuit. And it wasn’t like they had any clue about what the kid would like to wear outside of plain clothes. It didn’t help that their neighbors leaped at any chance to buy something for Midoriya either.

From what they did know about Midoriya, was that he liked to live minimalistically.

What do you get someone like him?

Do they replace the plates that they’ve broken? Do they get books that they think that he’ll like? Do they get furniture to replace the home? Do they get better blankets so that the three of them don’t have to share the two that they have every night?

But if they do that, would that be okay?

If they did that, wouldn’t that engrave their presence into this home?

Was that okay?

If they asked Midoriya, he would undoubtedly say that it was fine, but they really shouldn’t be spending their money like that. And if they asked, Midoriya would surely pay more attention to those details and pay for it themselves.

It was hard. They wanted to repay back what they were given. However, they had to think about what they could do.

If they made these purchases, if they made that commitment, didn’t that mean that they wanted to keep going? Wouldn’t that mean that they were beginning to plan for the future? The money that they earned will go into their livelihood, their future.

What a novel feeling.

### Paycheck \*convos

“Would you... Uh… ever give your paycheck to someone?”

Aizawa looked at Midoriya from the corner of his eye, and then back to the ice cream they were eating. It was a rare moment where the two could be alone together like this, and he couldn’t let it slip by.

“Huh?”

“Like to uh… Yamada-sens… er…. Yamada-san and Shirakumo-san,” he said, quickly amending his mistake before they teased him about it again. “Would you ever give your paycheck to them?”

“God no,” Aizawa stated back bluntly. He narrowed his eyes, and a dangerous aura began to surround him as his voice dropped. “Did they put you up to this? What did they break? They have their own money so why do I have to bail them out again?”

Midoriya, feeling that this was a very, very personal issue, he tried to deviate from it as fast as possible. Dealing with a moody Aizawa always sucked, but if he’s not careful, he would infect Yamada and Shirakumo with it and then Midoriya would have to deal with all three of them and their moods.

Anyways, why did he have to be so defensive about it anyways? No, no, he didn’t want to know, did he? If he wanted to be able to make eye contact with his teachers when he got back, it would be better if he didn’t know.

“Well, Dabi and Shigaraki gave me their pays but I didn’t want it so I gave it back,” Midoriya blurted out, hopeful that it’ll distract him from whatever dangerous thoughts he had.

“...They what?”

It was successful, but the look in Aizawa’s eyes were no less scary. What did Midoriya do wrong?

“B-but I did give it back! I told them that they should spend their money on what they wanted. Is… Is this normal?”

“No,” Aizawa deadpanned, and after a moment, considered it. “Well to begin with, there’s nothing about you that I’d consider normal. Everywhere you go, all you do is get into trouble. They used to call us ‘problem children’ but you’re in a league all on your own.”

The words stung in their familiarity, and coupled with the rugged grin stretching on Aizawa’s face, Midoriya felt so homesick he could throw up.

He looked down on his hands. No, no, he thought to himself. He shouldn’t be selfish. Right now, he needed to help the people around him, and then he’ll worry about getting back.

“But isn’t it a good thing? Having more money. They said that they want to repay you, so why not take it?”

“...I don’t know, it just… it just feels wrong,” Midoriya said, shaking his head. “It’s not like being with them ruined me financially either. Even if I had that money, I don’t know what I would do with it. Shigaraki is always looking at games and Dabi really likes sci-fi novels, so I figured that there was something they wanted to buy. Wouldn’t it be better for them to use that money that they earned for themselves than give it to someone who wouldn’t use it at all?”

“You know, for a guy who always knows when people are suffering, you’re absolute shit at understanding them.”

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Aizawa looked over and then sighed.

“You know, it’s bad manners to eavesdrop.”

“Then don’t have conversations where you can be heard, Shota,” Shirakurmo shot back. He looked to Aizawa and then to where Midoriya had left through the door. “But I can’t believe that. He turned down money? Because there was nothing that he wanted?”

“No, if there was something he wanted...or something that he thought someone else needed, I bet you that he’d work for it.”

“Wow, so like, the exact opposite of us.”

Aizawa gave a wry smile at the frank observation.

### Stain & Roommates \*

“Aren’t police officers supposed to be busy?” Shigaraki asked, narrowed eyes and annoyed as Stain took a large helping of dinner again. Nevermind the fact that Stain also brought several bags of groceries, the bastard didn’t help in cooking it, and didn’t live here, so Shigaraki felt that he was justified.

The fact that he was still bitter that Midoriya was leafing through job-ads had nothing to do with it.

“I have to go back out,” he responded even though he didn’t dig in as soon as he was seated. Shouldn’t he be in a rush?

At the very least, if he was rushed, Shigaraki could make the claim that Stain was here only to eat their food and move on. He could bitch and complain a little while longer, but then he saw the way Stain straightened as Midoriya walked into the kitchen. He hated how similar they were.

“Wow, dinner smells good!” Midoriya cheered as he walked in. There was a towel around his shoulders that he was using to wipe at his hair.

Shigaraki felt his heart swell at the praise, and from the look that Stain gave him, knew that he couldn’t hide it at all. God, he hated this guy. Before, when Midoriya gave those kinds of compliments, he would fluster and splutter and possibly throw something at him. But after those grueling days where he had taped his pay and left his phone, Shigaraki felt something slide back into his heart with his consistent warmth.

“And if you want to eat it,” he said, feeling his throat constrict in ways it never has before, “Then you better go dry your hair properly.”

Was it strange? Did it not make sense? Midoriya’s eyes, bright and green, seemed to pierce right through him. Before he started fidgeting, he spoke up.

“Alright, I’ll do that. Don’t eat everything without me.”

Which was stupid, because they always have leftovers to pack lunches with.

“...He’s limping,” Stain said suddenly.

Shigaraki jerked, feeling as though his words were more accusatory than they actually were.

“He got into some trouble, didn’t he?”

It was phrased like a question, but Shigaraki couldn’t focus on anything other than the fact that he knew that look on his face. It was the same look Shigaraki has seen in the mirror, for the past few days.

Stain sighed, and rubbed the back of his neck. He took a deep breath, probably to lecture him on morality and ethics again, but before he could say anything, their front door opened.

“I’m back,” their last roommate called out.

“Oh, Dabi, welcome back!” Midoriya’s voice carried all the way.

Dabi wandered into the kitchen.

“What kind of roadkill are we eating today?” he asked, an easy grin on his face until he saw Stain. Then, his grin dropped and his eyes narrowed. “Officer Freeloader,” he greeted, voice as light as always although his expression promised a world of hurt.

“...Arsonist,” Stain replied back, voice even.

Shigaraki grimaced.

Then, appearing at the nick of time, Midoriya came rushing in. His hair, sticking up in several directions, was no longer dripping, but looked far from dry.

“I’m so hungry, let’s eat. You wouldn’t believe how much make-up work they dumped on me!”

“Then stop going to school,” Dabi said, the same time Stain spoke up.

“Then stop missing school.”

The two shot each other hostile looks and Midoriya remained blissfully unaware. Shigaraki wished he could be that young and innocent and ignorant. The food was starting to lose its taste, and he hadn’t even started eating. Awkwardly, they managed to pass around the food, filled in at their regular seats around the table, and prepared to eat dinner.

It was a stiff atmosphere, as it always was when Stain and Dabi are forced to recognize each other. Shigaraki, who yells the most often of the four of them, has never felt as much hostility with anyone like Stain and Dabi seemed to have for each other.

“You have a lot to do tonight?” Shigaraki asked, desperate to escape the reality facing each other down at their dining table.

“Yeah, I guess.” Midoriya nodded.

“Where have you been for the last two weeks?” Stain asked, cutting straight to the heart of the matter.

“I was around,” Deku replied back, “I was looking for something.”

The older man scowled harder and Shigaraki felt the food’s taste diminish. He hated all of them. Augh.

“Something that you couldn’t let me know about?”

The young man paused in his food, and placed his chopsticks onto the bowl. He stared Stain down from across the table, looking nothing like the awkward teenager that came in with his hair still wet just a few moments ago.

“I’m sorry that I couldn’t tell you before I left. It was time-sensitive. If I had to do it again, I wouldn’t have hesitated. I can’t tell you the exact details about what happened, but it wasn’t illegal and no one got hurt. If you have something else to say, then say it.”

Stain’s shoulders squared, but Midoriya’s expression was patient. Their eye contact was fierce, and both Shigaraki and Dabi tried to figure out which dishes they would grab in case the two got into a fist-fight across the table.

“...Welcome back,” Stain said at last, dropping his gaze.

Midoriya smiled back, something warm and kind.

“Thank you.

### Next Job?

“...If you need a job,” Yamada said, eyes bright in a way that made it easy for Midoriya to overlap the image of Present Mic talking to him about the future, “Come work at the club with us.”

“Isn’t that illegal?” Midoriya asked instead of shooting it down on the spot. There weren’t a lot of places that wanted to hire a high schooler from a notorious place like UA, as ironic as it sounded in his head. But, he still had mouths to feed, money to save, and was getting desperate.

“Nah,” Yamada shook his head, “You’re smart, so I doubt you’d get caught.”

Right, it’s only illegal if you get caught. It was common knowledge that people went by here. Somehow, that didn’t do much to make Midoriya feel better at all.

“Just come in for an interview. And you can figure it out for yourself. We need people to help out with the loading and unloading on busy nights like the weekend. I’m sure we can find you a place.”

A job opportunity, given fresh by Present Mic sounded lovely. And to be honest, Midoriya didn’t think he had the right to refuse..

Beggers cannot be choosers, after all.

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He walked in during opening.

“Hey, kid, we aren’t open yet.”

And his heart dropped when his eyes met the figure of Hound Dog.

His guidance teacher, the one that reminded him not to get into fights in the dorm room and that he would always have allies among the teachers to call as back-up, was apparently also a host. Of course he was. It seemed that the entirety of the UA faculty/staff from his world were working at this host club. This would be his life.

“I’m… I’m here for a part-time position,” he said.

“You?” Hound Dog eyed him, gave him a quick one over, and Midoriya was torn between insulted and a little relieved when he said, “uh, yeah right. You can’t be a host here, kid.”

“I was… I was told that I could get interviewed for a position with the loading and unloading stuff for the weekends,” he said, trying to remain calm even as his eyes watered. Hound Dog looked even softer than he remembered, and he wondered if that was because he put great care into the state of his fur.

“Kid, we don’t have a job for you here-”

“Please!” Midoriya said, stepping forward, “I need a job!”

Hound Dog turned back around, narrowed eyes and fur bristled, and Midoriya thinks that they get angry the same way, at the very least. Still, he holds strong. He makes clear eye contact before giving a proper, 90 degree bow at the waist and asked one more time.

“Please,” he said quietly. “At least give me one chance.”

There was a long silence. He thinks about how jaded Aizawa actually was, the sardonic way Yamada could speak, the sharp words and pleasant smile Shirakumo gave, and hopes that this wasn’t something that has changed.

“Alright kid. If you pass, I’ll personally pay for your uniform.”

Midoriya straightened, eyes shining. Hound Dog was still the same in that sense. He liked to see earnest people. It’s why he ended up liking Midoriya after everything that happened. Still, looking at the malicious grin curling up on his face, he wonders if being liked was really a good thing.

Well, he got a chance. Right now, he needed to do everything possible to make sure that he did this right.

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At the end of the night, Midoriya almost had a heart attack when he turned around after finally finishing cleaning off the dishes and saw that Inui was standing at the entrance to the kitchen. He looked at him, felt the shame creeping up his face, and wondered how he was going to explain to Shigaraki and Dabi that he’s still unemployed.

Still, a promise is a promise. And Midoriya knows that he didn’t do a very good job tonight. He messed up orders on several occasions, broke a couple of drinks, spilled a drink on one of the girls, and he’s certain there’s a thousand other little things he did concerning his mannerisms and general unprofessionalism. Most importantly, he overestimated himself. By a lot.

This body was very bad with the smell of smoke, alcohol, and people. He knew that their shop could get busy, but he had severely underestimated how busy it could get. As a result, his body froze up and he struggled for seemingly no reason.

“...Welcome to the team.”

“What?”

Inui looked at him and tilted his head, a loose grin appearing on his face, looking absolutely terrifying. Still, he walked up to Midoriya, and when the younger man took a step back, followed him until his back hit the counter. Then, he placed on hand on one side of the counter and leaned over him. If Midoriya thought that he was a tall gentleman before, it was astonishing just how much larger this man was compared to him.

“Here’s my card,” he purred, the smell of alcohol and perfume washing over him in the most nauseating way possible, and Midoriya shivered. His body trembled as a large hand gently pushed the business card into his front hoodie pocket, “Give me a call when you’re free. I’ll buy the uniform for you.”

He stepped away, giving Midoriya room to breath.

“Huh?” he asked as soon as his body started to reset.

He didn’t completely lock up, like he did with Shigaraki a few months ago, and he wonders if he could unlearn the trauma in Deku-kun’s body for him. It was a comforting thought that he shoved far, far away in his mind.

“Wait… I got the job?”

“Yeah, you did great, kid.”

Probably in a combination of never being complimented by Hound Dog before, and the absolute awful last couple of days he had, the well-meaning words recognizing his hard work had his eyes welling up. He bowed forward, expressing his gratitude over the job and the kindness and the chance in the only way he knew how.

“Thank you very much!”

“Alright, let’s go talk to the manager to make it official.”

### Roommates & New Job

“So I got a job!”

When Shigaraki and Dabi both got jobs, they had a party. They got chips and fruit punch, and bought a small cake. It was a big deal and Midoriya really wanted to convey how happy he was for them on accomplishing that.

So, he would be lying if he said that he wanted them to be happy too. He wanted them to think that it was a good thing to have a job, some level of consistency in the world, and to let their horizon expand a little more by getting employment. There were a hundred other things that could happen because they have a job, and he wanted it to be a good thing. Getting employed wasn’t easy, after all.

“...What?” Shigaraki didn’t sound happy. At all. Like, not even close.

Dabi’s eyes flitted to Midoriya before landing on Yamada.

“Where?”

“At our Host Club,” Yamada said, bright and happy.

“Yeah!” Midoriya agreed, and realizing how it sounded, lifted his hands up, “Oh, all I’m doing is dish-washing and stuff! I’m not a host or anything!”

“Uh huh.”

“Since it’s not like I’m really attractive or anything and the club needs to keep an eye on their reputation. And it’s only during the weekends and stuff so it won’t bother you. The times I work actually won’t be that different from when I worked at the convenience store, and the uniform is already covered for so there’s nothing to worry about on that end-”

“Izuku,” Dabi snapped, “Shut up.”

Midoriya’s jaw clicked shut.

“Nah, don’t be so hard on him. It must be hard trying to keep three mouths fed. Shota, Oboro and I all work together but we have our hard patches sometimes too, after all,” the blond said. His smile was bright, and his words sounded well-meaning, but Midoriya couldn’t help but think that there was an extra pinch of something else.

-

Dinner was stifling.

“So, uh, tough day at work?” he tried, hoping that there was a way, anyway, to alleviate the heavy atmosphere.

Silence met his words. He felt like he could cry.

“Wow, the noodles taste great! It’s slightly chewy and the sauce is really sweet and spicy. The taste really fills up my mouth and it’s warm all the way down. This is super delicious. I never thought that we could have Thai food at home!” he took another mouthful, hoping to forget how hostile the environment had gotten.

He got a job. That was good news, wasn’t it?

“Thanks for the food,” Dabi muttered, his plate clean as he stood up.

“Yeah, just run some water on the dishes,” Shigaraki called back.

There was another brief second before red eyes turned to Deku.

“...Why’d you get a job?”

“B...Because I want a stable income?”

“I have a stable income.”

“But that’s your money.”

“Yeah,” Shigaraki motioned at the plates on the table, “but our food.”

Catching on to the unsaid question, Midoriya shook his head firmly.

“No, that’s your money. You should spend it on what you want to spend it on. I want to spend my money on this.”

Red eyes fell back on his plate before he stood up and walked out.

And Midoriya was alone in his dining room again. He really wished that everyone would just use their fucking words for once.

### Phones

“I realized that it’s pretty hard to not have phones,” Midoriya said one day, “Maybe we could grab some this weekend. I got paid pretty well.”

Shigaraki nodded back, “Yeah, let’s grab some lighter jackets while we’re out.”

“Some new shoes will be good for us,” Dabi called out, “And slippers. I’m dying with only sneakers.”

Despite himself, Midoriya felt a silly little grin come onto his face.

“What’s up?” Dabi asked, a smile stretching on his lips as though just seeing Midoriya smiling was infectious.

“Ah, no, I just… I never thought I would have something like this, I guess?” Midoriya said, trying to put his feelings into words. He placed his hand on his heart and grinned at them. “I’m glad.”

“We’re running errands,” Shigaraki said, as though he needed to be reminded of it.

“It’s nice,” Midoriya said, looking at the little list they made up.

He would have never believed that he would get to go shopping as casually as he did now. He would have never thought that the world would be stable enough, that he would be able to take a break now, and just go and run errands. In addition to that, the thought that he would be going out with once-villains to do something as domestic as this made his heart grow warm.

The people he found, tossed away without any regard for their life, were now capable and functioning members of society. He tried not to, but his eyes watered again. It had to mean something. He wasn’t meaningless here.

“I can’t help but think that it’s nice.”

He, so focused on his thoughts, missed the soft looks he received from his other two flatmates.

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Looking at the phone selection, Midoriya feels the world slow down.

This was a purchase. If he makes this purchase, didn’t that mean that he wanted to stay? If he made this purchase, should he get something that even Deku, should he ever wake up, would use? Should it be something that would be easily replaceable? Did he want to burden him with that?

Once upon a time, he would have made a beeline for a yellow smartphone with an All Might case.

He picked up the cheapest phone.

It could call and it could text. It could take pictures, just in case. It felt like a brick in his hand, so hopefully, it won’t just shatter even if he gets tossed into another car. But no matter how he diced it, he couldn’t shake the thought that he was getting Too Comfortable here.

And that scared him.

“You’re going to buy that?” Shigaraki asked.

Midoriya looked up and Shigaraki towered over him. While he was glad that all the food he ate was helping him fill out, it was a little bitter to be reminded about how much bigger he (still) was over him.

Well, Midoriya is certain that he’ll hit his growth spurt eventually and be just as tall and big too, but that felt far, far in the future. Like, a future that wasn't his kind of far, because his world didn’t have a Shigaraki anymore.

The thought made him feel a little more hollow than before.

“Yeah,” he said, burying his heart away and focusing on the moment, “it has a camera. Did you guys pick what you want?”

Dabi and Shigaraki both picked a smartphone of some kind, but Midoriya took it from them and headed towards the desk. When they tried to take it back, he quickly kicked Dabi in the shin and elbowed Shigaraki hard in the stomach. While they were doubled over in pain, he rushed to make the purchase.

In his humble opinion, they had it coming.

There wasn’t really a need for him to have a nice phone, since he wasn’t going to be here too long. But he knew he was a little… rough with his electronics. So, while Izuku was here, he’d have and use a different phone. And Deku can decide what he wanted to do with his phone when he came back.

If he never deleted all those photos, then there must be a reason why he kept them, right?

### Being friends with everyone\*Bakugo & classmates

“I think we could all become friends,” Midoriya declared, rather bodly.

Bakugo gave him a withering stare. “Oh really?” The poor bastards.

“Yeah, because no one is a bad guy here. We don’t have villains.”

“We don’t have heroes either,” the blond supplied, and the young man shook his head.

“I got you,” he said.

He looked back to the textbook, trying to remember how to do this particular problem and was glad that Bakugo was such a great note-taker in any world. Due to his focus, however, he totally missed the bright red blush that painted Bakugo’s face.

It was a small thing, but he always forgot that Bakugo here wasn't loud with all his thoughts and feelings. Some habits are just hard to break, as it was.

And then, a cough was heard and the two of them looked up to the person standing at the corner of their desk.

“Can I… sit with you?”

Midoriya melted, and gave a smile to the normally indifferent Shoji.

“Of course!” he cheered, moving his notes out of the way so the man could sit down next to him.

Bakugo’s glare was definitely hostile, and Midoriya kicked him under the table. He gave a hiss, curling up to hold the sore spot tenderly, and the grin he gave Midoriya would make small children cry.

“You little bitch-”

“C’mon Kacchan, you should learn how to make friends, especially since Kirishima can’t translate for you.”

There was a pause.

“Kirishima?” Shoji asked, tilting his head, “The kid who stopped coming to school after two days?”

“...He what?”

### Kirishima\*shut-in

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Midoriya could hardly believe. Yes, everyone said it, and yes, he saw the empty desk himself but… Kirishima?

Kirishima? The one that somehow managed to become friends with Bakugo at his max-bullheadedness? That Kirishima? No way.

Until he saw him staring back at him, he would have never considered that Kirishima Eijirou would become a shut-in, in any universe.

The broken door in his hand, he stared where Kirishima stared back.

“W-who are you-”

The sight of the guy who used to reach out to him to let him know that he could still reach his friends, curled up with a blanket over his head, trembling with his back pressed to the wall, pale and terrified, made his insides twist out.

“My name is Midoriya Izuku!” he shouted out, hoping that his voice didn’t shake as much as his heart did. His eyes watered but he wasn’t going to let anything stop him, and remembering who inspired him to be a hero, managed to give a shaky grin. “I’m your classmate.”

In another world, they were best friends. He’s certain that there was a world where they were enemies too. But right now, in this strange world where they were no heroes and villains, he doesn’t want to be strangers.

“And we’re going to go to school together now.”

“N-Now?”

“Well,” Midoriya sniffled loudly, scrubbed at his eyes, and kept his smile up, “We’re going to be late.”

-

“I-I… No one wants me there!” he said. Unintentionally, his hand started to harden and he hastily hid it behind him, “I’m just going to break stuff! There’s no point in me going there-”

“I came here because I realized that you weren’t in class!” Midoriya snapped back. “I don’t know about everyone else, but I want you to be there!”

“So what? I have to go to school to fulfill your selfish wish!? Why do I have to do that?!”

The young man reeled back, clearly not expecting the prickly words, but before Kirishima could take it back or even point out that he even hurt the people that came to help him, he found his ground again and started to yell back.

“Because you’re not a coward!”

Somewhere deep in his heart, Kirishima wanted to believe him. That’s probably why he kept his mouth shut.

“I…”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment and then looked down at the ground.

“You’re right. It’s super selfish of me to demand this of you. But I… I want to be friends with you.”

“But why? We’ve never met before.”

There was a brief pause as the young man blinked at him, as though he was realizing this for the first time himself. He gave a laugh, and rubbed the back of his head.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. We haven’t met yet.”

It felt like there was much more behind this than what was being let on. He didn’t know if that was a good thing or what, but for the moment, all Kirishima could think about was how the man was smiling even though he sounded like he was about to start crying. He didn’t get it.

If he didn’t want to come here that badly, why did he come? Was this a joke?

The thought filled him with more anger than he thought he was capable of and with a scowl said.

“Please get out.”

This dude, his classmate apparently, looked at him like he could see something and nodded.

“I’ll come by after school.”

“No, please don’t,” Kirishima said.

“With friends,” Midoriya said, and it felt like a threat. But he left.

He finally left, and Kirishima could return to the quiet of his room. He could return to the time of tentative peace in the little hole he called home. He was fine here. He didn’t hurt anyone and no one could hurt him.

And his eyes kept glancing to the clock, dreading the moment where this peace would shatter again.

### Shoji & Izuku \*being born

Getting his ass pummeled by a kid half his size was nowhere on his to-do list, but here he was. Shoji held his bloody and broken nose in his hand, scowling and choking on his blood with every breath. His eyes locked with vibrantly bright green ones.

They were so bright, that for a moment, he thought he would be consumed by them.

“Being born isn’t a bad thing!” he screamed out, “Being born isn’t a tragedy! It’s not a crime to have been born!”

He grabbed him again by the front and Shoji felt the fight desert him when he saw Midoriya’s eyes fill with tears. The radiance in his eyes didn’t dim even as his shoulder trembled. He always thought that crying was a weakness, but he doesn’t think he’s ever felt so completely at the mercy of someone else before like this.

“We don’t choose to be born,” he said quietly. “How can it be a crime when there was no choice?” He sniffled loudly, releasing Shoji to wipe at his eyes. His voice cracked. “Okay? You might have done a lot of bad things in your life and that’s not okay, but being born wasn’t one of them. I won’t let you get punished or-or need to repent for something you had no control over.”

“But… why?” he asked, his voice quiet.

“Because I’m a hero. I protect people.”

Coming to this high school was the closest thing to going to a Juvenile Detention Center without going to the Juvenile Detention Center. Here, they were supposed to learn how to solve for the area under the curve and learn about all the subsets during the Sengoku Warring Period. They were supposed to learn how to grit their teeth and accept the roles that society placed on them with their jeering words behind their pitying smiles.

Nowhere, in all of that, did it ever say that he would find someone who wanted to be a hero.

“You’re a fucking freak,” Shoji said, because it’s the only thing he’s heard people say. His voice shook and he wanted to hit himself because that’s not what he wanted to say at all. He, of all people, knew how hurtful those words could be.

“Thanks,” Midoriya said, flashing him a toothy grin despite his blotchy and tear-stained face. He leaned forward to extend his hand out towards him, “You’re not so bad yourself, Shoji-kun.”

Shoji stared at the hand for a long moment. Under the pressure of a hundred different emotions branching thousand different memories, he forgot it all for a moment to take Deku’s hand.

He’s going to learn something new.

### Mineta & the Other School

Mineta was as much of a perverted troublemaker as Midoriya remembered him to be when they were students. However, this was… a little much. Not even the Mineta he was with could get like this, especially since they were still trying to be heroes.

But Mineta placed his purple balls, the things that saved Midoriya’s life on more than one occasion, and placed them around in discreet but vital locations. As a result, any girl’s skirt could get stuck. And Mineta, with all that intelligence Midoriya knew he had, would take pictures of any pantyshots.

He rubbed the bridge of his nose. He really wished that this wasn’t his problem. He really wished that he didn’t know, so that he could live ignorantly and more concerned about how to get back home.

Instead, he came up to the girl, lending her his jacket so she could tie it around her waist, and nearly ripped her skirt getting her off.

“...My friend did this,” Midoriya said, before he turned to her and bowed his head. “I’m sorry. He’s not a bad guy. He’s just… He just makes a lot of questionable decisions.”

“And what? I should just forgive him for doing this because you asked me to?”

The slap that cut across his face didn’t throb, but the ring caught on some skin and it broke. Still, Midoriya thought it was reasonable that she was upset and bowed his head back forward anyways. Right now, she wasn’t going to listen to words. He hoped that she knew he was genuine.

He didn’t excuse this behavior. Of course not. And he didn’t want her to excuse this behavior either. However, he didn’t want this to ruin Mineta’s life. He didn’t want this to define Mineta.

“Augh, whatever!”

She stalked off and he sighed deeply.

### Class Nicknames

“Oi, Kirishima said we’re in self-study.”

“What?”

Bakugo frowned, but repeated himself, “Kirishima said that chemistry kits aren’t ready so we’re in self-study.”

“...You call him Kirishima?”

Bakugo blinked and turned to Kirishima, who looked back at him owlishly.

“Yes?” Bakugo narrowed his eyes. “What else would I call him?”

“Spiky,” Midoriya replied back without missing a beat.

The blond’s brow furrowed as he scowled, “Why the fuck would I call him that when I have spiky hair too?”

“That’s what we’ve been trying to say for years!” the green-haired man said.

Bakugo took a deep breath in, counting his pulses so that he didn’t lose himself and start strangling Midoriya again.

Next to him, Kirishima started to sweat nervously.

“We started talking, unfortunately, last year,” Bakugo said, dropping the spine of his textbook onto Midoroiya’s head, “Stop giving us a backstory that never happened!”

“Ah, right,” Midoriya rubbed his head.

“God, you’re an idiot,” Bakugo said, shaking his head. He paused for a moment, and then, quietly added, “We can make our own stories now, so don’t add fake stuff in the middle of all that.”

Kirishima covered his mouth, and Shouji gave him a solemn look as though to say, “Yes, that’s how they are.”

### Scars \*DabiDeku

Midoriya was used to the whole ‘injuries and the scars’ thing. He’s bothered, of course he’s bothered, but he has long since learned to brush off the words that people might say or the looks people might give. He’s never been good with the whole publicity thing, but if he can avoid paparazzi on the way to school everyday, then ignoring the things people said about him was just as easy. At this point, it was a habit.

Of course, he knew that other people aren’t used to that. And so, he made sure to cover up. His hero uniform made sure that no one could see what he turned himself into to get to where he was.

But from time to time, he forgot that before Izuku was Deku-kun. And Deku-kun didn’t know that. He didn’t know better and he didn’t ever learn and no one ever cared. He never knew how to keep going and ideas on accepting and moving on never occurred to him. That was his reality that he lived through, and Izuku wanted to save <Deku-kun>and everything he had left.

But he didn’t think twice, and he rolled up his sleeves past his elbows when he came in, this time to help with dinner. He didn’t want to get his undershirt dirty, so that was all rolled up, and he didn’t have any bandages on since he didn’t have any fresh injuries that needed them.

He finally came home early, and he had an hour or two before he had to get to work. And that meant that he can sit with his housemates and eat dinner with them before running back out.

And in all honesty, he was absolutely giddy about the idea that he was going to make dinner with someone. He felt great about it. He didn’t really ever get a chance to help his mom out in the kitchen, not since he was a child and they used to make chocolate chip cookies together once a blue moon. Still, those were some of his fondest memories. Making something with someone else was a valuable thing to Midoriya. So, this was exciting.

“...You had it rough too, huh?” the sudden voice yanked him out of his thoughts.

He turned over, his face bright while he held the bag of flour in one hand and a bag of breadcrumbs in the other. “What?"

He and Shigaraki were going to be making tempura tonight, and he was told to get the ingredients ready while Shigaraki went to the bathroom. Midoriya thought that he was alone, so hearing Dabi suddenly really threw him off.

Dabi’s eyes remained locked on the scar right on his forearm. He reached out, and placed his hand on Midoriya’s hand. After spending such a long time fighting this man, Midoriya surprised himself by relaxing under his touch.

He wondered if it’s because he occasionally gets stuck and still saw the Dabi that came for Kacchan all those not-years ago, or if it’s because Deku-kun’s subconsciousness kicked in and relaxed when something he perceived as ‘threatening’ grabbed him. He doesn’t know why, but he didn’t flinch or tense under those cool blue eyes.

Perhaps, they were just used to each other now or something. Wouldn’t that be nice? He wasn’t bothered and didn’t react negatively because it was Dabi. It was a pleasant thought, and the one he wished was the truth.

But when he looks up to see Dabi’s blue eyes, his breath caught in his throat, and he doesn’t know what he’s done wrong so that Dabi would look so fucking lost.

He frowned, adjusting so that Dabi could take his hand or whatever, and balanced the bags in his other arm instead.

“...You okay?” he asked quietly, squeezing the three fingers that he managed to grab.

Dabi’s eyes dragged from his forearm and then back up to the man. When Midoriya realized what he was looking at, he yanked his hand behind him instead.

“...Sorry, it's pretty ugly, isn’t it?”

It was fucking ugly, actually. Midoriya knew because when he woke up and saw it, he felt disgusted. An amagation between a kid who wanted to survive, cruel words, and a constant reminder that no one ever noticed. He hated to think about it, but it made him sad that in another world, a version of ‘him’ had succumbed to this. Lost in his shame, he avoided Dabi’s gaze.

He stared at him, expression unreadable before he gave a scoff.

“...You’re an idiot.”

Midoriya blinked, and looked back. Vaguely, he wondered if the expression wasn’t unreadable, but that his expression was just something that he had never associated with Dabi before. However, he didn’t know what to do once he realized that Dabi cared.

The taller man took a step forward, his arm reaching out to gently pull Midoriya’s arm out from behind his back. That blank stare, the way his eyes roamed at the old scars on his arms, the warmth of his hand on his elbow, it was all explainable by a single emotion that leaves Midoriya a little light-headed.

To think, Dabi was worried about him.

“...Yeah, probably,” Midoriya nodded, because he must be an idiot if it took him this long to decipher that look. He shrugged back, “But it could be worse.”

Dabi’s eyes, soft in a way that makes him wonder if this really is Dabi, met his.

The word that Dabi’s eyes caught, the one that was meticulously carved into his skin and decorated with cigarette burns, made his demeanor sag. And he would know that, right now, this Dabi in front of him, would never think of him as <worthless>. A world without villains and heroes, Dabi would stand in his kitchen and gently take his arm like this.

Thank you, Dabi, Midoriya wanted to say, even if that expression wasn’t for him.

Dabi doesn’t know it, but he saved Midoriya in the kitchen that day.

### Yama v Mido

“...Is my work unsatisfactory?”

Yamada jolted from where he was taking his smoke break and looked up where Midoriya gently closed the door behind him. Standing next to him, with the streetlight as their only witness, Yamada sucked on the cigarette more aggressively than he meant to.

“Uh, what do you mean?”

“I feel like, since I got this job, you’ve been...more distant I guess? I don’t…” Midoriya’s voice dropped a pitch before he changed his mind and started a new sentence, “I figured that maybe it was because my work isn’t good enough. So, I thought maybe I could just ask and see if I can fix it now that I’m more used to it?”

The blond bit down on his cigarette, ruining it, but he was far too annoyed about this entire ordeal.

“Then why are you talking to me?”

“Because you stopped talking to me.”

Yamada did miss the kid, he won’t lie. It’s been a while since he threw his arm around Midoriya and got him into a head-lock. It’s been a while since he teased the young boy, and it’s been far too long since he returned the greeting. Still, right now, everything felt empty. It didn’t feel like those smiles were his anymore. In fact, seeing how happy and content Midoriya was just annoyed him to no end.

“...Why didn’t you just come to me? If you needed help, you know that I would have, Oboro and even Shota would have put ourselves together for you. You know that,” he said. His voice cracked a little, as the emotions he tried to keep at bay surged back.

To his defense, Midoriya asked for it.

He got up to his feet and turned to the younger man. He hated those green eyes. He hated the way he stared at him, like he was something worth looking at when he was just some high school drop-out that made money off of preying on lonely women. He doesn’t understand how someone could look at him like that when they knew who he was and what he did. He didn’t like how someone who saw the ugly of the world could kept the shine in his eyes while he succumbed and became one of them.

“It… It’s this and when you were just gone for two weeks, have you ever considered that maybe there were people here who were waiting for you, too? You can’t just… come into our lives and make a home with us and then just fucking leave whenever you want!”

He thought back to the time when he would check the time and wonder what he was waiting for. How he waited for weeks and then leapt at the sound of Midoriya’s voice. Like some well-trained pup, left far too long on his own, and suddenly the ‘welcome back’ words in his mouth felt too bitter to say aloud.

Yamada, who thought that his world was full and perfect with the people at UA Host Club, really and truly believed that he was invincible with Aizawa and Shirakumo by his side. And after an entire childhood of being told that he wasn’t good enough, and that he was too loud, and that he was too much, he figured he would die pitifully with his two best friends, but they would go out together with a bang. Nowhere, in his short and miserable life did it ever mention a Midoriya Izuku.

“Why didn’t you just come to us? How come you’re fine without us? Why can’t you just quit and rely on us for the rest of your life?”

Midoriya, caged between his arms, still looked at him straight in the eye. Suddenly, Yamada felt like he’s the child, suddenly under the scrutiny of those eyes.

“...I can’t do that,” Midoriya said, and Yamada feels like he’s lost something precious. “Because, what if you need help one day? If I’m dependent on you, then I can’t help you. But like this, if you ever need help, then I can help.”

It was such a Midoriya-answer. So much Midoriya in a single answer so that Yamada felt stupid for even asking the question. Still, hearing the words returned some form of stability to his being.

He took a deep long breath, hating himself for how easy it was to center his heart.

“Man, now I feel dumb,” he sighed, stepping back and rubbing his neck.

“Really?” Midoriya looked towards the ground, a small blush on his face. “I didn’t realize that I mattered that much to you so… it’s a little embarrassing, but I’m,” he looked up at that, the lights dancing around his eyes and making Yamada’s stomach flip-flop as he finished out, “really happy.”

Yamada felt the heat rise to his cheeks. God. he couldn’t even remember the last time he felt embarrassed like this. Like, it had to be in high school when that cute girl asked him if he wanted to join her on a date, right? It was such a long time ago, back when he was a little more innocent. He sighed again, scratching his cheek as he reached for the door.

“Break’s over, let’s head back in, squirt.”

“Yes sir,” Midoriya said, giving a mock salute in the process. As they stepped in though, he took a moment to stare at Yamada. “But I am glad that we figured this out.”

“Yeah?” Yamada quipped back as he slipped his jacket on and adjusted his lapels.

“When you were being quiet, I felt… really lonely. So I’m glad that we figured this out.”

The blond felt his heart palpate dangerously. This kid was out for his job, Jesus, and to cover up for his misstep, he threw his arm around Midoriya’s shoulder with a big grin.

“Really?! You really mean that?!” he said, losing himself in the joy of the moment. “Oooh, I knew I could count on you!”

Midoriya gave this exasperated sigh, and if Yamada was a naive man, he would say that he could fall in love with the curve of his smile.

-

“...You guys made up then, right?” Shirakumo asked as their shift ended.

Aizawa, about four steps from sleeping where he stood, lazily opened one eye.

“Yeah,” Yamada grinned back. “We’re even closer than before,” he added cheekily.

The black-haired man snorted, but didn’t add further commentary.

“Sorry it took so long,” Midoriya called out, coming out with a towel around his neck. No doubt, Ishiyama took great care in making sure that he was properly taken care of before he left. The young man paused as he stared at them, and tilted his head in confusion, “Did something good happen?” he asked.

“Eh? What do you mean?” Shirakumo replied back, genuinely curious about what Midoriya meant.

“You guys seem like you’re in a good mood.”

Aizawa yawned as he got up to his feet, “The sun’s finally out,” he said, even though the sky was still dark and cloudy. “It’s going to be a good day.”

The two blonds broke out into loud laughter, while curious green eyes looked from the skies to them, no doubt thinking that they had way too much to drink tonight. If he got any more concerned, he might try to enter their home to make sure they all got to their beds again.

Well, it was fine to have a couple of secrets, right?

“C'mere you,” Yamada laughed, dragging Midoriya closer as he wrapped his arm around his shoulder and leaned in close, feeling light like a feather.

### First Name \*ie class 1-A meets Shoto

“Wait,” Mina gasped dramatically, “You mean you and Midoriya aren’t childhood best friends?”

Bakugo snorted, “We started talking in middle school.”

“We were born in the same hospital,” Midoriya added.

Bakugo made a face at him, disgusted and a little apprehensive, “You know what hospital I was born in?”

-

“...Call me Shouchan.”

“Pardon?”

Kirishima raised his hand, “And I’ll be Ei-kun!” he said.

Midoriya blushed and looked down. “Is… Isn’t that familiar?” he stuttered out.

Bakugo rolled his eyes. “Now he cares about shit lie that. But when it comes to just standing outside of my house and screaming at the top of your lungs-”

“I want to be Hi-kun,” Shinsou said, shoving Bakugo to the side as he walked over. His cheeks dusted a like pink, “And I guess we’ll call you Dekiru.”

### Chisaki Finds Out About Host Club

If Midoriya had learned anything, it’s that sometimes, you can just tell when a work shift was going to go to shit. Today was one of those days.

“Hai, here is your alcohol. Our hostesses will be with you shortly…” Midoriya trailed off as his eyes met familiar gold ones.

Unfortunately, Chisaki seemed to recognize him too. Fuck. He had hoped that the man would have forgotten his plain-ass by now, but the universe had it out for him. He passed around the glasses and placed the large sake bottle, a service from the manager of the night, and placed the menus on the table. Everything that he learned about the VIP rooms was followed to the T.

“Damn, how come we gotta have a man for this?” one of them complained loudly.

Midoriya was at work, and he’s heard worse, so the words wash over him. The heavy weight of Chisaki’s eyes, however, pressed down on him like a second layer of skin. It was a little harder to ignore, but he made careful certainty to not look at him or his general area. Maybe he could pretend that he looked similar to the guy that accidentally kidnapped Eri from kidnappers?

So the stifling silence following the comment, caused by the way Chisaki glared at the young man who spoke up, was beyond Midoriya. When he was done, he gave a polite bow, he wasn’t paid to smile or talk, he was only here as a temporary fill-in to get them started and let them know that their hostess was coming. It had nothing to do with the fact that he was trying to avoid Chisaki or something.

Still, not even four minutes after he leaves the room, his back is to the wall and Chisaki is standing in front of him. He still can’t quite meet his eyes, looking at the very interesting patch of tile about 15 feet away.

Someone up there must be having a great laugh, aren’t they?

“Is there… anything I can do for you, esteemed guest?”

“..I should have known that you were a filthy liar.”

Green eyes could have cut a line to Chisaki’s face. “Wha-”

“I don’t know how, but you knew that Eri was involved in the Shie Hassakai. You knew who we were before I even got to introduce ourselves. Well, I don’t really care how you know us, but to follow us to a host club? Isn’t that a little strange?”

Maybe it was because Midoriya hadn’t slept very well, and there was a persistent ache from his back where he had yet to ask Chiyo to look at since he was running to work, or maybe it was because Midoriya was so sick and tired of people like Chisaki. People who looked down on everyone else and assumed the whole world was their enemy. Seeing him, he wonders if he ever gets exhausted living like that. It probably comes with the whole yakuza-thing, but still.

“Really? I think it’s perfectly normal for me to show up to work,” he shot back dryly. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a job to do.”

And in Chisaki’s surprise, he slipped away. It was one of the balliser things he’s ever done, but he has dishes waiting for him.

… He hoped that Chisaki was mature enough to not take it out on the hostess.

-

“Alright, spill.”

Midoriya thought that their post-shift ice cream was too quiet, as it turned out, they had something they wanted to inquire from him. As the four of them made their way back to the apartment complex, he looked at them as he licked his popsicle.

“About what? I didn’t know the labels were switched.”

“No, not about that,” Shirakumo said, and then laughed, “Although that was pretty funny, huh?”

“Oh man, the look on Ryu’s face when he drank it!” Yamada laughed back.

“...Don’t change the subject,” Aizawa spoke up. He finished off the rest of his gari-gari bar, holding the stick in his hand like a cigarette as his eyes narrowed. “How do you know that yakuza?”

“...What?” Midoriya thought about it, and remembering the heart attack he almost had earlier, nodded slowly, “Oh, Overhaul?”

“God, you have a nickname for him, too?”

“What else would I call him by?” Midoriya frowned back.

The other three paused and sighed. Yamada finished the rest of his ice cream and Shirakumo shook his head.

“...Izuku, that guy was talking about buying you.”

“B-Buying?!” Midoriya gaped back, and then paused, “But you… wouldn’t-”

“Of course not!” Aizawa snapped back. “But it’s easier to protect you if we know what happened. How the fuck did you piss off a yakuza? Aren’t you like, 10?”

“I didn’t think it would piss him off!” Midoriya said, pointedly ignoring the jab at his age. He rubbed the back of his neck, “I’ll talk to him, maybe we can figure something out. I won’t let it bother anyone at work.”

“Izuku,” Shirakumo said suddenly, and the certainty of his voice caught the young man’s attention even though he wasn’t speaking very loudly. His smile was present but it didn’t reach his eyes, “We’re not bringing it up because we don’t want to be involved. We’re bringing it up because we want you to know that we got your back.”

“Yeah, we’re like scumbags, but we’re still adults,” Yamada said. “No one was there for us as kids, but we’ll be here for you, alright?”

Midoriya felt his eyes water, and Aizawa sighed. He dropped his hand onto his head, ruffling his curls and letting his presence known even if he didn’t tell it to him. The warm fluttery feeling buzzed around pleasantly until Midoriya remembered what they were talking about.

“Then, if it gets out of hand, I’ll be counting on you.”

“Of course!”

“Rely on us before it gets out of hand,” Aizawa deadpanned back.

-

Nezu mentioned it, once or twice, that kids like Midoriya were the most dangerous. Even though Aizawa once saw Midoriya give a roundhouse kick that knocked someone double his statue to the ground and remembered that one other time Midoriya threw a man over his shoulder with little difficulty, he never registered the kid as dangerous. Kids like him, who cries at the drop of a hat and smiles like he’s never known hurt, are typically too stupid and naive to be anything other than a walking-hazard.

Problem-child? Undoubtable. Unlucky? Definitely. Dangerous? Nah.

But when that yakuza group came in, when one of them motioned for the floor manger to be called, when he asked how much Midoriya was-

Yamada and Shirakumo had to restrain him, when they were both plenty upset that this guy was trying to buy Midoriya from them. Unlike some of the other sleazebag clubs in the area, they weren’t under contract to work their debts off. Nezu took very good care of all of them, and they were free to do as they pleased. The insinuation that UA Host Club was anything but kind to their employers made something burn inside of them.

But to try and take Midoriya on top of all of that?

Aizawa was seething. He hasn’t felt this much anger over something since that time someone swerved off the road and almost killed Yamada. Neither one of his longtime friends were doing better, and eventually Inui and Kan had to drag them all out.

Kayama, who was on standby, followed them out. She reminded them that someone who can make other people rush to their defense, regardless of who their opponent is, are dangerous people. Aizawa just about believed it.

The man who asked was young, and from the rumors surrounding him, he was a dangerous guy, even among the yakuza. A powerful man, in every sense of the word, who might end up taking over the Shie Hassakai one day. The people he was with, that he brought, were on their best behavior and kept their drinking to a minimum in his presence-because that’s how well-respected he was.

In the yakuza, respect goes hand-in-hand with danger.

That kind of man had his eyes set on Midoriya, and the thought of it made Aizawa’s skin crawl.

“We’re not going to give him up,” Aizawa growled.

“You’re… usually much calmer than this,” Kayama said. “You know Nezu-san won’t sell us, any of us, out. That includes Izuku-kun.”

The thin man, finally free from Shirakumo’s and Yamada’s hold almost growled out. He pulled a cigarette out and angrily lit it.

Right as he took the first breath, he could already see Midoriya’s stern face telling him that smoking was bad for his body, and he hated how everything felt tainted by him. But he knew that she was right. He was normally calm.

More than angry, both his blond friends looked over him worriedly.

“...But, we need to figure out at least why they’re coming for him,” Kayama said. “I’ll leave if to you boys.”

“You got it, Kayama-senpai,” Yamada replied, giving a lazy two-finger salute.

And calm, level-headed Aizawa was forced to assess the fact that Midoriya might be dangerous.

### Stain & Fatgum \*Coming on Over

“...You know, I do know where you live,” Stain said as he walked up to the young man. Despite how flat his voice sounded, his eyes glimmered with mirth.

That is, until he saw the black-eye that Midoriya had.

His lips pulled to a frown as he walked up to the younger man.

“And I see that you got yourself into trouble again. What did you fight with this time, a door?”

Midoriya’s beaming smile turned into a pout.

“How rude, I even came out to meet you!”

“I didn’t ask you to,” the man replied, just as dry.

Still, the two fell into a familiar step next to each other, wordlessly moving to their next destination together.

“I know, but I got excited when you said you’d come over for dinner. But I guess it was really annoying though, since Shigaraki chased me out,” the young man said, rubbing the back of his head sheepishly.

Facing forward, however, he missed the small smile tugging at Stain’s lips, and the way his tense posture relaxed into a slouch.

“...Yeah, I can see that,” he said, already playing the scene out in his head. “...It’s good to see you too-”

“Oh, this is what you were doing?”

Stain froze, and Midoriya whirled around to stare at the thin-version of Fatgum appeared behind him. He towered over Stain, and given how much taller Stain was than Midoriya, he might as well have been a child standing next to him. In all honesty, Midoriya found it hard to look at this man and call him ‘Fatgum.’ After all, the Fatgum he knew (from another world) was a proud and optimistic and confident kind of Hero, and the Toyomitsu he met on his impromptu trip was a little more muted, but still had the same magic in his grin. The Fatgum here, however, had this peculiar smile, mischievous as though he learned a secret.

It felt despairing.

“Ara? Izuku?”

Midoriya was still lost in his shock at seeing this man again that he missed the glare that Stain shot the blond.

“Fatgum-san?” Midoriya gasped, “I thought you went back?”

“You… know each other?” Stain asked, slow and cautious. His eyes darted from the blond and back to the child he had by the scuff of the neck.

“Yeah, Izuku here showed up in a tunnel a couple of weeks ago, and we went on an adventure to Osaka. I didn’t know you guys knew each other.”

“He’s the reason why I joined the police force,” Stain said. It was probably better than saying that he stood on a bridge, ready to kill himself, when a strange middle school student showed up in his life, but Midoriya felt like that gave him way more props than he deserved by wording it like that. It didn’t help that Stain only spoke with a certain confidence that, honestly, Midoriya inspired to be like one day.

“Huh, really? He’s the reason why I transferred,” Toyomitsu admitted.

“Oh,” Stain’s eyes narrowed, “Is that so?”

After spending such a long time running into danger, Midoriya had a little meter in his head that told him how bad a situation was going to get. For some odd reason, he could feel it ringing right now, like a bomb raid siren wailing at full blast.

“W-Why don’t you come and join us for dinner?” Midoriya said, hoping to dissipate the fight with the promise of food. It always worked for him and his friends. “And you can tell me all about the transfer! I’m glad to see you!”

There was a beat of silence, before the blond broke into a wide grin. Midoriya instinctively relaxed at the sight, and so focused on him, missed the betrayed look that Stain shot him.

“Yeah, I’m this guy’s partner now! And Iida-senpai is super nice to us!” Toyomitsu replied back, the same bundle of joy that Midoriya remembered him to be. His heart clenched tightly, and he felt the warm, fluffy feelings overtake him.

“That’s great to hear,” he said, smoothly ignoring how he felt about the fact that Iida Tensei was Stain’s senpai in the police force. “I hope you like curry!”

“I love curry!” he laughed back. “We talked about curry a lot then, didn’t we?” he sighed back. “Man, those were some crazy days.”

-

“The two weeks you went missing,” Stain said, “You were backpacking through Osaka?”

Midoriya opened his mouth, closed it, and then thinking it through, nodded. “Yeah, pretty much.”

“Hey, don’t sell yourself short,” Toyomitsu said, a frown on his lips, “You did it for Shun-kun, right? I can’t believe you’d go so far for someone you barely knew.”

“It’s really not that amazing. I owe a lot to his grandma, so it was hard to turn her down,” Midoriya laughed back, determined to downplay the situation.

“You didn’t have any money when I found you. Dehydrated and almost starving, but you were still trying to march all the way down, right?” the blond continued. “To deliver a letter from a grandma to her grandson even though you didn’t even know that the address would be correct.”

“When you say it like that, it was pretty stupid, huh?” the young man tried to laugh it off, but his tone turned wistful as he remembered it himself. “And it all worked out in the end. I guess I got some good luck.”

“...You got fired from your job,” Dabi chimed in suddenly.

“And you got that in-school suspension and all those essays too,” Shigaraki added.

Neither of them looked at him, not like how Stain was determined to stare a hole through his head, and Midoriya felt his smile strain. His eyes dropped to his hands, feeling the surge of emotion in his chest, the same one that propelled him to become a hero in the first place. When someone needed help, he didn’t know how to say no. That wasn’t an option that was available to him. He didn’t know how to explain that to someone who needed a reason to help someone.

“But that’s easy, you know? I can deal with consequences because I’m still here.”

There was a moment of quiet, and Midoriya shrugged back.

“It’s probably stupid of me to say this but I… When I realized that no one was going to do anything, even though Chiyo-san was still hoping... I don’t know, I just thought that it was too sad.”

And it had nothing to do with the fact that Midoriya was incapable of staying out of other people’s businesses, even when he couldn’t figure out his own.

“Izuku,” Stain said, his voice firm and grave like stone, “Things like that belong in storybooks. Not everyone gets a happy ending. Some people don’t even deserve them”

“Probably not,” Midoriya said, his heart clenching as he thought about an old lady running a candy store by herself here while she was surrounded and celebrated back in his world, “but it’s nice to think that we could.”

There was a brief silence at the dinner table. It would have been easier to flush Midoriya’s words as something a naive child would say. But unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on the spin), they knew this kid. He was a real-life superhero, and had the scars and muscle to back his words. He lived in the same world as they did, and where they all fell apart, his kindness remained steadfast.

If Midoriya could become a hero that could save just about anyone and anything, then they’ll be the safetynet to ensure that his life wouldn’t end in tragedy.

Because it would be too sad if that was the case.

“Ah, the mood is really bad, but the curry is really good. In fact, I think I’m going to get some seconds, do you guys want any?”

Dabi stood up, taking Stain’s bowl when the man lifted it and balanced Shigaraki’s bowl on his arm as he headed to the kitchen. Green eyes turned to Fatgum, who stared back with an odd expression on his face. It wasn’t something that Deku had ever seen on the man before.

“Are… you sure?” he asked quietly.

“Yes,” the young man smiled back, “You eat when you’re hungry, right?”

Toyomitsu’s smile returned, in that quiet and muted way that Midoriya remembered seeing in that tunnel, a long time ago.

“Thanks, seconds sound great.”

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“Thanks for coming over, Fatgum,” Midoriya said, “It was nice having you. Feel free to stop by whenever, just let us know, okay?”

“I need your number then,” the blond said, a grin on his face.

A blush splattered across Midoriya’s cheeks, and he couldn’t believe he forgot that. While fumbling to input his number into the blond’s phone, however, the man spoke up again.

“Does Chiyo-san know?”

“Huh?”

“That you lost your job over it?”

Midoriya gave a small smile, finishing with his phone and handed it back to the man.

“Does she need to?” he asked, tilting his head to the side, “It’s not a big deal. It was just a part-time job at a convenience store, and I lost it more because of my own mistakes. Even if she did know, that doesn’t change the fact that I didn’t regret it. If I could go back in time and do it again, I’d still do the same thing.”

Toyomitsu stared at Midoriya a little longer, his expression blank before it broke out into a beaming smile.

“Izuku,” he said, and Midoriya choked on air, “I thought this earlier, but you’re a good kid.”

“Eh?”

His hand came down to the top of his hair, needing to bend down a little because of how small the man was, as he ruffled the curls.

“And we’re adults. And I’m in the area now, too. You can rely on me whenever you want.”

He waved his phone at Midoriya before he pocketed it. A large grin stretched across his face.

“With that said, I’m still figuring out the area, so I’ve been looking for some nice places to eat at. Maybe you could help me out while doing that.”

The young man beamed right back.

“That sounds great!”

### Mirio Gets Chased Down

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There was something terrifying about being chased 10 kilometers by some kid on a bike, then being overtaken, and then having said kid drop on top of your car. And then, as soon as the driver slammed on the brakes, the kid flew off the top of the car, rolled five feet on solid concrete, and then got up. Blood dripping down his forehead, the young man with frighteningly bright green eyes lifted a piece of paper to them.

If he hit him, would he be pinned with murder? No, right? Since whatever...that was (since it couldn’t be a person) was walking, right? And murder only counted if it was a person, right? That wasn’t a person. It couldn’t be murder, surely?

What kind of person would come sprinting after a car?

Said …. Thing took a step closer and the driver got ready to hit the gas as hard as he could, when a hand grabbed his shoulder from the backseat.

“Wait,” Toogato said, stopping him. “...Let’s just… see what he wants.”

“B-But sir-”

“I’ll take full responsibility,” he said, like he had any idea what those words met, “and we can just hit the gas as soon as he comes closer. I won’t even leave the car.”

He rolled down the window and waved the … thing to come closer.

He did so, not even limping, and passed the piece of paper through the crack that Toogato and rolled his windows down.

“It’s from Tamaki-senpai,” he said.

And then, he turned around and began to walk back towards the way he came from. Astonished and surprised, Toogato rolled down the window the rest of the way to stick his head out.

“That’s it?! You come, chasing my car like a bat from hell, but that’s it!?”

The young man stared at him, and nodded.

“What? Why?”

“...Tamaki-senpai said that he needed to get this to his important, precious friend,” the monster with the face of a young boy explained. “It’s none of my business, and I don’t know why you guys fought, but was it really worth your entire friendship?”

The blond’s expression turned thunderous, “Outsiders should keep their nose out of other people’s business.”

“...Then stop dragging other people into your messes,” he snapped back before he turned away. He sighed deeply and gave a polite bow, “...I wish you the best.”

And, to the driver’s shock, Togato kept the letter in his hand.

### Picnic

“...What are we doing?”

“We’re going to have a picnic,” Midoriya said, pulling the backpack out of the back of the car.

Aizawa squinted at the mountain in front of them.

“No, I got that part. But…” next to him, Yamada peered up at the mountain with no little amount of trepidation.

“...You woke us up at 8 AM on our day off to climb a fucking mountain for lunch?” Aizawa deadpanned.

“The view at the top is going to be amazing!” Midoriya chirped back, his eyes shining. And when he saw the expression on the other adults, dimmed a little, “I just… wanted to share that with you.”

The present adults gave him a withering look, and for a moment, Midoriya thought that they would get back into the car and drive back. He wouldn’t blame them either. Now that he was here, in the moment, he understood that this might not have been a great idea. They probably had better things to do than waste their rare day off climbing a mountain with him, huh?

“...With the face of an angel, you say some really scary things, huh?” Shirakumo asked, cocking an eyebrow at him. He looked back up at the mountain. “Wow, I haven’t even seen a mountain since that time Yamada got so drunk he threw up all over Aizawa during New Years.”

“Oh my god, just shut up,” Aizawa sighed, rubbing his face with his hand.

Shigaraki gave a long yawn and Dabi rubbed the back of his neck as they closed the trunk of the car.

“Let’s get going, or else we won’t make it to the top,” Dabi said.

Midoriya grabbed the backpack from Shigaraki.

“I asked everyone to come, so I’ll carry the lunch,” he explained.

Shigaraki looked doubtful. “Okay, but let me know when you get tired and we can slip.”

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Hahahahaha, famous last words.

Not even five kilometers from their starting point, and Shigaraki felt like his legs were made of jelly. Who said they should climb a mountain?

Oh right, he narrowed his eyes where Midoriya led their group with easy. Him.

However, he wasn’t alone, and about quarter of the way up, they stopped for lunch. At a pitifully low elevation, they ate the lunches that they brought. It wasn’t anything special of course. Shigaraki just put together some onigiris, but now that they were in the mountain, he realized how dry these made his mouth. They brought energy drinks, but it made them even more dehydrated.

The only one of them that brought water was Midoriya, and that was hardly enough for all of them. At the sight of it, they decided that the young man should keep his water for himself. Luckily, there was a vending machine nearby, and Midoriya offered to grab drinks for them all.

Shirakumo slapped a wad of bills that Midoriya tried to decline, but a stern glare from Aizawa sent him away with a long sigh.

“...You’re not going to smoke?” Shigarkai asked.

“I’m too tired to smoke,” Yamada said, although his voice was muffled by his pack, where he laid facedown on it. Without looking up, he pointed at Aizawa, “And he quit.”

“You quit?” Dabi arched an eyebrow at him.

“If I had known I’d be climbing mountains, I would have quit sooner,” the man replied back, throwing a stink eye at Yamada.

“You know it’s love when you try to be a better person for them, right?” Shirakumo asked, waggling his eyebrows.

“Yeah, like how you stopped wearing colors that clash with green?” Aizawa shot back.

“Don’t be such a sourpuss. At least I don’t need a reason to change my underwear.”

“It’s called being economical. Not that you would understand. I saw your newest collection of dumbbells.”

“He’s not interested in either of you so fuck off,” Shigaraki snapped out. He narrowed his eyes at them.

“...It’s just a joke,” Aizawa said, even though no one believed him.

Shirakumo’s smile was so sweet it felt like something was rotting. “Yep, just a joke.”

“What’s a joke?”

They all turned to where Midoriya stood, holding several water bottles in his arms. It was clear that he grabbed some sports drinks as well. His smile was curious as he looked at them. He kneeled to place the drinks on the ground, and Aizawa didn’t miss how he didn’t neglect to grab some of their favorite flavors and regular drinks.

“It’s nothing that a kid like you should worry about,” Aizawa snapped back.

Most people would have flinched or at least frowned at his cold attitude, but Midoriya’s smile just turned warmer.

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“Alright,” Aizawa declared, “Next year, we’ll get to the top.”

“Oh, we should time it for the cherry blossom festival,” Shirakumo pipped in.

“Ooooh, that sounds good!” Yamada snapped his fingers.

“Didn’t they complain the whole way down?” Dabi asked, but the amused smile on his face didn’t relent.

“Make sure you don’t grow up to become an adult like that,” Shigraki said, motioning to the three.

“I don’t know,” Midoriya said, beside himself in joy at the innocent tinge to their scarless-features, “I wouldn’t mind being that happy.”

Even if they didn’t make it to the top of the mountain to eat lunch, even if they didn’t even make it halfway, the fact that they wanted to come back again meant more to Midoriya than anything else. In another world, he wouldn’t have ever dreamed of an opportunity like this, so he would do his best to protect it.

And, should Deku-kun wake up, he hoped that he would get to enjoy these kinds of experiences too.

### Stain sees some scars

“You don’t need to get this looked at?”

“Huh?” Midoroya craned his head to where Stain was, and realizing what he was talking about, quickly assured him, “Yeah, it’s not too bad. It doesn’t even hurt.”

“...It’s not the worst thing that’s happened to you?” Stain continued.

Midoriya gave a humorless laugh, “Yeah, not even close,” he said.

“Yeah, I can see.”

And the butterflies and easy laughs froze and rotted in his mouth. Whipping around to face Stain, he watched the man’s eyes drag from his leg and back up to meet his gaze with an unreadable expression.

What a dumbass, Midoriya realized. His leg was fucking covered in all sorts of shit. Ranging from the time that he got stuck in a fence and nearly tore his muscles out just a few weeks ago, to the questionable things that Deku-kun’s body went through, he knew that wasn’t an attractive sight. He had, by accident, cleaned his leg without a problem in front of Stain, and who would have thought that he would drop his guard down in front of the Hero Killer?

Shit. Fuck. Oh no.

“...Don’t look at me like that,” Stain said, his expression turning into something more annoyed. “I figured you made shit life decisions since your natural reaction to dangerous strangers is to house them like stray animals.”

Still, Midoriya couldn’t find it in himself to relax. He dropped his gaze, pulling his ripped pant leg and source of all his problems right now, and tucked it behind his other leg.

“Sorry,” he said quietly.

“...I don’t want your apology,” Stain said, shaking his head. “But I do want you to know that I’m… I’m here. If you…. Want me. It,” he said, quickly trying to amend his words. However, it was clear that he had never given support before, nor has he ever received it. When he realized that his words sounded cold, he kept trying, “I meant, if you want my assistance. Or support. Or anything.”

Green eyes slowly dragged up to meet Stain’s, confusion apparent.

“Huh?”

“What I mean is… Is that I…” he hesitated, either because he was embarrassed or he didn’t know what to say. Midoriya doesn’t know which he would prefer, but Stain didn’t let him figure it out for him as he kept talking. “That you don’t have to go alone. Just call me. I’ll go with you and these…” he motioned to his leg, “Will remain scars. Your last ones.”

It was, by far, the sweetest thing he ever thought the Hero Killer could ever say. His heart stuttered, and he didn’t even realize he was crying until he saw Stain take a full step backwards and away from him.

“Don’t say something like that and then run away!” Midoriya called out, sniffling.

“Then stop crying!” he snapped back, clearly out of his element.

“I can’t help it!” he said, wiping at his eyes.

Things like broken bones or cleaning wounds might sting and hurt, but it didn’t make him cry. He’s shattered his arms over and over again, but the most that happened was that his eyes watered. He’s been lectured by just about everyone in every role in society. In his world, everyone said that he was a little weird for it, but he knew that they understood. Mirio-senpai once brought him to the side to tell him that he understood.

“Thank you, Stain, truly,” he said, feeling as though he would choke on his gratitude.

Just a few months ago, Stain stood at the edge of a bridge. And now, he was offering his support to him. It hurt his heart more than anything else in the world. Someone who wanted to end his life was now reaching out to be someone else’s support.

“Why do you call me that?” he asked suddenly.

“What?”

“Stain.”

“Because that’s who you are?”

“A Stain? You think I’m a stain?”

The words caught up to him, and he gave a laugh back. “No, no, not in the way you’re thinking it’s just… Just something nostalgic. Like, you want to leave your mark on the world, even if that means you become the bad guy and do some unsavory things,” he said. It wasn’t like he could come out and say that they had met from another world or anything. But this man in front of him was not the man that Midoriya remembered. Not even close. So maybe, it was time to give up on [Stain]. “Sorry about that, Akakuro-san-”

“If you’re not going to call me Chizome, Izuku, then call me Stain.”

“Eh?”

“I’ll be your Stain, or whatever dumb nickname you make up. So, lean on me a little more, okay?”

“Uh.”

Filled with something that he didn’t know how to describe, Midoriya gave a slow nod instead. Seemingly satisfied, Stain stepped out, probably to grab the first-aid kid.

What just happened?

### Koiichi knows

Just like that, his patrols weren’t alone anymore.

“So, how far is too far?” Koichi asked.

“Ah, I always figured we could capture them, maybe knock them out, make sure that the police get to them, but otherwise remain anonymous.”

“You’re wearing bright yellow,” Koichi replied, pointing to the nearly hazardously yellow sweatshirt he was wearing.

“Well, I’m not here to catch bad guys,” Midoriya replied back. “I’m here to help people. Isn’t it better so that I can be easily seen for that?”

Koichi stared at him for a moment, and even though the universe may point and laugh at their incredibly naive and ignorant views of the world, he doesn’t want to change this. It was never about putting away bad guys or making them pay.

“Then… what are you fighting for? What are you trying so hard for?”

“I wanna make the world a better place,” Midoriya said. “I think it starts in my neighborhood. And then, I’ll go from there.”

And Midoriya wonders if there was a Koichi in his world, if he was like this, if this was something that could have been. As it was, there was no one else he could have asked to be a better coworker.

### Band …?

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“B-but-”

“It’s fine,” Tamaki said easily, “I mean, my cute little kouhai asked this of me, you know? Isn’t it only right that I give him my support?”

Word on the street is that Tamaki has gotten weak, and that he was easy prey. The people closest to him think that he’s comfortable in his skin, cooler than ever, and stronger every day. The reality was that Tamaki just wanted to finish his school year. The reality is that something important and irreplaceable had been mended and returned to him.

He ruffled Midoriya’s hair, making sure to go roughly enough that the young man couldn’t look up and see his expression right now.

“It’s good to rely on someone, isn’t it?”

At least, it felt great to be relied on.

### THE CONCERT

Midoriya felt so stupid. These weren’t the kids he went to school with. They weren’t the kids who were ready to dedicate themselves to training their minds and bodies to save people. They weren’t heroes-in-training.

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Shouji stared in disbelief.

He vividly remembered Midoriya giving him a long list of all the great and wonderful things he could do with his quirk. It was a list that revolved around helping the people around him, and some that included saving someone’s life. Listening to it, it was honestly touching (and super embarrassing, he thought that Midoriya would just whip out a projector with carefully prepared slides) because he no one ever had anything nice to say about his quirk.

Not even his parents, who just apologized to him and offered to help cover him up.

But Midoriya was different. He was supposed to be different.

Instead, after being told pretty things, like how his size wasn’t monstrous, it was reliable, Shouji realized that it wasn’t the case at all. Midoriya was just like everyone else.

He was just a stupid liar and Shouji was even stupider for ever believing him.

Blood dripping down his face, three of his fingers purple and swelling, Midoriya’s green eyes found his.

“Are you okay?”

“...Are you stupid?” Shouji choked out, “I… I…”

If Midoriya didn’t come sweeping in, Shouji would have been hurt, yes, but not as bad as Midoriya. Midoriya had been fighting before he got here, and he had been getting steadily more and more injured the longer they fought.

And still, the idiot jumped in to take the hit for Shouji, the guy he said was undoubtedly strong and reliable.

### Spinner \*Choosing Something

“Just stop!” Spinner shouted as Midoriya got back to his feet. “Just fucking stop! Can’t you see? There’s no point in doing this! Just run! Abandon me and just run!”

The young boy who stood defiantly between Spinner and a rampaging monster, didn’t run. Instead, he stood tall and strong on shaky legs. And Spinner, who had beaten him up twice, didn’t get why he wasn’t running.

“I… I lived an incredibly fortunate life,” Midoriya said. “If I… I don’t stand up to protect it, no one will!”

“What does that have to do with me?!”

The green-haired man slowly got up to his feet. And when most people would be irritated, annoyed, frustrated, angry, they would just literally be anything other than that blissfully content smile and a double bloody nose that Midoriya looked at him with.

His breath stuttered, part in fear, most in awe. No wonder this was the man that his unofficial Master Stain said he would lay his life down for.

“You’re already a part of that, Spinner.”

“Hey, Spinner! You got the kid yet!”

“Augh, what you would expect from a scaley bastard like him.”

Spinner stared where the two men came up to him. And he wondered, a life of debt or a life of regrets, which would be better to live with? He spared a glance where Midoriya trembled but managed to pull his fists up in a poor guard that even a child could hit through.

He made his decision.

Three swings, and the men were down. He turned to where quirkless, weak, useless Deku stared back at him, surprised with stars in his eyes.

“...Okay,” he said. He won’t choose debt or regret or anything. He walked over to properly stand in front of Midoriya and waited for the next people to step forward.

He’ll choose Midoriya.

### Enter: Gang Orca

If one good deed ran into another, if one action can change the world, if all this world needed to understand that the world doesn’t have to be the way it was an example, then the proof of it stood right in front of him.

“...To be honest, when you first came out…. I laughed too. I thought, what a crazy guy. He’s going to die real soon.”

Midoirya stared, dazed, as a hand outstretched towards him.

“Nice to meet you, young man. My name is Sakamata Kugo. The person who has severely wronged you was my underling.”

"Wow," the young man gaped back, because there was only one way to react when meeting Gang Orca. He’s just as tall and as imposing as Midoriya remembered him to be. Even though he’s certain that this man could ruin him here and now, in this moment, he feels relief. And then, realizing the mess of the parking lot that they have met, managed to bow his head, “Sorry about all that.”

He looked good.

The man placed his hands on Midoriya and helped right him up to his feet. He didn’t let go until Midoriya was stable, and the young man felt bad at finding relief in his warm hands while simultaneously staining them in his blood.

"I am the one that should be saying that," he said, voice a little breathless and somewhat fond.

"No, no," Midoriya said, shaking his head. He teeters, and the man reached for him. He didn’t need it, and he didn’t touch him this time, but the gesture brought back fond memories. "To me, meeting you is a humbling experience."

“...Is that so?”

"If my actions lead to someone else standing up," he said quietly, "Then doesn't that mean that I need to be firmer in my stance?"

He gave a little laugh. Steadier on his feet and in his head, he gave a bow.

"Thank you."

He probably had a concussion. His arm was bleeding from his forearm to his wrist. His leg was aching, even though he was just standing. His side didn’t hurt enough for him to think that he sustained any damage to his kidneys, and he vaguely wondered if the trains were still running. He has no doubt that he'll be in a lot of pain tomorrow, but nothing is broken so he isn't too upset.

But right now, he thought as he looked up at Sakamata, he needed to figure out how to defeat this man.

“So, what will it be?” he asked. He wiped at the blood off his face, trying to get rid of it but instead doing a great job smearing it all over his face.

“Do you think that you can win against me?” he asked.

“I win if I survive, right?” Midoriya asked, “Then, yeah, I guess I will.”

“Confident, aren’t you?” Sakamata said, his voice low like a purr and the young man ran through as many possibilities he could in his head. “What’s your quirk?”

Midoriya stared at Sakamata and laughed, “I don’t have one.”

“What?”

“I’m quirkless,” he said, the words feeling like tar against his tongue.

“...You’re quirkless but you jumped into a fight like that?”

Midoriya shrugged back helplessly, “I’m quirkless, not helpless,” he explained. His vision swimmed for a moment, but he managed to keep steady. “So if I can help someone, I should. Because some people have a quirk and are still helpless.”

It was bold of him to say, and Sakamata didn’t miss the subtle jab.

It felt like, no matter how he diced it, he was going to break a couple more bones. He lost his lighter back somewhere, so he would either have to burn something else, or get a lucky shot in. Sakamata outclassed him, even when he was perfectly healthy, in every way. Experience, height, weight, Sakamata would win. Bleeding out and on his fourth hour straight of combat, Midoriya is beyond exhausted. There is no reason to think that he was going to win this fight. The likelihood of escape was slim as well.

“...It appears that everything I could say is something you’ve heard before,” the man said, shaking his head. “Regardless, this time, it was my boys who were in the wrong. To think that, instead of taking the blame like mature adults, they decided to gang up someone who disagreed with them instead...” Standing up straight, he gave a bow, waist-deep. Even folded in half like that, he was still taller than Midoriya, this bothered him a lot more than he thought. “My deepest, most sincere apologies for that.”

There was a beat of silence, but right before the man straightened, Midoriya spoke up.

“...Are you apologizing because I’m a kid?” he asked quietly, “Or are you apologizing because you let this happen?”

The man stiffened and stood up straight. His eyes widened, taking in Midoriya’s sharp eyes.

“If the latter, you’re apologizing to the wrong person,” Midoriya said, rolling his neck as he tapped the toes of his shoes to the ground. “If it’s the former, then it doesn’t matter if I forgive you, does it?”

He tensed his arms. The bleeding stopped, but he can’t feel his pinky or his ring finger. He imagined that he will have two good hits with it and then it’ll be out of commission for a week, maybe two.

Sakamata, no matter the world, was intimidating when he wasn’t trying, and when he was...

“Do you think that you’re in any place to make demands from me?”

“Isn’t your apology meaningless if you don’t give it to the right person? Don’t offer it if it’s half-assed.”

There was another brief silence. Maybe his friends were actually bad influences after all.

“I suppose there is some truth in your words,” Sakamata eventually conceded. “So, I apologize for my boys’ rough treatment of you. Do you know where the other person I should apologize to is?”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment longer and shook his head. “I told him to get out of here, so I don’t know where he went.”

“...Well, do you have his number?”

“Uh, actually, I don’t even know his name.”

“...What?”

Now that he was saying it aloud, it probably sounded really bad. As it was, he gave a helpless shrug and nervously rubbed the back of his head.

“So, what, you just happened to see something here and just jumped in?”

“...Yeah, I guess I did.”

“Why?”

Midoriya paused at that, turning to him with a frown. “What do you mean?”

“You jumped in and got beaten almost an inch into your life for a stranger. Why?”

“Do I need a reason to help someone?” he tilted his head, like Sakamata was the strange one for asking.

“... Then,” the man said slowly, “I guess I don’t need a reason to help you either.”

“Pardon?”

One of Sakamata’s massive hands grabbed Midoriya’s shoulder (actually, almost half his toso and arm too) suddenly. His grip was firm, but it didn’t hurt any more than what Midoriya was used to. More than anything, Midoriya swore that he could feel his lifespan decrease in his shock.

“I’ll look after your wounds. It’s not like you can go home to your mother like this, correct? Then, I’ll take care of you for the time being.”

The words felt much more painful to hear than he thought. Unprepared for it, he nodded dumbly instead.

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“What’s your name, kid?”

It was a habit by this point. It was something that he was starting to say because he didn’t want to be forgotten. It was his one mark against the world, the one way that he can claim that he did exist. And even if it was a blatant lie to be himself now, he figured that it would be fine since he didn’t think he’d ever meet Sakamata after this. This was a man who clearly had his life in order, far away from Midoriya and his normal high school life.

“Izuku,” Midoriya said. “Izuku is fine.”

The doctor that Sakamata brought him to wasn’t gentle, but he was thorough. Midoriya was grateful for it. He worked silently, and as soon as he was done, Sakamata had come in. He hoped that the doctor wouldn’t tell Sakamata about the old scars on his body, patient confidentiality and all that.

“You look young. Are you in school?”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment and then laughed, “I get that a lot,” he said.

He didn’t want to lie, and often, it felt like it was all he did. Maybe it was bad to avoid their questions like this, but to look at someone he looked up to and just lie to them… that felt even worse. It was better to play coy. Half-truths because he knew he couldn’t lie to someone with Sakamata’s face. Half-lie because this wasn’t his life that he was risking.

“Did you think I’ll answer everything the way you want me to?” Midoriya asked.

“Do you think you can escape right now?”

“Probably not,” the young man agreed, but met his eyes evenly, “But I don’t want to be the kind of person that cowers just because the situation looks bad for me.”

“Then, is that the reason why you won’t answer my questions?”

“I answered them-” Midoriya cut himself off at the severity of the glare that Sakamata shot him, and with a small huff of laughter, said, “Well, stranger danger and all that.”

“Stranger danger,” Sakamata deadpanned back, his arms uncrossing as he leaned forward. “You ran into a den of thirty-armed men with various quirks that could kill you for a random stranger you didn’t even know the name of, but you can’t tell me what grade you're in?”

The young man opened his mouth and then closed it. “When you put it like that-”

“No matter how you put it, it’s that bad,” the man cut him off.

“And if you're going to cut me off, then I guess I don’t need to answer any of your questions, do I?”

At that, the man stood up and left. Surprisingly, he had a lot less patience than Midoriya thought he would. And remembering that this wasn’t the person he remembered, looked to the doctor instead. Right when he was going to ask how long it would take, the door opened again.

The first man was fully covered up in bandages and a full face mask. He came in and blurted out an apology, gave a bow to his waist. On reflex, Midoriya jumped up to his feet and bowed back, giving an earnest apology for beating him up, too.

From there, the people that he beat up, and Midoriya felt a little bad now that he realized whose people they were, came into the room and took turns apologizing to him. Of course, he made sure to apologize to each and every single one of them too. He wouldn’t have beaten them so badly if he didn’t think that his plans would have gone so well. He gave them a smile, they returned it, and they all laughed together in their shared pains.

What bizarre people.

“You’re good to go,” the doctor said. “Stay off your arm and leg for at least a few weeks. Stop getting into fights. No hard labor like lifting heavy objects either. That includes people. ”

Meaning, he needed to go to Chiyo before his next shift. No problem. He was meaning to visit her anyways.

“Change the bandages every four hours, or every time it bleeds through. If it’s still bleeding tomorrow, go to the doctor.”

He nodded, and the doctor stared at him for a long, long moment before he gave a long-suffering sigh. He reached into his pocket and handed him a business card.

“If you can’t get to a doctor, just contact me. I will take care of it, okay?”

“...How should I repay you?” Midoriya asked. These kinds of things don’t just happen to him, after all.

“You already did, kid. I haven’t seen Sakamata-boyo that energetic in a long time. I’ll take care of this for you, as thanks for letting me see something so entertaining.”

The green-haired man frowned back, clearly confused.

“Don’t worry about it,” the doctor said.

“Izuku-san!” one of the other men called for him.

“I-Izuku-san?” he flustered back.

He was ignored and the young man grinned back at him, despite how much it must have hurt to pull his split lip like that. “The boss said he’ll drop you off where you want to be dropped off. Come this way.”

“Uh.”

And so, Midoriya got into the back of a very, very expensive car. Like, breathing in the car made him feel like he was devaluing the car, and it felt incredibly uncomfortable.

“Where to?” Sakamata asked.

“Uh…” he gave off the convenience store address, and when the man looked at him, he shrugged back. “Personal information,” he tried to explain.

From the look on Sakamata’s face, he’s beaten people up for less. For whatever odd reason, however, he let Midoriya sit here.

What time was it? It was so dark outside, and the dark-tinted windows made everything seem even darker. Whenever it was, he can only imagine how upset Shigaraki was going to be when he came home in his tattered and bruised body.

The car ride was uncomfortably quiet. The A/C in the car was running at full blast, making Midoriya painfully aware of how cold and awful he felt. Still, he didn’t dare say anything, and wondered why this car ride felt so long when they weren’t crossing a large amount of distance.

“Thank you for the ride,” Midoriya said, never one to forget his manners no matter how uncomfortable he felt. “And the first-aid,” he added. He got out of the car, when a voice stopped him.

"I…" he has never thought Gang Orca could ever sound so uncertain, or have nothing to say at all. He manages to give him a smile though. If a child saw it, they would have cried. "I would like to thank you too, for giving me a push for something that I didn't even know I wanted."

Midoriya stared at him and grinned.

“You don’t need to thank me for that. You did that all on your own,” he said. “Good luck though!”

And finally, finally, and Saka,ata smiled back. It was every bit terrifying that he remembered, and if he was a little younger, he might have sobbed at the sight of it. Instead, he gave a beaming smile back, relieved that this world couldn’t take that smile from Sakamata.

-

Still, he came home, covered in grime and soot, smelling like sweat and blood, and too tired to be hungry. He jingled and jangled his keys as quietly as he could, but he could feel the sleep pulling his lids down and splitting his vision in two.

If he’s not careful, he was just going to sleep in the doorway or something. His phone has been long-dead, but it’s probably not broken. Probably. Phones don’t need their back casing, right? And they usually function even if the screen was shattered. Yeah, this will be fine. When he was in the car, he checked the time, and it said that it was nearing four am. He had to be in homeroom in about four hours. Closing his eyes, he took a deep breath and suppressed the urge to cry.

Ugh, he was so tired, he couldn’t even cry. This was just awful.

He pushed the door open, trying to be as quiet as he could, and the sudden flurry of movement right at the entrance of his apartment made him snap to full attention.

In front of him, Dabi shot up to his feet, and Shigaraki fell backwards. The man groaned as he sat up, and as soon as he laid eyes on Midoriya slowly got up to his feet. Had they been waiting for him at the door? Had they seriously pulled a pair of chairs up to the doorway with some books and tried to wait for Midoriya to come back?

“God, fucking finally,” Shigaraki groaned. He yawned as he got up without any complaints. “You hungry? We got some leftovers.”

Dabi’s sharp eyes, as though he hadn’t just been sleeping at the entranceway, carefully looked him over.

“I’ll get the first-aid. Go take a shower.”

Midoriya felt the exhaustion melt away, and in its place was gratitude. He couldn’t believe it. They had been waiting for him. He doesn't know for how long, but they had waited for him, and then fell asleep waiting for him at the entranceway.

“...That sounds great,” he said after a moment, feeling all the emotions choke him out. He gave a little cough, clearing his throat and felt his tear ducts kick in. “Sorry for coming in late,” he said.

“Just send a text next time,” Shigaraki said, meandering into the kitchen. “Augh, my fucking neck.”

Dabi’s hand landed on his head, ruffling his dirty curls, and walked away.

At about 4:15 AM, the three of them are sitting at the dining room table, eating dinner together because they had waited all day to do this. In about three hours, they would have to get ready for the new day, and maybe even eat breakfast. It would be the start to the most exhausting day yet, but none of them complained.

### Studying

“But,” Midoriya said, lifting his notes up, “This means we can spend time together, right?” He flashed a shy smile at them.

Todoroki would sell his heart for less.

“Sounds great,” he said.

“Wait, you don’t even attend our school,” Bakugo said.

“Well, math is the same in a different country, it can’t be that different.”

Shinshou placed his head in his hands and sighed.

### Testing

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“This… this isn’t fair,” Kaminari said, squinting at the board. “You don’t even come to class!”

Midoriya stared at the scoreboard, a little surprised, because he didn’t think that he would ever be the top scorer. But, there he was, sitting at Number One with a perfect score.

### Midoriya The Server

Midoriya turned his serving tray, spinning it and effectively deflected most of the bullets. The ones that flew way off course weren’t his problem. When the rain of bullets stopped, and the man tried to reload, Midoriya took his mangled serving tray and threw it like a frisbee. He turned away, grabbing one of the glasses with a few ice cubes, and sprinted for the man.

Predictably, the man smacked the tray away with one of his hands, and in the time it took him to bring his arm up and back down, Midoriya was already on him. He splashed the man’s face with the ice first, and grabbed his wrist. He ducked under the fist that came swinging, the man had shit aim with proper vision and he was just atrocious now, and retaliated by breaking the glass against the man’s forehead.

The man fell backwards, unconscious, and Midoriya kicked the gun far away and into the corner of the room.

He pulled at the lapels of his vest and turned around.

“Esteemed guest, are you alright…” his words trailed off, as his eyes met the visibly shocked and confused Kurono down the hallway. Behind him, Chisaki stood with an eyebrow arched. Oh no. Both of them, as realization dawns on their faces, looked equal parts amused and impressed.

Oh come fucking on.

“...I guess you are.”

“...Very well done,” Chisaki said, ignoring Kurono and walking up to him. Shouldn’t he care more? He’s Kurono’s boss, right? And Kurono is pretty much his right hand man? Shouldn’t he give any shits that this man was assaulted and fighting off three hitmen by himself before Midoriya got here?

But no, instead, it was like those gold eyes could only see him. Whatever small hope he had that the yakuza would walk past him died when Chisaki’s very expensive shoes stopped right in front of him, with just a few feet between them.

“We could have handled it,” he said.

“Well, when people die, they can’t come back, so we try to minimize death as much as we can. As it is, we can only bill the living,” Midoriya deadpanned back. He looked down at the unconscious men littered on the ground, and then back to curious golden eyes. He shrugged, “Just think of it as a service,” he said.

Now both of his eyebrows were high on his forehead. No no no. Midoriya wanted him to be bored and uninterested, why did this always happen to him?

“It seems like it’s a waste to have you as a mere server,” he said quietly. “Perhaps I could interest you in-”

“No thanks.”

Customer Etiquette Rule Number 8: Do not cut off the customer.

Midoriya pursed his lips. They’ll forgive him. Probably. Hopefully. They said that they wouldn’t sell him, so at least he could hold onto that, right?

“I’m happy here,” he said, slowly, trying not to think about the bodies in the hallway. “And I have a job to do. Do you require any more assistance?” he asked, even though he was already walking past him and to Kurono.

Customer Etiquette Rule Number 5: Do not leave until you are dismised.

Oops.

He crouched down next to Kurono. “Are you alright? Do you need an ambulance?”

“No, I’m alright. Thank you,” Kurono said, eyeing him like he was seeing him for the first time. The weight of his gaze made Midoriya’s heart turn into a pit of anxiety.

Please don’t turn out like your boss, he wanted to beg.

“Truly, Midoriya-kun, thank you.”

The green-haired boy gave a tight smile back.

“Well, if you don’t need anything else. I’ll be returning to my station. Ectoplasm-san will be by to handle those bodies. Excuse me.”

Customer Etiquette Rule Number 10: do not run away from the customers.

Surely, he thought to himself, they would only dock his pay because of this. Okay, even though he sprinted at his fastest to get out of that hallway as soon as physically possible, they would only dock his pay. He put down the three hitmen, so that counted for something right? No one died and the customers weren’t injured. This was a good thing, right?

Please. It wasn’t much to ask for right? To get a fucking break?

### Roommates & Heatwave

Dabi pulled on the front of his shirt. God, he felt like he was starting to melt. Normally, he was pretty good with the heat, but this was just painful. He didn’t even want to read, scared that he would get the pages wet since he was sweating like a pig.

Next to him, Shigaraki was laying down in front of the fan. They didn’t even have the energy to bicker with how hot it felt inside the apartment.

And then, Midoriya came out of the bathroom, sat down with his schoolwork and went to work. Isn’t he tired? Dabi is in a t-shirt and gym shorts, Shigaraki abandoned all clothes but boxers, but Midoriya is dressed in a long-sleeved green shirt and his normal sweatpants.

Isn’t he hot?

“I’m going to get a heatstroke looking at you,” Shigaraki told Midoriya.

The young man laughed, “Should I get you some water?”

No seriously, the kid had to be a saint. Drags in half-dying men like abandoned cats into his home, and doesn’t ever get angry even on the record hottest day of the year. If Dabi didn’t feel exhausted from the heatwave, he’s certain that Shigaraki and he would be reduced to hissing assholes again.

But Midoriya is calm and patient like always. He’s ready with a smile, and Dabi doesn’t understand how.

Shigaraki frowned, and Dabi narrowed his eyes.

“You’re going to get a heatstroke,” the older man said, and Dabi was surprised that he could keep talking.

“Really? I feel fine though,” Midoriya replied back.

“You don’t want to wear something lighter?” Dabi spoke up.

Green eyes found his before he dropped his gaze. No matter how tired Dabi felt, it was an expression that he recognized well.

Shame.

“It’s nothing, don’t worry about it. If it makes you uncomfortable though, I can go sit in the kitchen-”

“No, it’s fine,” Shigaraki said, shooting Dabi a dark glare.

What? How was he supposed to know?

He narrowed his eyes back, annoyed, but didn’t say anything.

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“Not sure if you noticed, but he doesn't like showing skin,” Shigaraki said when they were doing the dishes together. They ran the water ice cold. For reasons.

“Fine with sleeping with strangers, but shy about his skin,” Dabi summarized. “Duly noted. You want some of the iced tea?”

“Yeah, that shit is good.”

“Oi Deku!” Dabi called out, “Ice tea?”

“What?”

“Iced tea!” he yelled a little louder.

“Who?”

Dabi tipped his head back while Shigaraki cackled.

“Just get it to him. It’s not like he’ll say no.”

Dabi rolled his eyes, but figured he would do just that.

### Enter Inasa: Trainwreck

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“Alright, let’s split the water among all the healthy people,” Midoriya said. “That means this one is mine, right?”

There was a stiff silence, and hearing no objections. Midoriya took the water.

“This one is mine. And everyone here can see that this is mine to do as I please with it,” he said. “This is what we agreed to.”

No one spoke, but the tired and desperate looks in the eyes of the other people turned into confusion as they regarded him. It turned into certainty, and some of them nodded to indicate that they understood.

With that, the high school student smiled. He took the water straight to the woman with a broken leg.

“Here you go,” he said.

“B-But-”

“It’s alright. This is my water to do as I please with it,” he said. “I’m not really thirsty anyways.”

Her eyes welled with tears, and Midoriya helped her drink it slowly.

Inasa, holding his water bottle in his hand, wondered what he was doing with his life.

-

Midoriya was sweating through his clothes, like everyone else here. His uniform was starting to become see-through, and Inasa could see that he was wearing an undershirt. most have taken off what they could and unbuttoned what was necessary, but Midoriya kept everything buttoned up.

Looking at him, Inasa felt even hotter.

### Jul \*Deku’s Mom

He gets a letter in the mail. From his dad. It seemed that the only way they could communicate were through these one-sided letters that he wrote to Deku-kun.

Which was fine, Midoriya didn’t mind, he was glad that he was okay and well. He was. Truly. He wasn’t upset and he wasn’t angry. In all honesty, he didn’t know anything about this man other than the fact that he missed his wife so much that he lost his mind. Which made sense. Sort of. Well, Midoriya watched people fall apart for similar reasons, turning in their license or quitting their current life to spend the rest of their life focused solely on revenge.

And he’s glad that Hizashi, this Hizashi, didn’t lose himself to that.

So really, he was truly and honestly glad, like he was whenever he knew anyone that regained their hope and humanity.

But the heart and the body didn’t line up. When he saw Hizashi’s scrawl on that paper, he felt his blood run cold. When he tried to open the envelope, his fingers trembled. When he read the letter, painfully short and to the point, he felt nauseous before a surge of anger began to bubble inside of him.

How dare this man ask how he was doing? He should know, concerning the way he had left. How dare this man ask him if he was going to go visit his mother’s grave? How dare he ask him to put a certain type of flower and bring her favorite sweets for him? He should do it himself. He should be here, with Deku, and walk together and visit her grave together. He should grovel for her forgiveness for completely losing himself in his grief, and then promise to make amends. He should have…

“...Izuku?”

Midoriya sniffled loudly, his hands flying to rub his eyes. He wasn’t sobbing pathetically. Quickly, he turned to the person who called for him.

“Yes?”

Shigaraki looked at his face, then to the letter in his hand, and then back to his face before he scowled.

“...I…” he hesitated. “I wanted to know what you wanted for lunch.”

“Oh, uh…”

“Not curry,” he quickly added.

Midoriya laughed, sudden and light, and missed the way Shigaraki’s shoulders relaxed by an inch at the sound of it. “Alright, anything is fine, really.” Red eyes narrowed at him, and the young man shrugged back, “Uh… fried rice? I really like your fried rice.”

Shigaraki stared at his face for another moment before he nodded.

“Alright,” he said. He looked like he was going to leave, but his eyes fell to the letter in Midoriya’s hand and then to his face. “You know, we…well, actually, I don’t know about Dabi but I…” he tried, stumbling a little over his words, like he was searching for something. He must have found it, because he eventually blurted out, “I won’t know that you need something unless you tell me.”

Midoriya blinked at him, clearly caught off-guard at the admission, and Shigaraki scowled even harder when he saw the raw shock on his face.

“I’ll be in the kitchen,” he said, leaving the room.

Midoriya looked at the letter in his hand, anger forgotten.

A visit, huh?

Right. There were things that he should do.

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“Ah, I’ll be gone all day Thursday,” Midoriya said on Monday. “I don’t know when I’ll be back, so just eat dinner without me.”

“Hm, okay,” Shigaraki said, yawning behind his hand. He rubbed the back of his neck, “Where are you going?”

“There’s someone I have to meet,” he explained.

“Do you need some help?” Dabi asked.

“No. This is something I need to do by myself,” Midoriya replied back, taking another bite of the omelette. “Wow, this is really good.” He gave a triumphant hum, his eyes bright in their glee.

The other two exchanged a glance, but didn’t say anything otherwise.

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And so, the first time Midoriya properly met Deku-kun’s mom, he was on his way to the cemetery. He does his entire morning routine, the way he always does, except he ditches his school uniform for something that he wouldn’t normally wear.

To think that he’s become a pro at ditching.

With a white button-down and a pair of jeans, he hopes that he won’t sweat through his clothes in the heat of the summer, and heads out. Was this enough? Could he really convey his feelings when he was dressed like this?

He doesn’t actually know where she was buried, but he figured he’ll take his time to figure it out. Today, he’s not Midoriya Deku, but Midoriya Izuku, and he needed to pay his respect. His mom loved carnations, but grave-etiquette requires lilies. Still, Midoriya would rather make her happy than look like a ‘proper son’, so he gets her the brightest array of carnations at the flower store.

...Did Deku-kun’s mom like carnations?

The grave was modest. It looked like someone had been taking care of it. The weeds growing on it were minimal, and Midoriya takes great care to get rid of all of it. He prayed, lit incense, everything that the online forums that he checked said he should do when he comes to visit a grave for a family member. He had some far-off memories of what it was like to visit the grave of someone who passed away, but the more he remembers, the emptier he feels.

Of all the people who died in his lifetime, this one was probably the one person he had the most to say to, even though he had never met her.

He plopped down in front of the grave, neatly tossing all of his manners away as he began to articulate into words all the thoughts in his head.

“...My name is Midoriya Izuku, and I don’t know where your son is. I… I woke up one day in his body, and have been living as him since. I chased your husband out of your home. I’m sorry for desecrating his memory like this. I’m sorry for desecrating your memory like this. I just… I miss my mom too.”

He placed his head in his hands. What was he doing? He couldn’t ask for forgiveness, and he couldn’t repent. He didn’t regret what he has done since he has gotten here, but he also just wanted to go home. He used to be a hero, and here he was, apologizing to someone who couldn't even hear him.

For a lingering moment, he realized that home is the place where Shigaraki and Dabi were waiting for him. The thought is, at once, humbling and crippling all at once. The thought sank into him, because he knew that it was easier to forgive a villain than to think that the people he used to love would become deplorable.

He knew. If Midoriya Deku died, had tried to kill himself multiple times, then it was because of a thousand different reasons that accumulated into a single conclusion. He understood that, and still, he couldn’t fathom how no one noticed or cared. He couldn’t wrap his head around the fact that the parents that he did have, that were present and with him, exacerbated the situation.

In that sense, maybe it was a good thing that they weren’t here.

The thought was fleeting, and was banished from his head as soon as he thought it. Curling up into a tight ball, Midoriya placed his hand over his mouth to stifle his cries as best he could. He used to be a hero, and he just thought that it was better for someone to be dead. Because it would be more convenient for him.

“I’m sorry,” he said, hoping that someone would believe him.

Here, at the grave of Midoriya Inko, Midoriya Izuku will be the one person that mourned the loss of Midoriya Deku. His heart ached, and without much prodding, the floodgates in his eyes spilled and he cried over the loss of someone no one even noticed was gone.

### Summer Vacation \*cleaning Takoba Municipal Beach Park

“Well, when you said that you were going to go to the beach, I thought we’d… be going to beach. Not this trashheap,” Bakugo said, looking over the mountain of trash before them.

“I… didn’t think it was going to be this bad either,” Midoriya said. It had been a long time since he saw how trashed this beach was. Was it really this bad back in his world? He didn’t think so, but there seemed to be a lot of strange things that ended up being the exact same as his place back at home.

But, if this was the same thing he dealt with at home, he was an ambitious fuck.

“I… I’m really sorry about this guys,” he said, bowing deeply to the half of his class that showed up today. “I really, really am. I’m really sorry for wasting your time with this, and I’m really sorry that you guys came out for nothing. But uh… I’m sure there’s other places that you guys could do to.”

“You’re not going to come?” Shinsou asked.

“Well, I’m already here so I figured I’d do something about that,” Midoriya said, motioning to the mess on the beach.

“You have nothing better to do than cleaning up… that?” Uraraka asked, a skepitcal look on her face.

“Whatever, the faster we get this done, the sooner we can actually use the beach,” Bakugo sighed. He rubbed the back of his neck as he eyed the beach, “Let’s move out all the burnable trash first.”

“Eh? Kacchan, you’re going to stay?”

“I’ll go back to the convenience store to grab some trashbags,” Todoroki added, turning around.

“Hm, let’s go together. We’ll need more water!” Mina added. “Do you mind if we use your cooler?” she asked, turning to Yaoyozuro.

The other girl, surprised at suddenly being called at, nodded slowly. As the words registered, she straightened out and nodded more vigorously, “Yes, I will be happy to help!”

“Oooh, how reliable,” Jirou nodded back, a grin on her face. “Don’t think you can run, Kaminari,” she said, grabbing the blond by the back of the shirt. “Maybe cleaning up around here will help you clean up your mind.”

“Haha, save that for Mineta,” the blond stuck his tongue out. He did grab the teen in question before he tried to run, “Oh no, you don’t.’

“I’ll ask my brother if he knows any place to deal with the junk,” Iida said, pulling his phone out. “I’m sure our local police will be happy to help us do something nice for the community.”

“I’ll start with the big things then,” Shoji agreed, nodding his head. “Ojiro, give me a hand.”

“Man, we’re going to be here all day,” Ojiro sighed as the two began to jump over the railing to get into the beach.

Midoriya stared back, his jaw dropping.

“Don’t just stand there like a dumbass,” Bakugo snapped, “You going to help or are you just going to stand there?”

“I… Are you guys sure?” he asked quietly.

The look he got back was withering.

“Well… This isn’t really what I had in mind when you said the beach,” Kirishima said, “But I think this makes more sense now.” He gave a blinding grin, looking more like the hero Midoriya almost graduated with instead of the shut-in he was just a few weeks ago.

“Yeah! Cleaning a beach? That’s more Midoriya’s mojo!” Hagakure cheered back. “Yosh! Let’s get in on this!”

Midoriya felt his eyes water, and he wanted to scream at the world to look at his friends. Look at his classmates. It didn’t matter what world it was. It didn’t matter how badly the world tried to beat them down. They were still strong, they were still kind, and they were still heroic.

He wanted to protect this.

-

“You… You’ve been cleaning? A beach? Over summer vacation?”

Mina looked at her parents, because it did sound strange, didn’t it? Why would anyone spend their vacation time to clean up one of the dirtiest and clearly abandoned beach? It was so bad that they didn’t even let prisoners do their community service to clean up the area.

So, she understood that it was strange, but she knew that if she said, “Midoriya’s organizing it,” they wouldn’t understand it either.

“What else would I do?” she asked.

She thought about it. What did she do this time last year? Paint her nails? Wonder why I’m single? Go back to standing at the station late at night looking for an old and lonely man to squeeze money out of? Forget about all her summer homework until the day they went back to class and it turned out that their teacher quit and they were working with a sub until they got a replacement?

She shrugged.

“I want to try something new.”

Her parents looked at her like she grew a second head, but she didn’t blame them. Just a few months ago, she didn’t ever think that she’d sit and eat dinner with them.

“I want to be my own person.”

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Enji frowned.

“What did you say?”

“I uh… Your son’s on the news.”

He could feel the migraine building between his temples.

“God, what did he do now?”

“He cleaned up Takoba Municipal Beach Park.”

“...Excuse me?”

“With his …. High school friend, it looks like.”

“He doesn’t have friends,” Enji snapped back, still reaching for the remote to turn the TV on. As he did, his secretary scrambled to get the clip up for him.

His frown deepened as, indeed, he could see the top of his youngest’s head in the furthest corner of the beach, helping a green-haired boy pull a refrigerator. He was wiping at the sweat on his face, and his figure was too blurry to see anything else. He couldn’t believe it.

This time last year, he was getting a call from the school about how anti-social Shoto was and how he only showed up to classes once a week. He went literal months without seeing his son’s face, and it wasn’t until Fuyumi came to him in tears, begging for him to at least make him come home. It was a headache to deal with. However, it ended with him buying out half the homeless and getting a TV-special on their company’s humanitarian deeds, and bolstered their image so he didn’t say much.

Needless to say, he thought he knew Shoto. He was so certain of it, because he was the same. His father, according to others, was hard on him, but look where he stood now. That’s why, he was certain that he was doing the right thing.

He stared at the scene in front of him, the clip starting to loop. It wasn’t longer than a few minutes, and it had been replaying for a while now.

His son. He thought to himself, had friends.

In an instant, he made a decision.

“Go figure out the nearest junkyards to help them. Pay whatever you need to, write it out under my expenses, and I will figure it out later,” he ordered. His eyes looked from the screen back to his, and he turned the segment off.

He was still on the clock, after all.

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“Wait…. There was another beach?” Midoriya asked quietly.

“Yeah, there’s like a hundred beaches. But if you’re going to go and run a stand, everyone's going to go to Asakura,” Kaminari said.

“No one would choose to come to Takoba Municipal Beach Park,” Sero added. “...You seriously didn’t know?”

Midoriya’s face flushed back. “But I… I…” He made a wild motion at the now clean beach. “He didn’t tell me the name of the beach.” He didn’t want to whine, since he didn’t want to be a whiner, but from the shared look between Kaminari and Sero, he was definitely whining.

He looked at his phone and then groaned.

“That’s why Inui-sensei was so mad…”

### Beach \*Miruko

Miruko hadn’t been working for a while. It wasn’t that she didn’t have any offers or anything, but she felt like she had hit a wall.

Why did she start taking photos? Why did she love mountains so much?

Everything felt like too much.

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She took a break, on the request of a friend, and tried to distance herself as much as possible.

Taking a breather, if you would.

And so, she came to the beach where she used to get drunk with her friends at, a long, long time ago. Standing there, looking at the beach where her fondest memories as a student originated, she saw nothing but trash. The heaping amount of trash was almost unbearable, and it was hard to even see the shoreline with all the trash that people had abandoned here.

When she was a kid, she saw how she couldn’t tell where the ocean ended and the night sky began and thought that it was like her future, unknown, but there was going to be a bright dawn following it.

Looking at it now, she still related. Just this time, instead of something beautiful, she felt as dirty as the trash that piled on it.

And when she saw a bunch of high schoolers, screaming and yelling, she couldn’t believe that they were actually cleaning up the mess.

While she stood there, lamenting the destruction of something she treasured, they went and did something about it.

The shame that she felt was humbling. And for the first time in a long while, she felt the itch to capture that moment.

### Second Semester \*(still a freshboy)

“...Kacchan?”

“Why aren’t you ready yet?”

Midoriya blinked at Bakugo, and tilted his head, “What do you mean? Kacchan, why are you in…”

The gears slowly turned into his head, and the realization sank in deeply.

“Oh no,” he whispered quietly, “School starts today?”

The blond blanched, before the anger came out, “I fucking told you that school goes back in today! What the fuck were you doing?! We even went and did our homework together, you dumbass bitch!”

“I forgot! Oh my god!”

“Let me in! And then go get dressed, you shitbag!”

Midoriya swung the door open to let the blond in, and ran for the bathroom.

“Dabi! Shigaraki! I have school starting today! Let’s move the lunch plans to dinner!” he called out.

“We don’t have lunch plans today! We said Saturday!” Shigaraki snapped back from the kitchen.

Dabi handed him his uniform right before he went into the bathroom, “We know.”

“Then why didn’t you say anything?!” Midoriya wailed back.

The older man arched an eyebrow at him. “Are we supposed to know your schedule better than you?”

It was a fair point, and Midoriya wanted to cry. How did he miss this? How come everyone knew but him? How did he forget something like this? Of course, he doesn’t need to go to school, but the good kid in him couldn't wrap his head around the thought that he was going to be cutting class. Besides, it wouldn’t be good for Deku-kun to return, only to learn that he had an awful reputation for himself.

By the time he got out, Dabi handed him his bag, and Shigaraki tossed his bento at him.

“Don’t rock it too much,” he said, after Midoriya just barely caught it.

“Thank you! I’ll see you guys after! Have a good day!” he called out in a rush before he left.

And as they got to the school, Midoriya suddenly came to the realization that they weren’t rushing. There was no need to rush. They were perfectly on time. He turned to Bakugo, who arched an eyebrow back at him.

“If I have to go to school,” he said, “You’re going too.”

“Eh?”

“Since it’ll be pretty hypocritical of you to make a bigass show in front of my house when we’re in middle school but you suddenly play truancy as soon as we hit high school, you goddamn delinquent.”

“Eeeeh??”

### Second Year-senpai

The thought didn’t occur to him until the man had pinned his chest against the wall with his foot. It was rare that he would get apprehended so easily, or even caught-off guard, but now that this puzzle piece slid into place, everything made sense. His body locked up, and was actively trying to shut him down.

It was almost laughable what an oversight this was. After all, it wasn’t just the people around him who needed to be saved, but Deku-kun too.

“Hey there, cumrag,” the senpai said, digging his heel further into his sternum, “Oh boy, I was so excited to see that you were still coming to school. Almost missed you for a second, you know?”

He dragged his toe under Midoriya’s chin, forcing him to look up at his lecherous grin. Even if he didn’t have a name for this man, his body clearly had some memory of him.

How could he have ever forgotten that the senpai who made those videos, collected those pictures, and even sold Deku-kun’s body out like it was his, would be at this school?

“Our favorite money bag has returned.”

So, Midoriya supposed that this was the next thing he would have to deal with, once and for all. What would he need to do so that this man stops his way? It didn’t matter if he only stopped messing with Deku’s body, he needed to make sure that no one else would ever have to suffer from this again.

And if he could make sure that he gets a list of distributors and purchases, he’s certain that Stain would be more than happy to finally put an end to this on that side. Child pornography and forced prositution were awful, awful things.

...Should he go with it? If he plays along, it’ll make getting the information and evidence that he needs much easier. But, he doesn’t know if he has enough mental fortitude to get through it, and he doesn’t want Deku’s body to get desecrated anymore.

No, he shouldn’t consider that an option. Deku’s body had enough physical trauma to last several lifetimes. There was no need to put him through any more danger because it would be easier for him or something. However, even as he thought that, he couldn’t get his body to respond. The edges of his vision were starting to blur, and even though the foot came off his chest, he couldn’t muster any strength in his fingers.

It’s been a while since he’s been helpless.

“Man, I heard you made a name for yourself, didn’t ya? As the Strongest of Aldera? Well, got news for you, baby doll,” the name didn’t fail to make his shudder, even though it was a term of endearment he has never heard before, “High school is a big place.”

He heard the sound of clicking, and even though he didn’t see it, knew it was a box cutter just from the sound. This must have been a normal occurrence. With his eyes closed, he could see the scene with startling clarity.

His shirt was suddenly torn open.

“Oh? What’s the matter? You were covering up our lovely memories?”

His undershirt was cut open, and he could still breath normally through his nose without a problem. The sudden rush of cold air even in the post-summer heat was not a shock. This must be normal. He leaned in, trailing his lips against his neck and then suddenly biting down as hard as he could.

How awful was it that Midoriya didn’t even flinch at this?

Shit, he shouldn’t just sit there and judge the situation. He needed to fight back. There was a fucking high schooler here that was making money off of kids like Deku who had nothing and on one. God, he couldn’t even move his fucking fingers-

But suddenly, the man backed off.

“Perfect. See you around, Dekun.”

He didn’t doubt it for a second. This man, he was smart. And that was going to make this that much more harder to deal with. He left, the door of the empty classroom shutting behind him, and then the shaking began.

He lost. He had completely and utterly lost.

Fear is an emotion that can override everything else in the human body. It’s a lingering emotion that’s etched into Deku’s body and bleeds from Izuku’s mind. And the aftermath shockwaves were enough that Midoriya crawled to puke into the closest trashcan. Unable to stop shaking, four hours after school let out, he tried to find warmth even as the sun began to set.

By the time he had regained some feeling in his body, he pushed himself to sit-up. He couldn’t even get up to his feet. Pathetic. He wiped at the sweat, and then realized that he was crying. Had he been crying this whole time? He wasn’t even hurt.

Fuck.

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The door clattered open, and Midoriya flinched, but didn’t move otherwise.

“Hey, what are you still doing here?” The voice belonged to one of the teachers, and the thought that a teacher here made him calm down a little.

He took a deep breath, centering himself.

“God, kids these days are just a mess,” he sighed, like it was a pain in the ass. “Stop vying for attention and get out of here. We gotta lock up the school.”

Unsteadily, he got up to his feet, but the words lingered in his head. He imagined he doesn’t look that great, and he knew that he didn’t have a very good reputation, but surely, the teacher didn’t mean it like that.

“And close your uniform. You’re a shame to this entire school.”

No wonder Deku-kun thought and believed that he was alone. If these were the type of people who he had in his life, people who wronged him and people who acted like he was in the wrong, of course he thought that he was alone. The thought made him uncomfortable and angry all at once, but the fear from before hadn’t completely dissipated away.

He walked out of the room, when the teacher suddenly slapped his ass. What the fuck.

He jumped and spun around, all but ready to fight back when he saw the grin on his face.

“See? You’re fine. You were just acting up, weren’t you? Too bad for you, I’m not interested in some scarred brat. Get out of here.”

It was a blur, and then he was home. Standing in front of the door, he waited for a long time before the door opened and Shigaraki was staring him right back in the face. With his phone out and in his hand, he looked pissed like he was on his way out to run an errand.

“There you were! We thought you had gotten lost or some…” all the mild irritation on his face melted away into a cold anger. “...What happened.”

Right, Midoriya thought. His shirt was ripped open, and he was holding it closed with one hand. The senpai took his belt, among other things, and he didn’t change his shoes before getting home so he was in his dirty slippers and ripped socks. He must have looked like a mess. He was such a scatterbrain, wasn’t he? He didn’t even have his school bag. He must have left it in that classroom.

The thought of it had a shiver running down his spine.

A hand grabbed his shoulder and he jerked back to the present time. He stared at Shigaraki’s red eyes.

“Hey,” he said, “You’re home now. ...Go take a bath, alright?”

Slowly, the words processed in his mind and he nodded back. He walked in, saw the clean carpet and looked down at his dirty socks. His trembling hasn’t stopped, but the warmth of his small apartment began to seep back into his body. He took a deep breath, feeling a little calmer.

Home. At some point, this became home.

“Oh, welcome back,” Dabi said, his heavy gaze landing on Midoriya, before he took his jacket off and back to hang in the closet.

“I’m back,” Midoriya said, a little breathless. “I’m… I’m home.”

The tears rolled down his face again, and he angrily rubbed them away. Even if it was just a mistake, even if he wasn’t meant to be here, there had to be something that he could do. To give up because there’s no answer right now isn’t the kind of person he is.

He had something to protect here.

He went for the bathroom, weary but a lot more confident in what he could do.

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After a shower, Midoriya took a moment to take a look in the mirror. Probably because of how often he went to Recovery Girl to get himself looked at, his patchwork job of scars don’t look as bad as they used to. On top of the older wounds and the words carved onto his skin were his recent fuck-ups, ranging from all the times he’s been shot, burned, stabbed, and some other stuff. Bruises, new and healing, decorated his body sporadically, and his body looks less like a victim and more like a fighter. He doesn’t know if it’s better.

The same way he had to get used to this body, he wonders if Deku-kun will have to get used to this body as well, when he returns. The thought stayed with him for a second before it flushed away, and he got out of the bathroom.

Dinner went without a hitch. They were a little quieter than usual. Fried fish, fresh rice, a side of miso and pickled radishes, it smelled as good as it tasted.

“Dinner was delicious, thank you,” he said, getting up from the table to put his dishes away.

Shigaraki slammed his hand down onto the table, alarming him. He clutched the dirty dishes closer to him, protectively, and the older man snapped back.

“That’s it?!” he demanded. “That’s all you have to say?!”

“W-what else? Uh! It tasted really good! It’s uhm! Rare for you to make fish-”

“This isn’t about the fucking food, Izuku!” Shigaraki snapped back. “Isn’t there something you want to say to us?”

A little more calmer, the haze of irritation flowed in instead.

“What do you want me to say?! How am I supposed to ever just know what you’re thinking!? If you want to say something, then just say it!”

“How was your day!?” Shigaraki snapped back.

“It was fine, thank you! How was yours!?”

“Great!”

Dabi placed his head in his hands, shaking a little.

“What?!” they both turned to shout at him, and he threw his head back and laughed. He wasn’t the kind of person that had a strong laugh, because it sounded more like he was pushing air out of his mouth than anything. If someone couldn’t see his face, they would just assume that the man was having a hard time catching his breath or something.

“Oh my god…” he wheezed out. “You guys are ridiculous.”

He leaned back in his chair and looked up at Midoriya as his laughter calmed down. Even though he was laughing, his eyes looked uncharacteristically sharp. He met those eyes, wondering what could have possibly made Dabi look so hostile.

“You know, we never really said anything when you came home bruised and banged up before,” he explained, he placed his chopsticks down on his empty bow. “but this was the first time you cried about it.”

“Ah, I’m just a crybaby,” Midoriya laughed off.

“Maybe,” the man agreed, even though it looked like Shigaraki was ready to lunge at him and possibly beat that laugh out of him, “but maybe not. Izuku, we just need a name. Then you don’t have to worry about anyone again.”

The young man paused and he stared at them, wide-eyed and almost fearful. He dropped his gaze to his plate, thinking about something awful from a time that didn’t happen and he shook his head.

“That won’t solve anything,” he said quietly. And then, he gave them a smile, like they were blind and wouldn’t be able to see how hard he was trying to force a smile on his face, “It’s just some schoolyard fight, don’t worry about it.”

Somehow, that bothered them more.

“Can we at least know what’s going on?”

The silence was stifling, and then Midoriya spoke up.

“It’s a senpai from middle school,” he said slowly, carefully. “But I’m not who I used to be. Once we clear that up, I’m sure it’ll be fine.”

“Alright,” Shigaraki bit out, “And if he doesn’t get the clue. We’ll step in.”

It was non-negotiable, and this was something Shigaraki and Dabi could agree on without a problem. This was their home, and the people that they lived with were the closest things to family that they had. They won’t let anyone try to meddle in that.

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“What the fuck,” Shigaraki hissed when he was certain that Midoriya was in the shower. “What,” he made wild hand gestures at the direction that Midoriya left in, “What the fuck!” he was yelling, but whispering.

And Dabi, who spent an entire lifetime in a house built on violence and expectations, frowned back.

Defeat, they both decided, was not a good look on Midoriya.

### Eri \*Kidnap

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“...Eri-chan, the truth is,” Midoriya whispered quietly, “I’m actually a hero.”

“...A … Hero?”

His heart tightened, and he managed to pull a grin on.

“Yeah,” he said, breathless but he’s not tired. He wasn’t tired. In fact, he was just getting started. He stood up. “Eri-chan, did you know that people die when their heart stops.”

“Yeah, that’s why grandpa says to shoot their chest first.”

Often, Midoriya wondered about Eri’s questionable education. He never managed to ask though, and he was beginning to think that he never would be able to. No, that was wrong. He will ask about it, one day, far into the future. And in order to do that, he needed to be alive to do so.

“Then, can you help me out?” he asked. She peered at him, and he was glad that she had finally stopped crying. He crouched down to take her hand, and wrote the kanji for ‘heart’ in her hand. “This is my heart. I’m entrusting it to you, okay? I won’t die as long as you take care of it, no matter how many times I get shot.”

Her eyes widened.

“I-Isn’t it important? If you don’t have a heart, you’ll die!”

“Then take good care of it for me, alright?”

Sagely, Eri nodded. She looked at her hand, like there was something truly precious there, and Midoriya prayed that this would be enough. With this, she would stay out of the battle, she wouldn’t try to jump in, and he didn’t have to worry about her getting involved. He would protect her.

The girl who believed that he couldn’t die of heart failure because he gave it to her… he’ll protect this innocence. He’ll protect it.

For certain, Chisaki and the rest of the family will be coming to save their princess. He had left more than enough evidence for them to find their way here. If not them, it will be Stain and the police force. Regardless, help was coming.

He just needed to make sure that everyone here would be alive for them to be saved.

There were about four other girls, other than him. From a quick look around, he was the second oldest person (physically), and the oldest girl was 16. From the way that the kidnapper talked, she was the one in immediate danger for sexual assault. Given their obvious distaste for the crying and wailing girls, the youngest girls were in immediate danger for physical assault. Regardless, he would protect all of them.

He may be the ugliest girl, but he was a girl here. He would protect them from everything.

With that thought in mind, he stood in front of the door.

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As it turned out, an ugly girl was still a girl.

“She’s not going to sell for much, so it’s fine right?”

“Yeah, it’s not like her face is anything special going for her.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll be gentle the first time.”

And if Deku thought that he would be safe because he was actually a boy, he learned that the world can always be a crueler than he thought. At the very least he can see that they’re all here, and have left the girls alone. A real hero may have also been able to save himself too, but he was fine with this.

His heart, after all, was safe somewhere else.

### Midnight & Midoriya \*Dresses

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“I don’t know,” Aizawa said, grabbing a small amount of the wig in his hand. He lowered his head at the same time, he lifted his hand, closed his eyes, and pressed his lips to the piece of hair. He opened his eyes and looked directly up at Midoriya without changing his posture.

And Midoriya felt like he would enter cardiac arrest as the man with his teacher’s face curled his lips up to a gentle smile.

“You look beautiful, dress or not.”

He straightened, dropping his hair and wiping his face from any expression. Midoriya, understanding that he had been played, still couldn't control the blush that overtook his face and neck.

He stood there, staring at the ground and spluttering like an idiot, and totally missed how the smile returned to Aizawa’s face.

But Aizawa, who was such a convincing liar that he could even lie to himself, thought and believed that the only thing Midoriya was to him was entertainment.

### ChisaMido \* the Dress Incident

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He doesn’t know what he was expecting, but for the door to break down and Midoriya to appear was not one of it. The young man was in a ripped dress, a frilly and fluffy looking thing, looking absolutely wrecked.

Green eyes stared at them, and they aimed their guns but no one fired as the man remained where he was. After all this time with him, it seemed that they recognized him on sight, even though he was covered in bruises, blood, and also in a ripped dress.

They were bad people who have done just about every sin in the book. It didn’t take them long to put two and two together and come to an answer on why Midoriya probably looked like that.

“...Midoriya?” he said, his voice barely a whisper.

Yellow eyes took in his ragged features, the way his once long-sleeves were ripped off and the smeared blood and grime on his exposed shoulder, and then back to the way relief flooded his features. It wasn’t something he mentioned in that moment, but he took note of the ridges and ridges of scars, barely visible from the amount of dried blood on it. Those green eyes suddenly welled with tears and he gave a smile filled with gratitude, and he lost all his questions.

“...Thank god,” he said, breathless as his legs gave out and he crouched down. “I knew you’d come.”

And suddenly, Chisaki felt parched.

Next to him, Kurono surged forward, putting his jacket around Midoriya. And the young man waved it off. In another place, at a different time, Chisaki could easily pinpoint that smile as the same courtesy smile he gave his right-hand when he tried to get him a drink from the vending machine.

“Please, Midoriya,” Kurono said quietly.

And even though Kurono’s voice didn’t change in pitch or tone, and his facial features didn’t even twitch, the young man only needed a second glance before accepting the jacket.

“Ah, thank you,” he said, pulling the jacket closer around him. It dwarfed him in size, and he slowly got back up to his feet, “Sorry about that, I guess I was a lot more tired than I thought,” he said, a nervous smile as though he was explaining that they unexpectedly ran out of an item on the menu. He gave a little nod, “There’s four men down there and six girls,” he said. “Eri’s unharmed, I’ll take you to her first.”

Chisaki nodded, stepping forward as he regained his senses.

“...I see,” he said, eyeing the young man. “And you? How are you?”

“Ah, once they figured out I was a man, they just messed around with me. Nothing permanent or serious though. They were just messing around,” Midoriya said airily. He made a motion for them to follow him with his head as he stepped through the door he came through. His breathing was irregular, and despite how dirty and ragged he looked, Chisaki wanted to pick him up and carry him back out. “It sounds like they want everyone here to be untouched merchandise, so I ended up just being their stress relief.” he gave another laugh, but Chisaki didn’t know what was so funny.

He shook his head, panting hard, but his eyes remained focused.

“Well anyways, there are four guys. Two of them are Emitter types. One makes a lot of light and the other makes glass. One is a transformation type. He can turn his arms, elbow-down, into crab claws. I don’t know about the last guy, but he’s definitely the leader.”

They made it to the end of the hallway, where Midoriya paused.

“There’s three floors. At the very bottom is a single-room cellar, but it’s not connected to the middle floor. You can only access it through here,” he said, pointing at their left. “It’s where the rest of the girls are. The second staircase is over there,” he said, pointing to the right, “and I don’t know what’s there.”

He gave a small nod.

“Eri’s in that room,” he said, pointing forward where there was a door. “I’ll get the other girls out.”

“...You want to go back down there?” Kurono asked, speaking up and out of turn. Chisaki has killed men for less.

“Yeah? I mean,” Midoriya shrugged, “They’re waiting, you know?”

“You don’t owe them anything,” Chisaki spoke up suddenly.

“Yeah,” Midoriya nodded. He tilted his head, “What does that have to do with anything? I’m just… selfishly doing what I want to do, you know?” he gave a lopsided grin. Just focusing on his eyes, it was hard to think that this guy was just beaten an inch into his life.

“Setsuno, Hojo,” Chisaki called out, his eyes never leaving Midoriya’s face, “Get Eri out of here,” he said. He turned to the left, “Lead the way.”

-

Midoriya suddenly gasped, catching them off-guard. Instantly, hands were on their weapons and quirks were at the ready.

“What’s wrong?” Chisaki asked, his eyes darting from the hallway to Midoriya.

“No, I just realized something,” Midoriya said, looking down at himself. “The dress is a mess. Midnight is going to end me.”

Chisaki snorted, “That thing? Not a problem. I’ll just buy you another.”

Kurono’s head snapped up so fast that everyone felt the whiplash.

“Oh, no, I couldn’t,” Midoriya said, placing his hand over his mouth. “Since you saved me, shouldn’t I be buying you one?”

The other members looked seriously uncomfortable with the sudden turn of events.

“Oh? You want to see me in a dress that badly? Hm, perhaps we should get matching pairs.”

Midoriya paled further, looking a little sick at the prospect. He turned his head away, trying to focus on climbing down the stairs as quickly as he had been. From the way he was moving, Kurono was pretty certain that he wasn’t all that injured at all, just a little tousled and stuff, since he seemed to be moving at the same speed as the rest of them. It was better to think about that then the imagery the two were painting for them.

“I … I don’t want to tell you what you can and cannot enjoy,” he said, “But please leave me out of it.”

“Midoriya, I’m hurt. And here, I thought you wanted to be friends.”

“Nah, I’m good. The only thing worse than being friends with a dangerous guy is being friends with a dangerous, handsome guy.”

Chisaki’s foot actually missed a step, and Midoriya didn’t hesitate to grab him by the arm and stray him.

“Careful,” Midoriya said, making careful eye-contact to the surprised boss. And, like it never happened, he kept running down the stairs.

The yakuza stood for another second, and even with his face mask on, he was painfully easy to read.

“Alright,” he said quietly, and as though his mind was catching up, he started down the stairs again. “You think I’m handsome?”

“Ah! J-Just ignore that, okay?”

“They know we’re in the middle of an operation, right?” Mimic asked quietly, further behind in a tone so low that the two in the front couldn’t hear him. His phone buzzed with the report that Hojo and Setsuno had grabbed Eri and that all she’s been talking about is Izuku. She has no physical injuries. He should have gone with them.

But, it was good to know she’s alright. That meant the boss wouldn’t kill all of them. He peered over to where Chisaki and Midoriya were now talking about what to eat for dinner and refrains the urge to punch himself in the face. Who was he? Where was he? What was going on?

“He was just a victim in a violent kidnapping case,” Katsukame spoke up, squinting at Midoriya, “Shouldn’t he be more… upset?” They had always known that Midoriya was… strange, but this wasn’t normal, right? By any stretch of the definition?

He remembered kidnapping people. Actually, he’s pretty sure Akira was still in the basement. Regardless, they were never like this.

“That Chisaki…” Kurono spoke out, his gaze certain as he eyed the people in the front, “... is finally learning about human emotions. It’s only right that we support this.”

Kurono’s words would have been a thousand times more believable and comforting if he didn’t look just as shocked as they felt.

-

It was pathetically easy to take out the guys. Kurono looked to the side where Midoriya was clearly more busy doing something else. He watched the young man in his jacket, tapping and clicking away on the computer. Under the light of the computer monitor, shadows made cuts across his face from where the swelling hadn’t gone down, and illuminated his pale skin to make the bruises look much worse.

“What are you… doing?”

The young man jolted,

“Ah, I figured that maybe we could get some extra data on them,” Midoriya said. “Like if they have any other the other girls or who’s backing them or who’s buying to start with. Then you guys know who to cut, and I know who to go after.”

“...Is it for revenge?” Kurono asked.

“Huh?” Midoriya stopped typing and stared at the man, and then looked back at the monitor. “Uh….I guess so?” he said, like he wasn’t certain.

Skeptical, Kurono tried, “Are you angry that you were … hurt by them?”

Hurt felt like he was mocking and downplaying the entire situation that Midoriya went through, and the young man quickly shook his head and waved his hands in front of him.

“Oh no, I mean. I am upset, but I’m not… it’s not really… I mean, I was sorta asking for it-” he stopped himself when he saw Kurono’s expression. He gave a gentle smile, like Kurono was the one who needed to be comforted and assured. “...Thank you for your concern. I promise that I am okay. I am not going to launch a suicidal attack out of grief or anything.”

He arched an eyebrow at him. “...Then what are you looking for?”

“...It’ll be written, where the girls went. I want to go and find them. If this matches up with the kidnapping case, then that case will be closed. If not… then there’s a lot more to do than I thought.”

“We’ll take care of it,” Kurono said.

“I-”

He took a bold step forward, and with half a foot between them, Kurono is forced to recognize how much smaller Midoriya is than him. Standing like that, he doesn’t understand how someone who could make Chisaki smile could be someone so small.

“I promise you,” he said, “we will ensure that they’re all taken care of.”

Kurono would do it. He would see this through. For the man who reminded Chisaki that he was unbearably human, Kurono would do anything.

“Thank you,” Midoriya said, like he was the one who would personally benefit from this. “I think that would be wonderful.”

Kurono, who had never been earnestly thanked before, felt his heart stutter for a brief second. He turned away.

“A-anyways, why don’t you sit down and rest? We will take it from here.” He said, coughing awkwardly into his hand. “And I… Thank you.”

“I just happened to be here at the right time. Nothing to thank,” Midoriya said, shaking his head.

Did thanking him have to be such a battle? It was so hard to make this boy just accept his gratitude. Was this how children his age were? Everyone always talked about how hard it was going to be to worry after Eri became a teenager, but he was beginning to think that they were right to worry, but about the wrong things.

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“Where is he?” Chisaki growled out.

“Hm?” Kurono looked up from where he was pulling teeth out. “...Who?”

“Midoriya,” Chisaki snapped back, “Who else?”

Yeah really, who else could get Chisaki to emote like a human being other than the high school boy in drag. Although, thinking of Midoriya like that felt wrong and a little dirty.

“He was…” Kurono turned to point where he had seen Midoriya just a second ago and then stopped. “...Uh….”

“I see.”

Chisaki took his glove off and Kurono was in for a world of pain. As it turned out, Midoriya had given them the slip and left. He didn’t have any doubts that, even with all those injuries, the young man could escape undetected like that.

He even left Kurono’s jacket behind, as though to pretend like he hadn’t been here at all.

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Chiyo was 1000% done with this kid.

“Would it kill you to spend an entire week uninjured?” she sighed.

The young boy had showed up at her home, torn up and bruised halfway to hell. Honestly, she didn’t even know how he found people to find new and unique ways to beat him senseless every few days. It was amazing that he was up and walking around at all. She’s pretty certain that he was an adrenaline junkie at this point, and needed a lot of therapy.

“I can’t believe that I have to say this, but you can’t live like this Midoriya-kun. Your body won’t last, even with my quirk. I’m quickening your recovery rate, but it doesn’t mean anything if you don’t stop. What are you even trying to prove by doing this to yourself?”

“Ah, sorry about that,” he said. “I… I don’t know where else I could go, but if it’s too much trouble I-”

She could already see his beaten and mutilated boy, laying on the side of the street, and she immediately shook her head.

“Absolutely not.”

Because Midoriya was not someone who shied from pain, but from kindness. He was not someone who went looking and inviting trouble either. There was more than enough trouble in the world, and he was a good kid who didn’t know how to stop helping people, even if it was detrimental to his health. She knew that. The kid that defended her and her store from those thugs was a good kid, she knew that since those boys came back to apologize to her, and they were on good terms with Midoriya now.

He wouldn’t stop this. Not for her. Not for him.

“Don’t worry, Chiyo-san, I’ll be by tomorrow to help you clean up the store.”

She wished she could do more for this kid, other than house an extra set of clothing and make sure he didn’t die.

### Chimera & Ryuku \*the Cabin in the Woods

>> the one where Deku ends up in a dog-fight with quirk-enhancing drugs

>> taken because they thought he had a quirk, and was crowned as one of the Strongest (also because he pissed off a lot of people and they wanna see him break).

“It’s alright,” Midoriya said, his voice soft even as his blood filled Chojuro’s mouth. The shock of warm iron seeped into his mouth as Midoriya’s hand came to his head. “It’s okay.”

The drug suddenly drained out of his system, leaving him with nothing but the utmost respect he had for a kid half his size to hold his own against his berserking self. He loosened his jaw, feelings his teeth pull back from the broken, bleeding mess he left the kid and his shoulder in.

“You see?” Midoriya said, “Everything is fine.”

Chojuro had seen many people in his lifetime. People who paid an insurmountable amount of money to kill another person, people who beg to be spared in exchange for double his current pay, people who smile when someone dies, and people who remained delusional to the last second.

But people like Midoriya, who was clutching at his broken shoulder, blood oozing from in between his fingers, was a certain brand of kindness that never lasted. People, who can smile so gently after being wronged and injured, are the type of fools who die the most pitifully.

He hoped his hand up to him, where he was carrying two broken pills.

“I didn’t know how many I needed to use. How are you feeling?”

And now, Chojuro was indebted to this man.

“...Why did you help me?” he asked.

The child relaxed back.

“Well, if you can ask that, then I guess you’re fine,” he said. He slowly got up to his feet, “C’mon you’re the last one.”

“...The last one?”

The kid looked at him and gave a helpless smile. “The cops are coming, so if you want to leave, you need to go now. You can’t get caught, right?”

“And you?”

“There’s… something I have to do downstairs,” Midoriya explained quietly.

“...You’re not very bright, are you?” he replied back.

This wasn’t his deal. This wasn’t his problem. This kid was dumb and idealistic, and that was the only reason why he was saved. He was helped because he was pitiful. That’s it.

“I’d rather be stupid than live in regret,” the kid replied back, a smile on his face. “Get out of here.”

“Your name?” he asked. It wasn’t because he was curious, but if the kid died here and there, he would know whose name to find so that he can get him some flowers or something.

Not that he would stay in Japan any longer than he had to. He had to leave. If he had known that retirement was going to be such a pain in the ass, he wouldn’t have bothered. And this kid was giving him such an easy way out. There was no reason to stay.

He told himself that as he left. On the way out, he saw the rest of the fighters, people that he tore apart in his maw, blazed chunks of, and others that he didn’t get to fight at all. They stared at him for a moment and then back to the building.

“And Midoriya?” one of the, a woman with a dragon quirk, asked fretfully. “Is he… still in there?”

Judging from the phone in her hand, Chojuro assumed that she was the one who had tipped the police. He needed to go then.

“Yes,” he nodded, figuring that someone should say it.

“Oh no,” she said. She threw another, hesitant look at him, and then nodded her head, “Get out of here if you don’t want to get caught.”

And she ran back into the place that held her prisoner.

A person who made other people face their fears for him was a dangerous one. It was better not to get involved. It was good to leave. It was the best possible situation for him. To ensure his continued survival, he needed to leave right now and pretend this whole mess never happened. He knew about this drug and would have to be more careful about it in the future. There’s other things that he should do.

But Chojuro had long since stopped caring about things like that. These days, all he wanted was something interesting.

“...His name is Midoriya, huh?”

### Arrest (Reprise) \*Meeting Naomasa

And everything would have been great, except…

Midoriya ran his hand through his hair, took a deep breath, and realized that there were a lot of flashing lights. The tall-tale sounds of the police siren rolled into the room and he didn’t even get a chance to curse when the door slammed open.

Standing in a room of about 15 men around the room, Midoriya Izuku stared at the police force that came in. When did the police force get here? Why were they here? Did the kids he sent out finally get some back-up? If that’s the case, great, but he imagines he looks awful.

But he didn’t feel awful until he saw the unmarred face of Tsukauchi Naomasa.

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“Do you understand?” Tsukauchi almost snapped back, “Your actions had some serious consequences. Your shoulder will never fully recover.”

“It’s okay,” Midoriya told him, hoping to sound reassuring as he gave a smile, “since I didn’t lose everything.’

From the pinched expression on Tsukauchi’s face, it was clear that he didn’t lke the conclusion that he came too.

“So it’s okay, I’m just glad that everyone else got out. But, uh, could I ask for a favor? I know I’m not in any place to say anything, but I thought it wouldn’t hurt to ask.”

“...Well, I can’t promise anything, but I can hear you out,” Tsukauchi said, nodding his head, “What is it?”

What would this crazy teenager, who almost single handedly took out an underground fighting ring dedicated to test a dangerous quirk-enhancing drug, ask for? Professionalism aside, he was curious.

“I would like to remain anonymous. I know, given my age, I can get some shelter from the media, but I really wanted to make sure of it. Please, especially Stain-ah, Akakuro-san, please don’t tell him about my shoulder. And the other survivors, it’s enough for me that they’re okay. They don’t need to know who I am.”

Mercy, Tsukauchi thought. Was this kid craft or was he destructively kind? It was a hard call to make, but Tsukauchi would like to think that he was good at getting a grasp on people.

“...I’ll do my best,” he said.

“Thank you,” he said, relieved, filling his features, “Thank you so much.”

When Tsukauchi was this kid’s age, he was spending his first night in jail after getting into a streetfight with the local motorcycle gang. He was a bit of a wild youth back then, with a chip on his shoulder the size of Tokyo and a hunger to smear the town in blood.

People said that he was terrifying as a child. That he didn’t have a lot of control and was ready to spring into action no matter what happened. From the reports he had read through, the kid was in back to back fights just like all the adults and made it to the Final Four. He, according to eye-witness testimonies and the video feeds, never reacted to the drugs that he was given. He remained relatively sober and clear-minded from the moment he entered the area to the bitter end. He then configured a clever escape plan, alerted the authorities, freed all the prisoners, imprisoned the ring-leaders, and then kept the data in pristine condition.

Yet, the kid would be written down as a victim.

Needless to say, he didn’t know who the scary one really was.

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“And that’s the kid that got you into the force?” Tsukauchi asked bluntly.

Akakuro nodded curtly. “Yes sir.”

“...At ease,” his supervisor said, and while Akakuro didn’t stand at attention anymore, he still looked tense like a drawn bowstring.

He rubbed the bridge of his nose and sighed deeply.

“Shouldn’t kids… I don’t know, be in school? Care about dating? Like, the worst thing they do is shoplift? Not get stuck in the middle of an underground quirk-enhancing drug ring?”

Akakuro stared at him for a moment longer and then looked back down.

“”He’s… eccentric,” he decided on at last.

“He’s a problem-magnet,” Tsukauchi replied back. “But… as awful as it is, if he didn’t deal with it so neatly, collecting data and evidence for our end too, it made our job easier,” he said. He looked at Akakuro and nodded, “Which means it’ll get through the courts better, and justice will be served. The guys who were running this won’t get away with it.”

Akakuro nodded back, solemnly, and Tsukauchi shook his head.

“No, no, no matter how you dice this up, this is too weird. Is that… Is he really a 14 year old?”

Akakuro, for the first time since joining the force, broke his blank exterior and gave a crooked grin.

“I don’t know any other 14 year olds other than him,” he said, almost proudly.

How reassuring.

Tsukauchi would have to keep on him then, but ultimately, he respected it.

Still, when he and his team was given an honorary mention and a medal was sent to their office, he couldn’t help but feel dirty every time he saw it.

### Permanent Damage \*

Midoriya thought it was a little funny actually. Everyone always made a deal about permanent injury and the like, but when it came down to it, it wasn’t too bad. It was just an arm. And in comparison to the number of people who would have died, who would have torn each other apart for entertainment, he didn’t think that this was too bad. He’d make the same choice again, again and again.

However, he did feel bad for Deku-kun, who would have to live with the choices that Midoriya made for him. Still, he didn’t think that Deku-kun, who had lived his whole life suffering for no reason, would stand by and watch other people suffer like he did. He didn’t want to think that he, in any universe, would be like that.

“Permanent damage is a big deal, isn’t it? I’m surprised you’re up and about.”

Midoriya nearly jumped out of his own skin when he heard that voice. He sucked his breath in through his teeth and stumbled backwards. He would have fallen over entirely if it wasn’t for a hand, a giant paw as big as his lower back, wrap around him and stabilize him.

“C-Chimera-san,” he whispered out.

“Yo,” he said, as he stepped back. “How have you been?”

“Just uh… fine, I guess,” Midoriya said, taking a step back.

The man stared at him for a while, his lips stretching into a grin of some sort, and Midoriya backed up until his back hit the wall.

“Truly?”

“Yeah.”

Chimera shifted the hand on his back up, and placed it right above the shoulder that he bit, just a few days ago.

“Because I thought that this was permanent.”

He felt all the color drain out of his face. Midoriya clenched his jaw as he narrowed his eyes. He knew that there was no way he was going to win this fight, if they started to fight. There was no way that they could fight without a hundred things getting damaged, or worse, someone else getting caught up and getting hurt as a result.

“What do you want?” he asked quietly, eyes narrowed.

“Me?” Chimera chuckled, a rich sound as he stepped back to reach into his pocket and pull out a business card. “Oh no, I think I should be asking you that.”

He stepped forward to place the business card into his hand. As soon as his hands were free, one of them came to cup Midoriya’s chin. As best he could, the student tried not to flinch and pull away. It helped that he was so surprised at the turn of events that he gaped like a fish instead.

“What,” Chimera’s criminally deep voice reverberated through the space between them, “do you want?”

“...What?”

“You’ll never heal from that wound. Not completely, at least. I would know, I’m the one that dealt it. Isn’t it alright that I help out where I can?”

“No, it’s really unnecessary.”

The blunt and sudden answer was met with silence. Chimera stared at him, his eyes widening as he started to laugh. He pulled his hand back, wrapping his arms around his belly as he gave a full-body laugh. The sound was bright and echoed in the empty corridor.

“There are plenty of people in the world that would be dying to have me in their debt,” he boasted, crossing his arms in front of his chest as he pulled a cigar out.

Without really thinking about it, Midoriya stepped forward to snatch it away. He handed it back to him.

“I don’t care what you do. I don’t care, but don’t smoke at a hospital,” he said. And hopefully not sounding as panicked he felt, added, “And go find someone that wants your… skillset if you want to use it so badly.”

There was a brief moment of silence, and Midoriya was certain that this was it. He was going to die right now. A fiery, pitiful death filled with pain and despair. This was it.

“...My skillset, huh?” the chimera chuckled in front of him. “Do you even know who I am?”

Midoriya opened his mouth, ready to say that he was a villain that wanted to turn society inside out before he stopped himself. That wasn’t him. That wasn’t this Chimera, was it? How could he be a villain when there are no heroes? So then, if he didn’t have that, what would he be?

“...Homeless?” he asked quietly.

Chimera stared at him for another moment and then started to laugh again.

Midoriya always had the misfortune to meet guys like him, who laugh at everything when he was serious. It was as terrifying as always, and he wished that his misfortune would just end already. He swore that he would be a better person, and that he would start doing the right thing, so can the whole world just cut him a break already?

“Hm… Well, I suppose you’re not completely wrong,” he said. “But I was talking more about how I make my money.” He took a step forward, “I’m sure that there’s someone you wish to get rid of, don’t you? Let me take care of it for you.”

Ah, is that what this was all about?

“I didn’t save you so you don’t owe me anything,” Midoriya stated curtly. “There’s no one I wish to be harmed so your point is moot. Let’s just let this go and pretend we never met, if that makes it easier for you.”

“Geez, you’re a tough customer,” he sighed, tipping his head back.

He thought for an extra second before he looked back at Midoriya.

“I won’t charge you,” he said, like that would make it better, “And in my line of expertise, my reputation and word is what sells me. Until your arm fully heals, I will act as it.”

“No, I really don’t want this. And I’m sure that you don’t actually mean that either,” Midoriya said, more than uncomfortable with the situation. He thought that, at worst, he would squeeze a favor or something, but now his words had twisted into including his permanently damaged arm?

“Then… the name carved on your back. Can you tell me with certainty that you don’t feel anything for that individual?”

Green eyes widened, and he stared at the older man. The amused expression was much more sinister now, and Midoriya took a deep breath. Straightening out no matter how much it made his shoulder ache, he spoke clearly and firmly.

“Yes.”

“Good,” Chimera said, amused and pleased all in one. “It would have been boring if that was the case.”

And in that second, Midoriya would begin to wonder if this was better than a villain. At least with a villain, things were predictable. A villain’s action was geared to make a message, destroy something, humiliate someone, and altogether do things that most people wouldn’t do.

But Chimera wasn’t a villain. From the sounds of it, he was a dangerous man who did dangerous things and was proficient enough that he was paid to do it. He was a special brand of danger, and made even worse because he wasn’t doing this for the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ reasons. It didn’t feel like he did it because he had to, blackmail or coercion or anything.

He was bored.

And now, he thought that he could alleviate that boredom through Midoriya.

Shit.

“You don’t mean that,” Midoriya said, feeling his courage desert him. “Please leave me alone.”

Chimera chuckled, a rich sound.

“Soon enough, you’ll end up in this kind of position again. When that happens, I’ll be there,” he promised.

It would have been so much more cooler if Midoriya knew and liked him. As it was, he felt like he just appended a new stalker to the long list of people that he thought he knew.

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The next day, at the hospital, a nurse commented on how someone must have left him an impressive bouquet of red roses, even though no one signed into the visitors’ log. He placed his head into his hands and suppressed the urge to scream.

Why couldn’t people just be saved quietly and move on with their life? Or better yet, why can’t they just not need to be saved every four days?

### Return

The following days felt so peaceful that Midoriya felt like he could cry. His ached so bad that he kept waking up at night, and even though Shigaraki and Dabi didn’t say anything, he knew that it kept them up too.

However, peaceful days were haunting. It felt like something was breading down his neck, pressing down on his shoulders with a chill that no jacket could protect him from. It reminded him of how selfish he was, for making a home in someone else’s body. It shamed him for enjoying his time here when he knew it wasn’t his.

At this point, even if he did go back, would he be able to still claim that he was a hero? He was slowly and surely breaking apart Deku-kun’s body. He had a long list of stalkers that were coming for him. There was nothing heroic about that.

### Aug\*SomeFestival ShigaDeku another world

“What’s on your mind?” Shigaraki asked.

“Huh?”

The older man was quiet for another moment. They leaned against the railing of the bridge where they were waiting for the others.

“Ah, I was just… thinking, I guess.”

His face twisted into disgust. “Whenever you think, you end up getting hurt,” the older man said bluntly. Midoriya winced at the words, but managed a little smile. And then, catching him off guard, the older man continued, “Think aloud today.”

Green eyes blinked at him, “What’s the occasion?” he asked. “You usually tell me to keep my mouth shut.”

Shigaraki scowled back and turned his attention back to the water underneath them, “Whatever, just do it,” he said.

Staring at him for a moment, the younger man smiled back somberly. Maybe it was because he was really losing his mind, or maybe it was because Shigaraki’s face now brought his guard down. Once upon a time, that face brought nightmares or tragedies. Now, it reminded him of warm dinners and the smell of laundry. He wasn’t certain when the switch happened, but regardless, he spoke.

“...Can you entertain me for a bit?” he asked. Sharp red eyes rested on his face, before giving a curt nod. With a small hum, he asked, “Do you think that parallel universes exist?”

The taller man grimaced, but before he said anything careless, he caught the near desperate look on Midoriya’s face. He gave a long, suffering sigh. He turned to face the young man.

“Let’s say I do.”

“...In… What if, in another world, I was a hero and you were a villain?” he asked, his voice small and quiet.

Shigaraki placed his head in his hands, but right before he wanted to start yelling, took a good and hard look at the man next to him. His eyes trailed on the bandages on Midoriya’s trembling figures, and for a moment was reminded of the Midoriya he found puking his guts out in the bathroom when he cracked open a beer that first time. He must have come to his own conclusion, because he heaved another sigh and thought about it.

Whatever Midoriya was thinking about, it haunted him. It haunted him and it woke him up in the middle of the night to cry. He bit down on his tongue to stop himself from saying something dumb. For the first time, or so it felt, Shigaraki thought that Midoriya was looking for help from him.

"...I can't really imagine it," Shigaraki said, "Me? A villain?” He snorted, “That sounds like too much work.”

He tilted his head, closing his eyes as he tried to forget the strangeness of all of this, and tried to think about what to say to keep going. There was little that he wouldn’t do for the guy sitting next to him, and he hoped that he recognized it.

“It’s like being a terrorist right? Bombing buildings, starting fires, throwing the economy into disarray…” the more he thought about it, the more troublesome than it would be worth it. Living under the radar would be a pain in the ass. He couldn’t get the games he wanted, or eat the food he wanted with the people he wanted to, right? “The world would have to be shit if that’s the case.”

And then, he remembered his quirk. The quirk that he tried so hard to hide, and now, it was much easier to think that he’d be a great villain. All he had to do was touch things.

He tilted his head just slightly to see him better, where Midoriya stared up at him with wide eyes, as though his words and thoughts mattered, and Shigaraki returned his gaze with a warm smile.

"And besides, you’re the hero, right?” he said, feeling that cold place in his heart fill back up like it was never empty. “Then there’s nothing to worry about. You will find a way to save me. Villains are just violent victims, right?"

He wouldn’t be able to say it aloud, not when it looked like Midoriya was hanging onto his every word. Him? Destroy a world that Midoriya protected? How could he? This world was filled with something amazing once he dyed it in his colors. If he was a villain, it had to be because Midoriya hadn’t saved him yet.

And he couldn’t imagine this guy ever not saving him. If parallel worlds existed, he'd tell him that he just needed to hold on until Midoriya got to him, and then, he won’t be alone anymore.

While he was busy thinking about that, however, tears burst out of Midoriya’s eyes and streamed down his face. He sniffled, and rubbed his eyes fiercely. Shigaraki stared back while an impending feeling of panic rose up inside of his chest. What just happened? Did he say something wrong? No way, right? He spoke as honestly as he could. What the fuck was he supposed to say? What was he supposed to do?

Why couldn’t Midoriya just come with a fucking manuel that explained what the fuck he was supposed to do?

“A...And if I don’t?” he croaked out.

Shigaraki, jerked backwards, like the question brought him physical pain. Wasn’t this just hypothetical? Were they just going to ignore the fact that he was crying and sobbing on a bridge during a festival? This clearly wasn’t making him feel better, couldn’t they just drop this? Why was Midoriya making such a big deal out of this?

But, if Midoriya was clutching so hard to this, then it must be important to him. And if it was important to him, then it would be important to Shigaraki too.

“Then, it’s not over,” he said at last. “Since the good guys always win in the end.”

Midoriya gave this shuddering sob, his arms curling around his body as he trembled like he couldn’t stand the cold.

Some time ago, Shigaraki would have never considered this as an option, but right now, he couldn’t think that he could do anything else.

He wrapped his arms around Midoriya, feeling him fit against him like a puzzle piece, and thought that this would have been a much sweeter moment if Midoriya didn’t blow his nose against his shirt. He placed his head on top of Midoriya’s comfortably, and tried not to dig his chin down. He hesitated, even though he had gloves on, but placed a hand against Midoriya’s back. It was strange to think that someone who was so small was someone who could support him so well.

Shigaraki hoped that his heartbeat, beating a little faster than normal, next to Midoriya’s head, was proof enough that he had been saved. He had never been good with his words, after all.

And Midoriya seemed to understand him anyways.

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“Sorry about that,” Midoriya laughed, rubbing at his eyes.

Shigaraki ruffled his hair.

“...When someone helps you, you should say ‘thanks’,” he said.

Midoriya blinked at him, like he was shocked, but it melted away into something kinder.

“...Thank you, Shigaraki.”

### Autumn Festival

“...They want us to what?”

Midoriya nodded, “So Jirou, you should let me know, do you want a bigger crowd?”

Jirou felt her heart race.

“Of course,” she said, a grin twisting on her face, “Of course I would.”

### Koichi & the Wallet Incident

Muggings happened so often that they were starting to stop have meaning for Midoriya, as awful as that probably sounded.

“...You can’t stop all of them.”

“...Yeah, but I stopped this one.”

“So, uh… who are you?”

Midoriya turned to the man and gave a laugh. He grinned, big and wide.

“I’m a hero!”

### Saving Oyaji \*

-

“...Is that him? The kid that Eri loves so much? The kid that has you running all over Tokyo?”

Chisaki felt it again. That feeling of dread accumulated into something dangerous as it sat painfully in his gut. Keeping his head down, he answered honestly.

“Yes, sir,” he said.

If Oyaji asked for his head, Chisaki had to deliver. Hopefully, he’ll die on the way there. Surely, if he accidentally ran into Shigaraki or Dabi, they could arrange that for him.

“His warm gaze is the temperature of his kindness,” Oyaji said. “Take care that it doesn’t run cold.”

Chisaki lifted his head, eyes wide in his shock. In front of him, his boss gave him an amused grin.

“Well?”

“Yes sir,” Chisaki dropped his head again. Something in his chest loosened and he felt like he could breathe again.

“Good, and bring him for dinner one day. I’m sure Eri would love that.” Oyaji said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. He gave a crooked grin to Chisaki, who returned it with a smile of his own. “The kid that managed to make you relax, I would like to dine with him. Make sure to send him my regards, for saving my life and all.”

-

“...Excuse me?”

“It’s for you,” Kurono said, looking more too tired to be awake and walking around. “From Kai.”

“Overhaul?” Midoriya gasped. He looked down at the box that Kurono was holding and then back to his face, “For me?”

“Yes,” Kurono said, “It’s… a symbol of our gratitude,” he explained.

Midoriya hesitated, but took the box. It was a rather large box, ordained in bright red wrapping paper with faint gold phoenixes decorating it. The ribbon that wrapped it up was sheer gold, and the entire thing looked more expensive than his entire flat and everything in it. Given its size, he didn’t think that it would be so light.

“I’m uh… thanks? Message received?” he tried, and looked back to Kurono. “But off the record, why?”

“For saving Oyaji,” Kurono said, his voice soft. His gaze turned warmer than anything Midoriya ever expected to receive from a yakuza man. He took a step backwards and gave a full bow. “We understand that this gift is insignificant in comparison to our feelings, and wish for you to understand that we will never forget this debt. May you look upon this and always know that we will have your back.”

“No, please forget about it,” Midoriya whispered, his face draining of color. “Please, let everyone forget about it.”

Kurono straightened and gave a smile, something too kind and gentle and Midoriya hated how handsome this man was. What was he looking at that he could look so unguarded? Midoriya thought that they were making eye-contact, but Kurono was clearly thinking about something else. He had to. Midoriya couldn’t think of why else he would look so tender.

“...You are a kind man. Off the record and family matters aside,” he said, reaching for something in his breast pocket, and pulling out a white business card with a smile, “I wish to be your support one day.”

“Haha…” Midoriya laughed weakly, but took the card, feeling surreal.

It was Chisaki’s business card, but Kurono’s number was scrawled onto the back.

### Yaoyozuro’s Birthday Ball \*Sept 23

“Thank you,” she said, her eyes shining. “For the first time, I feel like this day is mine.”

“It starts here, Yaoyozuro-chan,” Midoriya said, his eyes bright and warm in a way she’s never been looked at before, “That’s the good thing about being alive, you know? From now on can be a long, long time.”

She stared at him for a moment longer and laughed.

“Deku-kun, could I ask for one more gift?”

“Eh?” curious green eyes look at her and she smiled back.

Of course, a girl as rich as her would have anything she ever wanted. She could understand that shock.

“...If it’s in my ability to do so,” Midoriya replied back, “then I’ll be happy to do so.”

“Momo,” she said, like she was waiting for those words. “I’d like it if you would call me Momo from now on.”

Predictably, his face flushed at the prospect, and she treasured it.

“...I guess I could do that for you, Momo-chan.”

### Extra Cash & Yakuza Attention

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“...If you needed the money,” Chisaki said, “I would have been happy to find accommodation for you.”

“Somehow, I don’t imagine you as the type of person to be happy to do anything for someone else.”

“...You get cheekier every day.”

“Thank you,” Midoriya said, giving a polite bow.

Chisaki stared at him and then snorted. A small smile graced his lips and Midoriya thinks that a Chisaki without all that Villain-hazah and hellbent on purging quirks from the world is a very relaxed adult who is comfortable in his skin.

“So, how much?”

“Eh?”

“Your debt here,” Chisaki clarified, motioning to the building, “How much was it?”

“Oh, I’m not here because I’m in debt,” Midoriya said, feeling oddly touched that Chisaki was trying to make smalltalk. In another world, this man reformatted the sidewalk to kill him. Here, the sidewalk remained steady underneath their feet.

“...Then why are you here?”

“It’s a nice job with flexible hours,” Midoriya said.

“So you do need cash.”

The young man laughed outright at that, “Doesn’t everyone?”

There was a long silence, and it wouldn’t have bothered Midoriya normally, but Chisaki’s eyes were boring holes in his face.

“Is something wrong?”

“...Normally, people are dying to have me in their favor,” he said.

“I don’t think there’s much about our relationship that could count as ‘normal’.”

“You have a response for everything, don’t you?” the yakuza scowled back. “As unfortunate as it is, I can’t let this go. So just let me repay this debt, and you will never hear from us again.”

The young man paused at that and then turned to him, “What debt?”

“Getting Eri out of that kidnapping case.”

“Wha…?” Midoriya couldn’t believe it, “That was months ago. And you bought me coffee, remember?”

“Then, the incident with the dress.”

The young man felt his face burn at the memory, and he spluttered. “You came and got us out!”

“You would have saved yourself eventually,” Chisaki deadpanned back, “We just happened to be there at the right time. I never got you a new dress either.”

“I said I didn’t want one!”

“And then for saving Oyaji.”

“Yeah, and you got me that new jacket.”

“You never wear it, so it doesn’t count,” he shot back. “And then there was that incident with the dog-”

“You weren’t even there!” Midoriya cried out, trying to register what the fuck was happening.

“I should take responsibility for my boys,” he replied back, looking much too amused about the entire ordeal.

There was a brief second, and Midoriya didn’t know how he could look so smug without changing any of their facial features.

“Then, what would be enough?” he finally shot back.

There was a long pause, and Chisaki honestly couldn’t come up with anything else to say.

“...Well, let me know then,” Midoriya said, grinning back as the tides changed. “It would do everyone some good if you were free from debt.”

He never knew that someone could look so annoyed but so pleased, but Chisaki could pull it off with style.

-

“...If I didn’t know any better,” Kurono said, “Kai, I would think that you are just using the debt as an excuse to talk to him.”

The yakuza stilled at the words, caught so far off-guard that all the white around his eyes were showing. For a brief moment, Kurono thought that he would die, and pay for his imperitance with his life. Perhaps being with Midoriya rubbed off on him too, and now he was going to pay with his flesh. He turned slowly to his childhood friend.

“I see.”

“...Kai, if you want to leave this world, you can. You will have Oyaji’s blessings,” his childhood friend reminded him.

“No, I owe too much to him. I have to do this.”

Kurono stared at him for a moment longer and looked back at the ground. “Then, what are you going to do about Izuku? Are you going to… bring him here?”

It wouldn’t be hard. It was clear that Midoriya already had half a foot within the underworld, and Chisaki had no doubts that he probably had more connections elsewhere that could prove to be incredibly useful. However, when he thinks about the shade of red Midoriya becomes with a sudden compliment, he already knows the answer.

Chisaki spoke confidently, “If he wants to come here, it has to be of his own accord.” It wouldn’t mean anything unless Midoriya wanted them, him, the same way.

He tried really, really hard not to imagine a future with Midoriya, since it made his heart waver.

“Alright, Kai. Then I’ll support that decision, too. I’ll let the boys know.”

“Yeah,” Chisaki said quietly. He kept his gaze down at the ground even as Kurono left, and wondered if he could become someone’s <Overhaul>.

### Picnic (Autumn) \*

“We did it!” Yamada yelled at once they got to the top. “Look! Look at that view! We did it!”

There was a brief silence, and Midoriya had thought that Aizawa would have grouched, and Dabi would have mocked. However, there was this pleased smile crossing everyone’s tired expression, and Midoriya wondered if he could box this feeling to keep forever.

Later, when Shirakumo whipped his phone out, declaring that they needed to take a photo to commemorate this moment, he realized that the answer was much simpler than he thought.

Sitting, finally, at the overpass at the top of the small mountain, eating Shigaraki’s packed lunch and their lukewarm tea, Midoriya hoped that Deku-kun could feel this feeling, and return home.

### Enter Himiko Toga \*

The only memory Midoriya has of Himiko Toga’s smile is pain. Either he’s in pain or someone else, but there was probably blood involved.

Still, seeing her without a smile was also plenty scary too.

### Enter Twice

It was like the whole world wanted to just point and laugh at him.

Which was fine, Midoriya was used to getting laughed at and Midoriya could bear with it.

He swore that one day, he’ll be able to point and laugh right back. Until then, he would just have to live with the fact that he just ran into Twice.

Maybe it was because he ran into Toga? Regardless, Twice is a man who is stuck, upside down, hanging from a steel beam by a rubber cord of some sort.

“Pleaseeee someoneeee,” he cried out pitifully.

And Midoriya never learned how to turn his back to someone who cried out for help.

“I hear you!” he yelled out as he came forward.”Give me a minute, okay? I’ll get you down.”

“Who the hell are you? I don’t need no help!”

Midoriya jerked to a halt as he stared up at the blond. “You sure?”

“Of course I need help! Look at me! I can’t even feel my fingers! // I’ll kill you, you bastard!”

The young mna stared at him for a long moment and then shook his head.

“I’m coming to save you. I don’t care if you want it or not.”

Midoriya was never someone who was good at listening to other people. There was no point to start now.

-

In hindsight, it really didn’t make sense that Twice would be hanging upside down in a place like this. It only made sense that he wasn’t alone here. Someone had to put him here.

“And this is…”

“Twice,” Midoriya said without missing a beat. He looked at Dabi and then Shigraraki, uncertainly, “You don’t… recognize him?”

“I was homeless for two days,” Dabi said, “Of course I don’t know every homeless person in the city. C’mon, let’s get him washed up.”

He reached over to grab the blond. He was ready to support him to the bathroom like how Midoriya did, when he realized that this was a heavy man. He could still support him, enough, but he looked back to Midoriya.

He probably supported him much better than he did, but that thought gnawed at him.

He knew that Midoriya was stronger than him, but physically? Like this? The thought bothered him more than he thought.

“Not you,” he snapped out when it looked like Midoriya would follow them into the bathroom. “This bastard is heavy enough. I’m not carrying you too. Go get some first-aid.”

“Oh, uh…. Are you sure?”

“I’m not that heavy. // I’ll fucking kill all of you.”

Dabi’s eyebrow twitched. Why were these the people that Midoriya associated with? Well, that was a dumb question, since he knew why. Who else but Midoriya would care about random strangers in the street for no reason?

“Thank you. // I hate you.”

“Yeah, stuff it,” Dabi said. The anger shimmered under his skin, but he managed to stop, “Burns are a bitch to heal.”

### Gentle the Gentle Convenience Store Worker

“Hey, are you okay? Gentle?”

Gentle? Who? Him?

Danjuro Tobita slowly opened his eye, the one that wasn’t swelling and aching, and stared at the young face that looked back at him.

“Okay, it’s okay. It’s going to be okay.”

Several groaning was heard around him, no way, did this child take care of all of the people that came for him?

Impossible, right? There were three of them and the kid looked young. He had a split lip, but it looked like it was half-healed. It couldn’t have been an injury from this fight.

“Can you hear me?”

He groaned back and the kid gave a sigh of relief.

“Do you need an ambulance?”

“N-no,” he managed to stutter out. He can’t pay for that.

“Okay, what hurts?”

Everything.

“I-I’ll be fine,” he said.

Eventually, he got it out. He asked, “W-Who are you?”

The kid looked at him, his relief turning into something encouraging as he gave a wide grin.

“I’m a hero.”

### Twice Closing

Bubaigawara Jin got a job at a Host Club, in the back helping with mainly the backroom and kitchen work. It’s not an easy job, and he feels the weariness settle into his bone with every passing hour. He sweats through his nice shirt, and he doesn’t get many breaks.

Still, as he passed the crates of booze in or walked by the kitchen, he might catch those emerald eyes, a small smile, and he felt energized in a way he’s never felt before. Hard days are hard days for everyone, but the pay is good and he finally finds a group of friends who don’t mind that he is himself.

This time last month, he was looking for cans on the ground to survive to see tomorrow. He was honestly contemplating committing a crime just so that he could go back into jail.

And now? He goes home with three of the other hosts, and lives right next to the guy who gave him this opportunity in the first place. He has a savings account that, even though he accidentally left his bank book out on the kitchen counter, no one steals from.

He had people that asked him how he was doing, made sure that he had enough to eat and drink, and people that he did the same for.

Words will never be able to fully capitalize on how much he feels indebted to the young man, Midoriya Izuku, who cried when he said that he was grateful for being alive.

### Dinner Party

Sometimes, Midoriya hated being right. This was one of those times.

The house of Himiko was just as awful as he had guessed. The strained smile that Toga gave him that day haunted him for a reason, and he swore to himself that he would return it to her, any means necessary. And so, Midoriya trashed the rest of his dignity, apologized to Deku in his head, and donned a maid outfit, pretending to be a maid for Momo’s tea party.

He was incredibly grateful that he had rich friends who knew how to play the higher society game. So, incredibly, damned, lucky. He wouldn’t let this sacrifice in vain, and he has no idea when Momo’s personal maids began to like him, but was incredibly grateful that they were going to put their livlihood on the line for him and his stupid hero-streak.

He swears that he’ll save Himiko.

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On that day, Himiko will stared at the maid who served her tear just a few hours ago like a newborn baby seeing the world for the first time. The awe in her eyes were palpable as the maid took out all four of the burly men twice her size and possibly three times her weight in a few seconds. She moved like a fairy, and her long skirt did nothing to hinder her movements.

Her long green hair tumbled down around her, the curls only seeming to magnify her beauty. She snapped around, her eyes looking for her next target, and then the curls came to rest around her. The world slowed down just a little more.

“Excuse me, Miss,” she said, kneeling down in front of her like she was a knight, “I’m sorry that I was late.” One of her hands came behind her, the other hand in front of her heart as she bowed her head forward. “Are you alright?”

The blond stared back, mouth agape, and slowly nodded.

“Good,” she said, her smile soft and genuine even though Himiko is certain that she has never even talked to her before. “This is… a little presumptuous of me, but please forgive me.”

With that, she came closer to Himiko and lifted her up like a princess in her arms. Himiko thinks that the embrace of another human, even if it’s a strange maid with a killer roundhouse kick, is a warm thing. And the sunny smile she gives her even while blood is trickling down her temple, is the most beautiful thing she’ll ever see in the world.

She wrapped her arms around the strange maid’s neck, and realized with a shock how thin she was. How could someone so much smaller than her be so strong? She didn’t know.

She couldn’t help but think that she didn’t want this moment to end.

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“My lady,” the maid said, her voice barely a whisper, “This is as far as I can take you. Please run straight, and you will reach the manor. Lady Momo will be there.”

Toga thinks she would be happy if she went deaf, because she would have heard this maid’s voice at least once.

“Will we meet again?” she asked quietly, feeling like a child again.

The maid’s eyes stared at her for another moment, and a warm smile stretched onto her face.

“Of course. As long as you desire it, I will always come and save you.”

She’ll never forget those green eyes, the first time that someone looked at her and saw her and smiled. She once read in a book that a prince would come and have a princess locked up in a high tower, but thinks that they were wrong.

A real prince wears a maid uniform and fights with his fist. His eyes are like gems and he’s smaller than her. And a real prince wasn’t a man at all.

### Maid v Bird

“Hey! Give that back!”

Midoriya, after jumping the wall surrounding Yaoyozuro’s mansion, had told himself that all he needs to do is sneak somewhere quiet and change his clothes. Then, he would be free to head into work. And then he’ll work until sunrise, share a pocari with Spinner, and return home to sleep for the next 18 hours.

That’s it. That was all he had to do. There was no need to walk around in this filthy and ripped maid outfit and wig any longer than he had to. He was literally carrying a change of clothes in his bag. Please, all he wanted was some peace and quiet for ten, no three minutes. That’s all he wanted.

And Midoriya always seemed to have the shittiest luck, since he heard that tone and was turning around before he knew what he was doing.

The supposed thief ran right by him, so he did what he always did, and grabbed him by the shoulder. The sudden shift of his gravity, as well as the unsaid question “what the fuck is this maid doing?” provided to be enough support. Midoriya kicked the back of the thief’s leg, and yanked his arm behind him, forcing him onto the ground. For good measure, he kneeled on the thief’s back, already recognizing that he was much thinner than the jacket made him out to be, and curled his arms painfully behind him.

The sound of his chin hitting the ground made him wince, but this was a throw he’s done countless times before. This man will not die. His chin was not broken. His nose on the other hand…

“Oh, thank you so much…”

Midoriya looked up where the presumed victim of the theft came up to him. He stared a lot longer than he should have because the last time he saw Takami Keigo, it was a grisly scene. His eyes watered at the sight of the blond, whole and alive, and felt a hundred thousand things that resulted in saying just one thing.

“Anytime.”

The blond looked at him curiously, the smile on his face wide but the look in his eyes was piercing. Looks like he was still the same in that sense.

Truly, no one was probably more suspicious than him here. The threat was apprehended and Hawks would get back what was taken from him. But still, with his heart shaken, Midoriya abandoned everything and ran away instead.

Once he got about a block and a half away, he ducked into an alleyway between stores and took a moment to rest. He was dry-heaving or he was crying, he wasn’t sure which, as he crouched down and tried to find some order in his emotions.

“Hey, there Little Miss,” a very familiar voice that he didn’t want to hear right now called out, “You alright?”

Maybe it was because Midoriya just saw Hawks with less of a wingspan than he ever wanted to see on him (but at least he had his wings), or maybe it was because it was another reminder that a world without villains (and heroes) still wasn’t peaceful. Maybe it was because he was sick of all these strangers strutting into his life with familiar faces and spiritless eyes that Midoriya recognized far too well.

Regardless of why, Midoriya sniffled loudly as he lifted his face to stare at Yamada Hizashi, who stared right back.

“...Izuku?” he said, breathless in a way that Midoriya has never heard this him before. In his world, he would say Present Mic only said that when he was suddenly concerned, and this Yamada Hizashi was not Present Mic.

It was strange to think that his (not) teacher could be so quiet or so caught off-guard. He imagines it has to do with the fact that he had found Midoriya’s cross-dressing ass crying in a dingy alleyway. Actually, the longer he thought about that, the more it made sense that the older man was confused. Right, on Present Mic, it would be concerned. On this man, the stranger who shares his features, it was confused.

Still, he sniffled again, and wiped at his eyes. He stood up, and tried to force a smile.

“Ah, I messed up,” he sighed, and looked up at the man. He scrubbed at his face once more and straightened up, “And I lost my bag.”

The blond stared at him for another moment and then spoke again, “Well, the bar’s just down the way. Go get a change of clothes from there.”

One day, he thinks that Midoriya won’t hide his tears and run into his arms to cry instead. He thinks that probably because, when those green eyes landed on him, he thought that Midoriya would run to him and rely on him or something.

Which would be dumb, who would rely on a deadbeat host like him? Fuck, Aizawa didn’t trust him to feed the cats, Shirakumo laughed him out of the apartment when offered to cook once, and they still don’t know where Kayama lives, and they’ve all known each other since middle school. The thought that the dumb high schooler who doesn’t know how to keep his ass out of trouble would rely on him should have him reeling back in disgust.

But at the same time, the bitter taste of disappointment remained. It hollowed out a part inside of him, and it panged to remind him that he was empty. It was faint, like smelling the lingering scent of perfume right before he tosses his clothes into his wash, but it was there.

And he didn’t know what to do with that thought.

-

“...So, is this what you’re into?” Yamada eventually asked.

“Please shut up,” Midoriya replied back, hiding his face in his hands.

“It’s fine,” the blond lifted his hands up, “I think it’s hot.”

“Oh my god,” Midoriya moaned into his hands.

But that expression from before was gone now. His bloodshot eyes, no doubt from how hard he was rubbing at his eyes, were the only inclination that he had cried at all. Yamada was glad that he could at least do this.

Midoriya huffed, an exasperated smile on his face, and Yamada was relieved to see it. The world would be dark place if the sun stopped shining.

“So, why were you in this anyways?”

“Ah, it was a part of the job.”

“...A job,” Yamada kept his voice light but his head spun.

...Midoriya needed money?

No, he supposes that makes sense. Dabi and Shigaraki pretty much have no income, and he can’t imagine (with how often Midoriya does get into trouble) that their hospital bills could be considered affordable. He’s seen how much they could eat, had to pay that bill once or twice, and the thought makes the world slow down around him.

Kids, especially growing children, were expensive.

“...If you needed money, why didn’t you just take some more shifts?” he asked.

Midoriya blinked back and looked down at his hands in his lap. The smile he had turned somber and Yamada almost regrets asking.

“...Ah, they’re not really… paying me with money,” he said. “I needed something from them, so it just sort of ended up like this.”

Yamada just stared at him. What did that even mean?

When their eyes caught each other, Midoriya wilted a little, but didn’t budge.

Of all the things that Yamada wanted to be when he grew up, he never thought ‘reliable’ would be one of them. On occasion, he missed who he used to be, a person who was satisfied with the people he had and the people he was with.

Because the distance between him and Midoriya was painful.

### Gentle’s (attempted) Gratitude

“G-Good morning!”

Midoriya jerked before he came to a stop. Next to him, Bakugo’s back started to tense tightly as he glared down at the man who stopped them.

“Good… morning?”

“Stop seducing old men. We’re going to be late to school,” Bakugo said, his eyes never leaving the stranger.

“W-What do you mean seducing?” Midoriya gasped back, his face turning bright red. “Kacchan, I’m sure that’s not it at all.” He turned back to the taller man. “Is there something wrong?”

“N-not at all!” the man replied, and Midoriya felt like he should know this man. It was starting to gnaw at him, “I truly apologize for bothering you, but I thought it was fate that we were to meet again.”

This time, the blond next to him actually growled, but the man didn’t make any show that he noticed.

“I’m really grateful for your help the other day. It’s not much but,” he produced a small envelope towards him, “I didn’t think it would be right to abandon someone who had helped me so kindly.”

Midoriya lifted his hand up and pushed the envelope back towards the man.

“It’s kindness because you don’t owe anyone afterwards,” he said. “I’m glad that you’re alright though.” He gave a polite bow, and waved goodbye with a bright smile, “See you around!” He turned to his friend, “Let’s go, Kacchan.”

The blond gave one last scathing look towards the stranger before he turned to follow Midoriya out.

Tobita Danjuro stared after his receding back, thinking that the world was a much brighter place than he initially realized.

### Tamaki \*Plans for the future

“You… want to become a policeman?”

“Yeah,” Tamaki said. His face turned pink as he looked away, “It doesn’t suit me at all, does it?”

Looking at Tamaki now, Midoriya would never think that.

“No,” he said. “You’ll be a great hero.”

“...I said I wanted to be a policeman.”

“And you’ll be great at that too.”

Tamaki looked at Midoriya, a hundred times more confident than the Takami he remembered, and he laughed, long and loud and proud.

It was a sound that made his eyes well up.

A world where there are no heroes is a world where Tamaki holds his head up high. Midoriya isn’t sure what to do with that conclusion.

### Hawks \*Bird & Thunder

“You have a nice face but a twisted personality, huh?” Midoriya asked, he didn’t get a chance to get close to Hawks before everything exploded back into his face, but he really didn’t think that the man was like this. Granted, he’s certain that anyone would say that about him and Deku-kun.

“...Then, why did you agree to come over?” Takami asked quietly.

“...Honestly?” Midoriya replied back, and when his sharp eyes cut a line from the ground to his face, he was shocked that he didn’t start bleeding. “You looked like you didn’t want me to leave.”

Takami stilled, and Midoriya grinned back.

“So I stayed.”

-

When Takami was a child, his parents died in a sudden car accident. It was a bad mix between a rainy day and a drunk-driver. It left him an orphan, with a hole in his heart where his parents used to be, and an unshakable annoyance of the ‘pitter-patter’.

No, he was afraid, wasn’t he? It was like he never grew up, and the gods made it rain just so they could remind him that he was still that seven year old who lost everything. Scared of rain? As he grew older, he just became annoyed.

But he was an attractive man. And the only thing that made attractive men even more attractive was putting him in the suit, in the rain.

So really, after all those shoots, you would think that he was accustomed and fine now. It doesn’t bother him. A little rain doesn’t even phase him. It’s nothing, like his parents, like that driver.

Like Midoriya.

### Stray Bird

-

“Oh yeah, Hawks,” Midoriya said, coming back into the room. He reached into his bag and pulled out a small envelope. “This is for you?”

“Hm? My, I love gifts,” Takami said, crossing the living room in an instant. He took the envelope with an easy smile, wondering what it could be, and his entire body froze when he saw what was inside the envelope.

“You pretty much live here anyways,” Midoriya replied back, “Lemme know what kind of curry you want for dinner, okay?”

“No more curry!” Shigaraki yelled back from where ever he was, further in the apartment.

“Wow, now he can hear me, huh?” Midoriya deadpanned, looking towards the direction that the voice sounded from. Distracted by that, however, he completely missed the expression that crossed on Takami’s face as he regarded the key in the envelope.

“...You sure?” he asked quietly.

“You’re here enough anyways,” Midoriya said, without looking back at him. “This way we can go back to locking the windows again.”

Takami didn’t know what kind of expression he was making at the moment, but his face hurts from how much he smiled afterwards.

Officially, he moved in the next day, much to Dabi’s and Shigaraki’s combined vexation.

### Housemate #4(?)

“Alright, let’s lay down some ground rules,” Shigaraki said.

On the other side of the table, Dabi looks just as imposing with his arms crossed over his chest and a firm frown on his face. Midoriya finds relief on how well they were all getting along, and how comfortable they were that they were emoting now too.

“First of all, you gotta chip in for the rent-”

“-You guys don’t pay rent.”

Shigaraki paused and he turned to Midoriya, who was blowing on the hot rice before putting the spoonful into his mouth. He chewed, and realizing that the conversation stopped, looked up innocently.

“What?” he asked.

“Well, then you gotta chip in for the food,” Dabi jumped into the conversation.

“You guys don’t pay for the groceries either,” the youngest at the table said. He went for the soup next, giving a happy hum as he bit into the vegetables. “Oh, wow, the radish came out really nicely.” He remained ignorant to the dry looks that Dabi and Shigaraki was sending him, and Hawks bit down on his lips to keep from bursting into laughter.

“Well, I guess you’ll have to do chores and shit,” Shigaraki decided on, and right before Midoriya could say anything, Dabi stuffed his mouth with another radish.

“If it’s delicious then eat it quietly,” he growled out, and then, a sickenly sweet smile came onto his face, promising nothing but death and retribution. “Okay, Izuku?”

And in the face of the thinly veiled threat, Midoriya giggled

“Yes sir,” he said through a mouthful of vegetables.

The sight should have been disgusting, but no one would have guessed that from the look on Dabi’s face.

He chewed through his food and gave a warm smile at Hawks, completely ignoring the others at the table.

“As long as you clean up your mess, don’t destroy my books, and eat everything that’s given to you, you can stay as long as you need to.”

And since he gave his word, and no amount of grouching from Shigaraki or pouting from Dabi would change his mind.

“Sounds great,” Takami said, “I probably make the most out of everyone here.”

And the face his roommates made, all of them, when he showed them his pay, had him laughing till he cried.

-

Takami is a handsome man, and he knows it. There aren’t many people that could look at his flawlessly handsome features and not give in to his demands.

“Maa, Izuku, do you want help with that?”

He reached over and grabbed the plates out of his hands. He relished in how that surprised look became a smile and happily trotted off. With a killer grin, he took it to the kitchen where Dabi was washing them. The scalding look that he gave him made his grin widen, if that was at all possible.

“Get that smile off your face before I melt it off.”

“Nah, you wouldn’t,” Takami shot back, “Izuku likes it too much.”

Dabi scoffed at that, “Don’t call him that.”

“Why not? He doesn’t mind.”

His jaw clenched hard, and Takami relished it. In another world, he would be the one under Dabi’s thumb, but here, things were different.

Here, in this apartment, they were almost friends.

### Hawks & Scars \*

Somewhere, deep in his mind, it made sense that Midoriya would have his own share of scars. People aren’t as strong, and aren’t as fluidly-trained like Midoriya was, if they didn’t need to be. Typically, if you needed to be strong, it was because there were some excruciating circumstances that led up to that.

But there was a clear gap between logic and reality, because Hawks freezes where he stands when he catches Midoriya’s foot. The young man had limped into their flat, and Shigaraki took one look at him before firmly telling him to “stay right the fuck there” and “do not get blood on the goddamn carpet”.

Still, Shigaraki was pale as he rushed to the bathroom for their first-aid kit. Dabi, abandoning his book on the couch, wandered into the kitchen to grab a bottle of water for him before helping him sit down. With his legs towards their tiled entrance, he sat down on the carpet with a long sigh. Evidently, he was tired.

However, he wasn’t too tired that he didn’t give Takami a small smile and a wave, and asked how he was.

“Doing fucking peachy, unlike you,” Shigaraki snapped out as he finally returned. He had the first-aid kit and two small towels. He threw the towels at Dabi, who caught it without looking, and squeezed by Midoriya to kneel in front of him. “What did you do?”

Midoriya gave a little laugh, like there was nothing wrong at all, and reached for the kit. “I got it, don’t worry-”

“Just shut up and tell me what you did,” Shigaraki said. “I’m taking your shoe off.”

“It’s ugly-”

Despite everything, Shigaraki’s hands were gentle as he undid all of Midoriya’s laces slowly, pulling them to ease his injured foot out as slowly as possible. Still, Midoriya didn’t even bat an eyelid even as the disgusting “slurch” sounded. His formally white socks were soaked in a violent red, and the stench of it reached Hawks from where he stood a few feet away.

Dabi and Shigaraki visibly recoiled.

“It just looks that bad-”

“What did you do?” Dabi asked, squinting at it.

“Stepped on some glass-”

“You tried to amputate your foot with glass,” Shigaraki pitched in, as though to clarify. He moved his hand up to his face, disgust written all over his face. “Fucking christ, don’t you need to go to the hospital?”

Midoriya shrugged, like he didn’t know the answer, and added, “I mean. I guess it stings a little. To be honest, I didn’t realize that it was bleeding so badly until I dropped something and I realized the trail I left behind-”

“You were just, trailing blood? How long were you walking?”

The young man, a freshman in high school, opened his mouth to reply, and his eyes flickered up to the contorted expression that Shigaraki had. His eyes softened and he gave a small smile.

“Don’t worry, I’m fine,” he said. “It just bled alot.”

Takami never considered himself a queasy person, and could handle gore-movies (both being in them and watching them). But he was uncomfortable with the easy attitude that Midoriya held about all of this when he could smell the blood across the distance.

“Doesn’t it hurt?” he asked, unable to help himself.

“...Honestly? Not really,” Midoriya said. “There's just a lot of blood because I got caught by-” he cut himself off, but they heard it clear as day.

“...You-”

“It’s fine,” Midoriya said. “I dealt with them. They’re fine,” he said, answering questions that they didn’t ask. He shook his head, “I promise I’m fine. It just looks bad.”

They looked pointedly at him and then to his sock.

Shigaraki pulled off the thing, and Hawks watched in sick-fascination as the fabric resisted it and stuck to the wounds. Something clinked, falling to the floor, and they stared at the nail.

There was another pause.

“Oops.”

“Izuku-” Dabi sucked in a deep breath.

“What the fuck-” Shigaraki hissed.

“Look, I can explain-” Midoriya tried.

And all Takami could see was the webbing of scars coating his ankle like a bracelet. There was a mess of healing flesh, overlapping awkwardly and encompassing the extent of his feet, and Takami suddenly felt cold in his realization that he doesn’t know anything about Midoriya.

### Burning Apartment

Midoriya Izuku could just hear Iida yelling at him. It doesn't matter where they are, some things don’t change at all. Against the crackling fire and soft cries for help, it’s a wonderful soundtrack.

The apartment was burning up, but when he heard those screams for a child indoors, he moved without thinking about it. And so, after throwing his bag at Bakugo, he ran up the stairs without much more thought other than that someone was up here, unable to get out of a life-threatening situation.

So naturally, he ran to save them.

“It’s okay!” he yelled out, “I am here! Don’t worry! Someone is here to help you! So just hold on!”

-

-

“

### Hospital

Midoriya was avoiding hospitals for a reason, you see. The more people that began to gravitate into his life, the harder he tried to avoid this place.

“...You tried to kill yourself before?”

He regretted opening his eyes on that day, but this was something that he had to face. He knew that. Even if this wasn’t his body, and this wasn’t his world, and those weren’t his choices, this was still the reason why he was here. With that in mind, he took a deep breath and turned his head to his newest guest.

Next to him, Jin’s hands trembled on the bed, right where they were making paper cranes. The assortment of colorful paper that his friend brought it scattered across the white sheets. Would it have killed Bakugo to wait the two minutes it would have taken him to get Jin out of here? He really didn’t need this in his life right now.

“...Yeah,” he said, never one to run.

“Not… not just once either, right?” the blond asked, his voice shaking.

And Midoriya, who has never learned how to lie to him, said, “Yeah.”

Bakugo stared at him, and closed his eyes. He took a deep, slow breath, and Midoriya was again reminded that this wasn't his. He would like, if at all possible, for his Bakugo and this Bakugo to meet, and hopefully teach his Bakugo some breathing lessons. He really, really needed it.

“You fucking shithead,” Bakugo said, sitting down heavily in the chair next to his bed. He buried his face into his hands. “Jesus fucking christ.”

“...It’s okay, Kacchan,” Midoriya said quietly, “I’m here. You don’t have to worry about that anymore.”

“That’s not something a guy in the hospital should be saying.”

If he could, he would reach out and rub his back. He would let him know that he was okay now and that he wouldn’t try that anymore. But he couldn’t.

He wasn’t this Bakugo’s Midoriya.

### Izuku meets Enji and it goes about as well as planned

Izuku stared at the screen, placed his head in his hands and took a deep, long breath. This was okay, right? His teacher would forgive him, right? In a place like this, they need a Symbol of Peace, and since he was supposed to inherit that title anyways, this was okay, right? It was fine, right?

Whatever, what was done is done. He had no choice now.

Flipping through his discharge papers, however, he wondered how the fuck he was going to pay for tuition now, and wondered if he really needed to dip into his savings. He really hoped not. Whoever sent him into the hospital, he wants to go and beat the shit out of-

“Everything is already paid for.”

“...What?”

“Yes, someone has come and already paid the total fee up front.”

Midoriya’s head reeled at the information, and the first thing he thought was oh god, Dabi killed someone and brought that money in so to make sure that Midoriya wouldn’t die trying to pay off these bills. What a great guy. Except not. Good thoughts. Shit actions. Midoriya wheezed a little.

Someone died so that he could live? No, that went against everything he stood for. Surely, Dabi wouldn’t do that…

But he knew that Spinner would.

He groaned, and sighed.

“Do you know who? So that I can at least thank them?”

The receptionist gave him a small smile and nodded. “It says here that it was paid off by… the Todoroki Estate.”

Midoriya’s jaw dropped and his eyes bugged out.

Were he and Todoroki that close? No way, that wasn’t likely.

“I’m really sorry, but I need to make sure the line keeps moving…”

Midoriya snapped out of it and then nodded, “Ah, sorry about that,” he said. And left the area.

He couldn’t belive it. Todoroki paid off his entire hospital bill? In one go? He knew that his classmate was rich and well-off, but he didn’t think that he would waste it on Midoriya. Well, he better go thank the guy and make sure he understands to never do this again since it was such a waste of money-

“Excuse me, Midoriya Deku-kun?”

He turned over his shoulder and nearly swallowed his tongue as the man named Endeavor, Todoroki’s father, stepped forward in his intimidating suit and no flames and Midoriya honestly didn't know who this was for a moment.

“I would like to have a word with you." It was not a suggestion.

Oh fuck. Midoriya thought. It wasn’t Todoroki, his quiet classmate, but Todoroki, his father, who paid for his hospital bills, didn’t he? The business tycoon that looks as big as one of his buildings.

He would have much rather it have been the younger one. Any of them.

-

“H-Hello,” he said, so nervous that he feels like he will land himself back into the hospital.

“I would rather you didn’t,” Endeavor, except not Endeavor because he was in a sharp business suit, said and Midoriya wanted to hit himself, how could he have said that aloud.

“Haha…” he wanted to cry.

“Don’t be so nervous, I just wanted to… chat with you.”

Midoriya didn’t know anything about this Endeavor aside from the things that Todoroki-kun (the youngest) said and based on what Todoroki-kun (the eldest) didn’t do.

“I see.”

“One of my sons has… escaped my radar,” he said. “And I learned that he was living in an apartment with you.”

Endeavor was a shit dad, he knew this. He’s always known this. It seemed that it was a constant of some sort, because he was someone who was incredibly strong and successful in the things that he wanted to do and being a dad wasn’t one of them.

It took All Might falling to change this man. It took the end of an era for him to change his mind and his attitude and at least try. And thinking of that, the pain of old wounds and the pain of healing wounds, he looked at Endeavor.

“...I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You’re not a fool. You think I wouldn’t know about the child who outranked my son in the High School rankings?”

“I didn’t think you cared about your kids at all,” Midoriya said before he could stop himself.

Endeavor, very, very, very slowly turned his full attention back to him. Unlike the Endeavor he grew up watching on television, this Endeavor did not burst into flames.

Still, the area around them felt hotter. It could just be his anxiety.

“...Is that so? Did Touya say that?”

“No,” Midoriya said, shaking his head, “Not at all. It was an observation, but I’m glad to see that I’m wrong.” His hands were trembling, but he did his best to keep his stare level and not burst into tears.

“Then, I suppose you wouldn’t mind returning him back to me. I would like to keep my family together.”

Endeavor slid an envelop to him. Opening it up, Midoriya saw the receipt for his hospital bill and felt his heart stutter.

No way.

“I heard your father is on an extended business trip. It must be hard to work for a small company that doesn’t have enough manpower to match their ambition. I can’t imagine how hard it must be for him to continue supporting your lifestyle across the sea.”

No, no, no. Endeavor would… He wouldn’t.

But the truth was right in front of him, and he didn’t realize that he could still be disappointed until this moment.

“...You’re a smart boy,” Endeavor said, his voice deep and clear. “You understand what I mean, right?”

No one knows this, because no one cares to notice this, but Dabi hates clear skies. He pulls the blinds closed and he avoids it at all cost. But just last month, they all went on a picnic and he mentioned that he was glad the weather was so nice. Looking at the crystal blue eyes staring him down across the way, he understands why.

“I would rather be in debt than sell another human being,” he said. Instead of thinking about what he was saying, who he was saying it too, he instinctively chose to protect the guy he found in the rain that one time, all those months ago. “The debts that I have are mine. Thank you for your generous offer, but I will find my own way.”

“...Then, your shift starts at 7 AM sharp at the main headquarters in Tokyo,” Endeavor said. He stood up, and pulled on his suit lapels, even though it wasn’t even rumpled. “And you will work under me until you pay off your hospital bill.”

With that, Midoriya received the receipt of his awful hospital bill. The older man left, clearly having better things to do now that he was done. And Midoriya realized that he had paid for their meagre coffee. Swallowing the bitter tang in his mouth, he made it out of the cafe and down the street before his eyes caught on it.

ENDEAVOR Corporations.

### New job \*admittance

“I got a new job,” Midoriya announced at the dinner table as he passed out the bowls of curry. “So I might be coming home late.”

“...Another job?” Dabi asked.

“Are you finally quitting that fucking host club?” Shigaraki asked, more than happy about the possibility.

“Eh? Ah no, it’s… It’s more like I owe a favor, really” Midoriya said, not quite able to admit that he was working for Endeavor, and it was to pay off hospital bills. He somehow didn’t think that these two would take it so well.

Especially not Dabi. And he was making great lengths than the man he found in the rain all those months ago. Shigaraki and Dabi almost felt like friends now too, so he would protect this.

There was a pause, and the two briefly exchanged glances.

“You get in trouble again?” Dabi asked, his narrowed eyes squinting at their roommate.

Midoriya shrugged, “I’m actually almost out of it,” he said, trying his best not to lie through his teeth.

### Temp slavery

Midoriya once worked under Endeavor. It was a long time ago, but he treasured those memories.

Working under Todoroki Enji was like working under Endeavor, except they weren’t saving civilians from villains and terrible accidents. So if anything, the pace was slower than he remembered, but no less rigorous. The reports that came were heavy duty and needed a lot of attention to detail.

After several jobs that only needed manual labor, and a very dull schoolwork, Midoriya was more than happy to have something to challenge him mentally. Ecstatic at the challenge, Midoriya dove right in.

-

Hours were rough. He went to school to sleep, and then came straight to Endeavor’s office to work until it was late at night. Some nights, he worked until morning light at the UA Host Club, and most nights he barely made it home to eat dinner with his kind and considerate roommates.

“...You look like shit,” Shigaraki said as soon as he came in.

“Thanks, glad to see you too,” Midoriy replied, yawning as he stumbled into the kitchen. “That smells great.”

“...Go take a shower,” Shigaraki scowled back, wrinkling his nose, “You smell like shit.”

“Yesss sirrrr,” Midoriya drawled out, yaning one more time as he walked towards the bathroom.

“Oh, welcome back,” Dabi greeted, his blue eyes narrowing at the sight of him. “You look like shit.”

“Thanks, Dabi,” Midoriya deadpanned as he grabbed a bathrobe and headed into the bathroom. He’ll probably wear real clothes once he comes out, but right now, shower.

When he gets out of the bath, they would eat dinner together. Even though it was two in the morning. Because they all came from families where no one waited for the other, and refused to listen to Midoriya’s quiet suggestions.

He never knew how nice it was for someone to just ignore his feelings. It was nostalgic.

### Hawks & Mido \*to be selfish

“Isn’t it fine?! It’s okay to be selfish!! It’s okay to put yourself first!” Hawks said, nearly yelling in his face.

Midoriya wasn’t personally ever close to Hawks. They’ve eaten together once while he was still a Pro, and have never shared the same space longer than an hour. They’ve never talked to each other privately. Of course, he respected the man and had the honor to watch him work a few times, but that was the extent of it. He’s pretty sure that Hawks had only used his Hero name, if that.

In a really distant kind of way, Midoriya thought that it was a little funny to be told this by the man who was reared to be a hero.

“You’re right, it’s fine. There’s nothing wrong with living how you want,” Midoriya said, slapping his hands away, “This is my selfish way of living.”

“...You’re crazy.”

Yeah, the Takami in front of him could say that.

### Todoroki Dinner

“Izuku.”

Midoriya looked over where Todoroki stared back.

“...Do you wanna come over for dinner?”

He blinked back. What?

“Today?”

His friend nodded.

“...And Kacchan?” he couldn’t help but ask.

“No,” Todoroki replied back, and after a brief second, spoke up again to clarify further, “Just you.”

He gave a confused noise, and Todoroki looked down at the ground. He took a deep, slow breath, before he straightened. Turning to fully face Midoriya, uncaring about the fact that they were standing in the middle of the sidewalk, he dipped his head just a little bit forward into a bow. Like this, he pleaded.

“Please.”

“Oh, sorry, I was just surprised. You don’t have to do that,” Midoriya said, snapping out of it. He didn’t like to see his friends humble themselves like that, not for him, not for this. “But uhm, I don’t mind, but are you sure?”

He made a motion to his split lip and black eye.

“I’m not… really uh… guest material.”

“...I want my family to meet my friend.”

Midoriya felt his heart ache.

He’s never been able to say no to people. How could he start now?

-

The Todoroki Estate was just as big and intimidating as he remembered. His memory could be a little fuzzy, since he’s only been here a handful of times before there was nothing left of this place at all, but from what he did remember, it was nostalgic.

“... Are you crying?”

He almost flinched out of his skin and spun to where Shoto stared at him in horrified shock. Coming to, probably the wrong conclusion, he crumpled into guilt.

“...S-sorry, I didn’t realize that you-”

“No, no no,” Midoriya said, raising his hands and shaking his head furiously. He scrubbed at his eyes and gave a grin, “It’s just a really nice place. You have a… a really nice place.”

Shoto frowned at him, and he calmed down a little more.

“Sorry, I… what I meant to say was…”

He looked at Todoroki, eyes a little wet as he grinned.

“Thanks for,” being alive, being here, being strong enough to trust, being kind enough to reach out after a lifetime of hurt, “inviting me over.”

His friend (it was okay, right? They were friends, right? Even if he was to go away and Deku-kun came back, they would be friends from then on, but right now, they were friends, weren’t they?) stared at him for another moment and then nodded.

“...Thanks for coming over,” Shoto said, a small and shy smile gracing his lips. He pulled the door open and took a deep breath to call out, “I’m back.”

“Oh! Shoto, welcome back! And… and is this your friend?”

Fuyumi is as beautiful as ever. It could be because she looks absolutely overjoyed or maybe it was just because she was alive and it was a sight for sore eyes, Midoriya isn’t certain.

And then, from the back, he heard her.

“Ara? Shoto brought a friend over?”

And Todoroki Rei, without hospital machines attached to her and without any assistance, stands with a wide smile on her face. She’s not as thin as he remembers her, filling out instead of standing like a hollow skeleton.

“Welcome! I’m Shoto’s Mom, go ahead and just call me ‘kaa-san’,” she said, energetic in a way he’s never seen her before. If he’s not careful, he was going to lose all control over his tear-ducts. He took a deep breath, forcing himself to breath. “I hope you don’t mind Mapo Tofu.”

Even her voice sounded kind.

“Izuku always eats spicy food with Bakugo. I don’t think our regular is spicy enough for him,” Shoto said, taking his shoes off and stepping into the foyer.

“Is that so? Alright, I’ll keep that in mind for next time. But come on in, Izuku-kun, was it?”

In a world where there are no heroes and villains, Todoroki Rei is the warmest member of the Todoroki Household, and Midoriya thinks that the sound of her laugh filled in at the cracks of his breaking heart, widening the cracks with her kindness.

“...Izuku?”

Midoriya jerked back to the present and took a deep breath. He didn’t want to look at them, since it was painful. But he didn’t know the next time he would see them, so he wanted to burn this into his memory and hold it in his heart and to death.

“...Izuku, are you okay?”

His eyes found Shoto’s worried, heterochromatic eyes, unmarred by scars and young, and dropped his gaze to the ground. He took a shuddering breath. He was his friend.

Idiot. Way to make a first impression, he chided himself. Now they’re going to think that Shoto is friends with some freak. And they’re not wrong, but he didn’t want them to think that from the get go.

“Sorry, I guess I’m more tired than I thought,” he said quietly.

It was a shitty excuse at best, but more than excuses, he wanted to put his best step forward. Can’t change the past, gotta keep going forward. He straightened to give a polite bow, falling into a familiar pattern while he tried to recenter himself.

“Hello, my name is Midoriya Izuku. Thank you for having me today.”

“Oh, no need to be so stiff!” Rei said brightly, thankfully moving on from his initial hiccup, “Come on in! You can hang your jacket wherever. Go wash your hands and let’s eat dinner!”

Shoto took his jacket from him, and he smiled in his gratitude. He took his shoes off and trailed after his friend, thankful that (even though it was a little weird for him to do this) Shoto didn’t stray more than a foot away from him. His constant presence, as painful as it could be at times, was a blessing in these moments.

By the time he got to the bathroom, he felt a little better. Cold water helped. His hands trembled a little, and he hoped that he no one would notice. And if he did, maybe he could lie and say that he was cold or something.

-

“Oh, you’re Shoto’s friend? Nice to meet you.”

His head spun. Natsuo, with his arms attached to him, looked at him. His hand was extended towards him, to shake his hand, and Midoriya got lost in his good health

There were no scars, there was no injury, he was whole and had two eyes and this couldn’t be Natsuo. He was there when they had to put pieces of him in a body bag. He was there. He was one of the first people to respond to that call, and he was the one who had to break the news to the rest of the Todorokis. But right now, in front of him, with a small smile on his face, was undeniably Todoroki Natsuo.

He never got used to this. He’s been here for a few years now, right? He still wasn’t used to this. Why wasn’t he used to this? He should have known better.

His eyes watered, and Natsuo’s eyes were so clear and wide that he could see his own reflection tearing up. The college student leaned back, his eyes darting to his brother for help, but Midoriya swears that he won’t fuck this up.

With that said, he all but threw his hand forward, clattering his chopsticks against his rice bowl, but he grabbed an awkward handful of Natsuo’s fingers.

“N-Nice to meet you,” he said, his voice embarrassingly high-pitched.

One day, they could laugh about this, and he swears that he’ll protect the unseen “One Day”.

“Uh yeah,” Natsuo said, awkwardly shaking his hand (or maybe he was shaking it off? He didn’t know), and Midoriya had to remind himself to let go of those warm fingers. “You uh… good?”

“Yeah, the uh, the Mapo tofu is just spicy,” he lied. He tried to lie.

He couldn’t really taste the food, in reality. He just felt as though the whole world was mocking him, but he was so grateful for it, if only because he got to see the Todoroki’s again.

Shoto, who was much better at reading him in this world than he was comfortable with, said, “Natsuo-nii, we have more in the kitchen. Do you want me to get it for you?”

“Huh? Ah nah, don’t worry about it. I got it,” he said. His eyes flickered from Deku to his brother and then his mother.

“You’re going to join us?”

Midoriya sounded way too hopeful for a friend coming over for dinner.

“Of course he will. It’s rare for Shouto to bring friends home,” Fuyumi said, a pleasant smile on her face as Natsuo’s lips twisted upwards into an awkward grin of his own.

And then, the door opened and he froze.

Wait, wait one minute. Someone else? And then, he wanted to hit himself in his stupidity as Endeavor came walking in. He was so stuck and shocked in the fact that all the Todoroki’s he remembered meeting sat together and ate together and were together-healthy mostly sane and alive\*that he had totally and completely forgot that this man was his employer.

“We have a guest… Midoriya?”

He stared at the man who stared right back at him.

And then, staring at him, Todoroki said, “You know him, Izuku?”

“Uh.”

“Deku?” Endeavor rolled the world in his mouth like it was something he didn’t want to eat. “You?” He narrowed his eyes at him.

Oh no, Midoriya realized suddenly, he never introduced himself as Izuku to Endeavor, did he? And since Endeavor was official and played by the law, he knew that the lawful name for this body was Deku.

“Yes sir,” he said weakly. “That’s me.”

“Izuku is our guest,” Rei said, speaking up. Her face was peaceful but her tone was cold, “We should treat him with respect, and call him by his name.”

Midoriya jerked at that, and wondered if it’s okay to prey on someone’s kindness like this. It feels shameless, and looking at Endeavor’s face, doesn’t want to be another reason why people shouldn’t like him. He doesn’t want to be the reason why this family doesn’t get along.

“Ah, no it’s okay. It’s like a… street name for me,” he said. Shoto shot him a look across the table, and he laughed, cringing at how awkward he sounded. “A-anyways, nice to meet you again, Todoroki-san,” he said at last. “I’m glad that we are finally meeting on better terms.”

“You guys met before?” Natsuo asked, frowning. It was clear that they were all trying to figure out when and where a guy like Endeavor would meet Shoto’s friend, and couldn’t figure it out.

But that was fine.

“Yes, he helped me out of a bad situation,” Midoriya said, truthful and honest because that’s how he felt at first, even if the feeling didn’t last for long. “And it saved me from another hospital bill.”

The look on Endeavor’s face told him that this was a man who was fine with being the villain. He recognized it, and the sight of it made him feel nostalgic and sad, all at once.

“Did he pay you to say that?” Shoto asked.

The familiarity of the words, coupled with the drastic differences in setting, had Midoriya laughing back.

“No, of course not. Do I seem like that kind of person?” Midoriya asked, shoulders shaking. To his relief, Shoto accepted his words then. Figuring that he averted this trainwreck, he turned to Rei, “The mapo tofu is delicious,” he said.

“...Are you going to eat or just stand there?” Shoto asked Endeavor, eyes sliding up to him for a brief second before looking down at the plate.

The man straightened at the words while his family stared in shock. It was the closest thing to an invitation from his family he had ever received, Midoriya is certain. Still, after a beat of silence, Fuyumi clapped her hands together and tried to stand up.

“Hey, let me get it for you-”

“It’s fine, Fuyumi. I… I can get it myself.”

-

Just like that, the dinner started.

“So, Izuku-kun,” Rei said, turning the attention to him, “How did you meet Shoto?”

He stared at her for a moment, his mind reeling. He should lie, right? He should lie? He and Shoto should have coordinated a story before they came in, shouldn’t they?

“We met in the street,” he said, assuming that it would be better if they didn’t say the whole truth. “And it turned out that we liked the same flavor of ice cream.”

“After he pummeled me and Bakugo’s asses in an alleyway,” Shoto added, almost fondly.

There was a stiff silence and Midoriya slowly turned to his friend. Why? Why would he find such pride in something like that? Why would he ever say something like that to his family? Even if he didn’t know that he was working for his dad, why would he just sell him out like that? That really isn’t something to be proud of.

“Huh,” Natsuo said, eyeing Midoriya. “You didn’t peg me as a fighter.” He was clearly taking this whole thing much better than Midoriya was, and he wasn’t even there for the incident.

“I’m not that amazing, I just happened to catch Todoroki-kun off guard-”

“He used my own ice against me and by the time I tried to use fire, it backfired hard. When that warehouse caught on fire and everyone else left me behind, he was the one that pulled me out, even though we were just fighting,” he continued. “You should call me Shoto right now,” he added belatedly as he eyed his friend. “We’re all Todorokis here.”

There was a long silence. Midoriya could feel his appetite withering. He wanted to cry. Yes, he did that, but it was different hearing that from his friend as he explained how they met to his parents. Good god, he didn’t ever consider the thought that Todoroki recalled their first meeting with such fondness, but it really, really, really didn’t make him feel any better.

“Shoto, we’ll talk about this afterwards,” Rei said, almost sweetly. To his credit, his friend wasn’t even fazed, and kept eating like there was nothing wrong with the fact that they casually broke several laws and were now best friends and eating with each other’s families.

“Oh wow, that’s amazing!” Fuyumi said. “You must have a really strong quirk, huh?”

A pit opened up in his stomach, and dropped his gaze to his plate. He hadn’t… felt like this in a while. He knew, in his head, that there was nothing to be ashamed of. It wasn’t something he could control. It was, all things considered, a pretty good thing

Still, it weighed on his tongue like lead and he said.

“I’m quirkless.”

He hasn’t needed to say it in a while. And before, the only times he said it was like a weapon. But right now, in the house of his friend, he was just himself.

“...You fended off… Shoto,” Natsuo said slowly, “Without a quirk?”

“I uh…” Midoriya stuttered and stammered, “I was lucky?”

“Lucky enough to win all 18 times we fought?” Shoto said.

“You were unlucky?” the young man tried.

“So, all the wins I’ve had all this time was just luck, huh? I guess I’m just not strong at all.”

“I-I didn’t mean it like that,” Midoriya flustered. “You’re not weak! You’re plenty strong!”

“You were amazing then too. I never would have thought to make a gas bomb to use all the air before I could get to it. I really pay attention in chemistry now, you know.”

“Wait, you said we wouldn’t mention that anymore! And you should be paying attention in class regardless!”

“And I still remember how you broke my arm twice, too.”

“You said it wasn’t broken!”

And in that moment, Midoroya realized that Shoto was smiling. He was doing a crap job hiding it against his bowl, but regardless, he saw it too late. Shit, he thought, he walked right into that one. God, Shoto was teasing him and he fell right for it. Augh. Wasn’t he the older one?

Desperately, he turned to Fuyumi for support. Because a long time ago, she always took his side. But then wasn’t now, and instead, he saw her wide eyes instead.

“Oh!” Fuyumi snapped her fingers, “Shouto’s been in and out of the hospital two years ago. It was you?”

“No one else could,” Shouto said, and if Midoriya dared to think it, sounded proud. Why was he so proud of this? Why was he so happy about this?

“I uh… I think that’s really overestimating me,” Midoriya tried, one last time.

“Izuku’s the top of the top-tier. He’s modest and one hell of a fighter. He’s undefeated in the area.”

Natsuo whistled, and Midoriya stared at Shouto. Shouldn’t he be on his side? But Shouto’s eyes, when he looked at Midoriya, had this incredibly pleased glint in his eyes.

“I’m not undefeated,” he said quietly. “And I’m not that strong, I just… take opportunities as they happen.”

“That’s a formidable quality in a person,” Enji suddenly spoke up, catching everyone off guard.

“...Thank you,” Midoriya dipped his head, out of habit. “I want to use it to help people.”

“...Help them into the hospital,” Shouto tried to clarify.

The expression Midoriya shot his friend could only be described as helpless, but there was something friendly about the entire ordeal that seemed to throw the entire family off. Maybe it was because Enji didn’t mind that his son brought home the reason for his increased hospital visits, maybe it was because Shouto had brought home a friend that he was teasing, or maybe it was because it was the closest thing to a normal family dinner for the Todoroki.

“...Well, I’m glad that you aren’t sending him as often anymore,” Rei said, her voice gentle.

“There’s no point since I know I won’t win,” Todoroki said, looking oddly happy about the whole thing.

Everyone at the table threw a glance at Enji, like they were expecting him to say something, but Midoriya spoke up.

“...If you ever really find a reason to beat me, I think you will,” he said. “It’s just that, when we were fighting, I wanted to win more than you.”

Todoroki stared at him and then nodded.

“Really?” Natsuo deadpanned, “In a fist-fight?”

Midoriya nodded, “Yeah, because Shoto had a lot of people with him, but no one seemed close to him,” he explained curtly, the hot feeling of anger beginning to shimmer as he thought about it, “So I had to win. I had to win so that he didn’t have to be alone anymore.”

There was a long silence as Midoriya lost himself in that moment again, and realizing that they were all just staring at him, flushed again.

“I-It’s a lot more purer than it sounds! Honest!”

The silence was deafening until Enji chuckled. He quickly moved his hand up to cover his mouth, as everyone stared at him like he grew a second head. Still, the older man didn’t seem to notice as he eyed Midoriya across the table.

“A hero complex, indeed.”

“It’s not a complex!” Midoriya squeaked back, feeling his face burn hotly. Seriously? First Shoto and now Enji? They’ve never been like this before, and he spent a lot of time with all the Todoroki in his original timeline.

“Do your folks know about this?” Rei asked, her voice soft like an angel.

He thought about his mom, in another world, and gave a sheepish smile.

“I try not to worry them too much,” he said, rubbing the back of his head, “So I need to get stronger so I don’t worry anyone anymore.”

Fuyumi placed her hands on her chest and sighed deeply, no doubt thinking something highly of him. He couldn’t do it in the last world, but he entertained the thought that it’ll be nice to live up to those expectations until he has to leave.

-

“You don’t have to help with the clean-up,” Rei said, a pleasant smile on her face.

“No, I think it’ll kill Midoriya if he doesn’t help,” Shoto deadpanned. And then, as though recalling something funny, his lips cracked into a small smile, “This is easier for everyone if we just let him do this.”

“I… I’m not that bad…” Midoriya tried, futilely, to defend himself.

Shoto snorted even louder, and passed him some of the plates.

### Koichi the Window-Washer

“I can’t believe I got to meet you again!” the man said, “Wow! And you work under Todoroki-san himself?”

Midoriya smiled back, “I’m glad you’re well,” he said. “I’m just an intern here, but I’ll do my best to live up expectations.”

### Christmas -

-

“I know you’re there,” Midoriya called out. “Chimera-san.”

“You know, with the way you say that, it doesn’t sound like you were the one who called me.”

The young man tipped his head back and took a long, deep breath.

“You’re right. I’m happy,” he deadpanned.

He placed his hand into his pocket and pulled out a small box. Looking back at the older man, he extended the small gift wrapped in a dark green wrapping paper and a dark maroon ribbon. The corners were rumpled, and it was clearly wrapped at home by someone who…

Ah, he eyed the bandages on Midoriya’s fingers. That’s why.

“Merry Christmas,” he said, his expression morphing into something warm.

“I didn’t get you anything.”

“I know.”

The older man scowled back, but felt his chest twist downwards even more. What was this kid’s problem?

Chojuro, more than ever, thought that Midoriya had no idea who he was or what he did. Or at least, the full extent of it. He couldn’t. He eyed the box before he lifted his hand up to accept it, and green eyes shined. With a smile as gentle as the snowfall around them, Midoriya gave him a polite bow before he left.

If he did know, there was no way he would be able to smile at him like that.

Chojuro clutched the box to his chest, and wondered how such a small thing could weigh so much.

Curiosity got the best of him, and he tugged the ribbon apart and ripped through the paper. Carefully, because he didn’t want to leave any evidence that he was ever here, he tucked the trash into his pocket. He’ll throw it away later.

He stared blankly at the box of mints and suppressed a snort. With the hand that he would normally get his cigar out, he popped one of the small mints into his mouth. It was, by no means, a replacement. But with all the twinkling lights and the wrapping weighing in his pocket, he wasn’t looking for a smoke.

Giving a quiet hum, he rolled the mint in his mouth. Perhaps Midoriya had done something to these, or maybe it had been too long since he had a mint, but it released a warmth throughout his chest.

(If his partner was still alive, he would have gaped at the thought that Chojuro trusted someone enough to eat something that they gave him, vacation or not.)

### Near Years \*Concert

They definitely didn’t have a permit for this.

### (January) Liar, Liar \*BakuMido

“...Who are you?”

Something cold settled into Midoriya’s heart at those words. He turned over his shoulder and smiled softly at the spitting image of his childhood friend. Except not, because the last time he saw Kacchan,

“...Kacchan, are you losing your memories already? I-”

“Who the fuck are you?”

His hand came out to grab the front of Midoriya’s shirt, jerking him and forcing him to stare at him.

“I said, ‘who the fuck are you?’ and I want a fucking answer right now.”

Midoriya thinks that this must be a universal constant. The Bakugo who has an unwavering gaze who can see right through him had to be a universal constant. The sight of his red eyes that cut through any bullshit that the world could throw at him was something that he always relied on.

Thank god.

“I… I don’t understand you. You say things even though they’ve never happened. You call me that stupid name. You show up one day and fucking… change everything and make me hang out with those annoying shits and I-”

“But I thought you liked Kirishima-kun and the others?”

“Shut up! I’m not done!”

And as always, when Bakugo yelled, Midoriya’s expression softened and just as always, Bakugo seemed to get even angrier. His grip on Midoriya’s collar tightened as he shook him a little harder.

“And you make that fucking face. What am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to say? Why don’t you talk to me? We’re friends, aren’t we?!”

A few years ago, Midoriya would have wept at the words.

Right now, he felt tired. This wasn't supposed to happen. First of all, Bakugo was saying this to the wrong Midoriya. Couldn’t he wait a little longer so that he could get Deku-kun here instead? Well, he supposed it was fine. And more importantly, he honestly felt a little flattered that Bakugo would say something like this.

“Fucking say something!”

Even if he and his Kacchan are never able to become friends, he hopes that Deku-kun and the Bakugo here could be. He thinks that, if he could give that back to him, he would be forgiven for all the wrongdoings he has done with Deku-kun’s body.

“...If you don’t want to say anything to me, then how can you call us friends?”

Midoriya stared at him for a moment and then smiled back.

This was good. Awful since Midoriya will never be able to take these words back, but good because Bakugo will be fine without him. Safer. Even better because Deku-kun would be okay. They would have each other in a way that he and his Kacchan would never have.

“Kacchan,” he said, “I’ve never called you my friend.”

After all, this wasn’t his Kacchan. This was a Kacchan that looked like his Kacchan. And he added this to the list of things that he needed to apologize to Deku-kun about, because he put that awful expression on Deku-kun’s Bakugo.

The hand on his front fell limp, and Midoriya pushed the hand away from him. He looked away, rubbing the back of his neck and keeping his eyes away. He didn’t have any fond memories of Bakugo, either of them, but he didn’t want this to be a memory. He didn’t want to remember this expression, especially if this is one of the last time he will see it.

“You get it, now right? Sorry about this and stuff, I really wanted to keep this up until we graduated,” he lied. He didn’t know what would happen actually. But looking at Kacchan like this always made him feel bad.

“You know, it took me some time, but I’ve been watching you for a while.”

He tilted his head to the side and Bakugo’s eyes were so sharp that Midoriya was surprised he didn’t get cut.

“You rubbed the back of your neck when you told that little girl that you weren’t hungry. You rubbed the back of your neck when you told Round-Face that you were going to go to the bathroom when you ditched class instead. You… you only rub your neck when you’re lying.”

His heart stopped for a second, his smile slipping off his face as he stared at Bakugo.

“And I guess that’s what you really look like, huh?” he asked, those red eyes piercing straight through him.

Another universal constant must be that he could not escape Bakugo’s gaze. His eyes would always find him.

“Whoever you are,” Bakugo said, “I don’t care.” This caught Midoriya by surprise, and his eyes widened accordingly. “And I don’t really care what happened to Deku. Since, the person that called out to me and annoyingly stuck to me since then was you,” the blond continued.

He jutted his chin out, his red eyes shining as a grin befitting of a Bakugo came onto his face. He took a step forward, and looked absolutely delighted when Midoriya took a step back.

“So bring it, you fucking delinquient. I’ll take all of you as you are, you fucking twig. I’ll make you accept my fucking friendship even if it goddamn kills you.’

“...What?”

Clearly satisfied with the look of fear on Midoriya’s face, he turned on his heel and walked away with a wave, leaving Midoriya to wallow in his confusion.

The new year started in a flurry of emotions, none of which make any sense to him, but he’s certain that it’ll come back to bite him in the ass.

Because, for the first time since he got here, he thought that he would be okay if he stayed.

### (Post)Unwanted Rock Concert \*Enji’s Reaction

“Preposterous,” Enji spat out, the words like acid and it melted the reporter’s expression in front of him.

“P-pardon?”

“You have a question to ask and you’re asking if I’m ashamed of my son?” he asked, voice low and eyes narrowed.

And what were people expecting? Were they expecting him to lose his temper and yell? What were they expecting?

Even the reporter, who asked that question, had no idea.

But for certain, no one would have ever expected Enji to scowl and say what he did say.

“My Shouto is a smart child, of course he is, he is the product of Rei and I’s marriage. You think that he’ll resort to delinquency like this? Of course he’s not! My son is not a delinquent! The fights he picks are the ones that will shape him to be a better man! If he’s a part of a concert, he would have told me and I would be there instead of answering your preposterous questions! Are you done?!”

The reporter opened his mouth, and then closed it.

“Come to think of it, Fuyumi said that she would be cooking a large dinner. I am sure that my well-established and beautiful daughter has dinner waiting for my family tonight. Yes, I understand, you must have a lot of questions, but I am a very busy man I do not have the time to waste with the likes of you.

The reporter turned, very slowly, to the security lining the doors, but they all refused to meet his eyes.

“It’s going to be a grand feast because my other son, Natsuo will be there. He has a long list of accomplishments, and is well on his way to be a better man than I could ever be. My son…”

And just like that, four hours passed.

-

Shoto covered his face, “That dad of mine,” he sighed.

Midoriya, covering his face in a poor attempt to hide his smile, nodded along.

Next to them, their friends were rolling and slapping the ground in their laughter, all watching the news segment that was trending on the internet and various social media.

“I’m glad that he’s uh…”

“Annoying?”

“I was going to say doting.”

Shoto rolled his eyes. And then shrugged, “Fuyumi-nee mentioned that… she didn’t realize that he even noticed or cared about some of that stuff.”

He did, Midoriya knew but couldn’t say.

“...Do you?” he asked quietly, “Mind?”

His friend looked at the ground, “I think… this time last year, I would have,” he said, watching his ice cream melt in front of him.

Midoriya handed him a napkin, and he took it with a wistful smile.

“...And now?”

The smile he gave the ground was the equivalent to anyone else screaming and cheering, Midoriya was certain. And his friend turned his gentle gaze towards him. It was so painfully familiar that it squeezed the smaller man’s heart at the same time it tried to overwhelm him with nostalgia.

“...I don’t know what you did,” he said, “And I don’t know how you did it. But thank you, Izuku.”

His heart aching, Midoriya managed to smile right back.

“What are you talking about?” he said, “I didn’t do anything.”

Really, he thought, he couldn’t do a goddamn thing.

### Vacation Plans

“..Izuku,” Dabi brought up suddenly. “You’re in high school now.”

“...Yes?” Izuku agreed, hoping that he didn’t sound mocking when he agreed because he was just surprised.

“Don’t you … want to go and do stuff?” Dabi asked, waving his hand carrying the groceries in a really vague manner.

Midoriya looked from the grocery bags and then back to Dabi, “Did I forget something?”

“No, I mean,” the older man cut himself off and looked away.

“It’s not like you to be shy-”

“-who’s being shy-”

“But if there is something you don’t want to talk about, you don’t have to force it.”

Dabi looked as though he swallowed a lemon as he dragged his eyes away from Midoriya and scowled back. Suddenly in a shitty mood, Midoriya’s lips pulled into a frown. He swears that this man has some awful mood swings.

Vaguely, in a voice that was much quieter but still persistent, he wonders if Dabi was like this for the League back in his world too. The thought makes him feel a little lonely, (because if not him, then who listened to him?) until Dabi spoke up again.

“You’re in high school now, so it’s okay if you want to take a break from working so much,” he said quietly.

“If it’s about the burns, I’m fully recover-”

And then, as though frustrated with his own meekness, Dabi spun around and marched right up to him, stopping with only a few feets between them as he shouted out, “It’s not that!”

Midoriya bit his tongue in surprise, and reeled back as Dabi raised his voice. The older man looked surprised too, like he wasn’t expecting to raise his voice. He took a deep breath and shook his head. Awkwardly, he shuffled backwards.

“I… I didn’t mean to yell just…”

“It’s okay,” Midoriya replied back. He stepped closer, eyes warm as he regarded the older man, “Take your time. I’m here.”

Dabi stared at him for a long moment and sighed.

“...Let’s go home,” he said quietly.

The young man with his impossibly clear eyes stared right back -right through him\*before he nodded.

“Okay, let’s go home.”

-

Dabi had a lot going on in his head. It used to be a little easier, back when he hated everything and the whole world could be categorized with hot or cold. It was a little more simple, even if he hated everything. So when he ran out of the house, he went with full intentions on leaving this earth by dawn.

And then Midoriya stood over him, umbrella in hand, and he got a nickname.

Dabi.

And nothing had been the same since.

“I want to return it to you,” Dabi suddenly broke the silence between them, a block in front of the tiny apartment where he learned that home is a warm place. It’s not hot. It’s not cold.

“...Return what?”

“You… I… I don’t think it’s bad… Living anymore,” Dabi said, slowly. He tried to fight off the blush, because he wasn’t embarrassed for feeling like this anymore, and he didn’t want to be someone who couldn’t say his true feelings. He was sick of being a coward. “I want to return that favor.”

“It wasn’t a favor,” Midoriya said, frowning. “I did it out of my personal, selfish reasons. I don’t want anything from you.”

Kindness is an annoying thing. It’s another thing that he learned from Midoriya. Kindness is an annoying and frustrating thing. And Midoriya stands at the top as the most infuriating type of kindness.

He took a step closer to the young man, until Midoriya’s face was just inches from his chest. The angle Midoriya was bending his neck so that he could maintain eye contact looked painful, but Dabi couldn’t find it in himself to show any more restraint.

“That’s the thing,” the older man said quietly. His hand came up to grab Midoriya’s wrist, his thumb rubbing against that one scar he never forgot about, and felt the young man stiffen. “I want you to want something from me."

He took a step back, ashamed but determined, and Midoriya was beginning to think that he was finally meeting Todoroki Touya.

### Dabi’s Hospitalized

Midoriya came running into the room, uncaring of anything and all else. He slammed the door open with little preemptive action or acknowledgement and he only saw Dabi.

The man stared back at him, a wry grin stretching across his face as he gave a lazy wave. Nothing about him looked as urgent as they made the call seem. He wasn’t even in a hospital gown, but was in one of the VIP rooms in the hospital. Sitting in his jeans and t-shirt, looking as though he was picked off the street with how casual he seemed, Dabi looked fine.

“Hey, Izuku,” he said.

“You… you’re okay?” he wheezed out.

“Just a broken finger,” he said, lifting his other finger where his pinky finger was broken. “A biker ran into me, and I didn’t break my fall well.” And, as though he already knew what he would ask, continued, with a little smile on his face,“Yeah, the biker is fine too. Kid wasn’t even injured.”

“Oh,” Midoriya said. He sank to his knees at the doorway, tears beginning to stream from his face as he covered his face with his hands. “I...I got the call, and I…” he sniffled loudly as his voice broke. “Oh thank god.” He sucked in a sharp breath, nearly choking as his relief washed over him like a tidal wave.

“Izuku, don’t block the door,” Dabi said, voice quiet and warm despite his words, “Don’t worry, I’m ready to go.”

The young man sighed, a grin stretching onto his face as he rubbed his face again. He looked at his hands in his lap, “I… One sec, I just lost all the feeling in my legs,” he said, a little embarrassed.

“Need a hand?”

He froze, and his head snapped up. How did he miss this?

Also in Dabi’s VIP room were people that Deku has never met before, but Izuku once ate with an entire lifetime ago. The entire Todoroki family, with the exception of Shoto and Rei, stood in front of him, staring at him with an expression he wasn’t prepared to see.

No way.

It couldn’t be.

Behind him, he realized that it was Endeavor and Fuyumi. They looked shocked and surprised at him, a little annoyed on Enji’s side, and he felt lightheaded.

“...Izuku?” Dabi’s voice called out.

“Ah… haha,” Midoriya pushed up to his feet. His eyes locked in on Enji’s, remembering that shitshow of a dinner party and that awful temporary slavery-thing, and took a shaky step back. His gaze dropped to Natsuo’s hand, and dropped his gaze to the ground. He could feel his eyes watering again, but this time, he’ll be crying for different reasons. “W-What ah… I’m sorry that you had to see that-”

Oh no. Oh shit.

“Don’t be,” Dabi said, getting up and walking over to him. “C’mon, let’s go home.”

“Go?” Midoriya frowned back. He looked at the man approaching him, and then to the other occupants, and then back to the supposed patient. “Uh, wait, I gotta go and pay the-”

“They’re covering it,” Dabi said, spinning him around so that they were both facing the door, and then wrapping his arm around Midoriya’s shoulders to minimize how much he could turn.

Without meaning to, Midoriya leaned into that familiar warmth. His eyes watered again as he remembered that pit of fear that dropped when he got that fucking call-

“Then, shouldn’t we at least say goodbye-” but still, he was a good kid that was raised with good manners.

“No.” He can’t quite say the same for Dabi.

The man’s words were final, and his eyes were cold. He was not going to budge on this. He didn’t want to talk about this. He didn’t look anywhere but the door. Midoriya looked up at him, able to push away the memories of another lifetime as he focused in on the person right next to him.

“Dabi,” he tried one more time, his voice quiet. Ice blue eyes dropped their gaze to his face without moving his head, and Midoriya hoped that his words could reach him. “I’m glad you’re okay.”

He watched Dabi’s expression melt down into something he was more accustomed to seeing now. Gone was the homeless guy sitting in the rain on the side of the street, and instead was the Dabi that replaced his heating unit at home. He watched the way his shoulder relaxed, and he nodded.

“...Yeah, you would,” he said, his voice barely a whisper as he gavea lazy grin.

As best he could, Midoriya waved at the other Todorokis, hoping that they wouldn’t notice how he can’t look at them.

In his world, Todoroki Touya died and became a villain named Dabi.

In this world, he stole Todoroki Touya and made him Dabi.

### (?)To Dump (?)

Midoriya made it to the parking lot before he just couldn’t. His head spun, and he hated himself.

He wanted to take that away. He wanted to break that. He made that choice, and in turn, took that option away from Dabi. He did this out of his own selfish green.

Because, at some point or another, he liked having Dabi in his life. This wasn’t even his life, but he was trying to force his own personal greed onto it.

It scared him. He didn’t want to be comfortable and happy and content here. He wanted to go home. He needed to go home. He knew that he would have to give this back to the Original Deku of this universe eventually. He knew that. It didn’t matter how happy everyone here looked, or the fact that they were all alive and in good health. None of that mattered.

It wasn’t his.

And no matter how many times he repeated that in his head, it wouldn’t stick. As a result, he cried next to a tree behind a car, sobbing uncontrollably. His tears carried no weight, because his feelings were superficial. This wasn’t his, and this didn’t matter to him.

It wasn’t fair.

In his world, he didn’t even have a Dabi he could call his own. Natsuo was dead and there wasn’t much left of Fuyumi. The Shoto here laughed loudly and couldn’t beat him in arm-wrestling. He’s missing someone that wasn’t his-that wasn’t real-that wasn’t for him.

So he’ll cry it all out right now. He’ll get rid of this awful feeling sitting on his chest, and he will return back to that hospital room with a grin on his face. He’ll be supportive and happy that everyone in this world is going to be much happier than his world.

Which was fine, this Deku clearly deserved it.

This was fine.

Scrubbing his face, he got back up. He was fine. Look at how fine he was. He wasn’t going to let this hold him down-he wouldn’t hold anyone back.

His phone buzzed, and he pulled the breaking thing out of his pocket. There was a single message.

>> come back

Heart filled with an emotion he shouldn’t be feeling, he did just that. This time for certain, he’ll cut himself off. He needed to.

If he likes anyone here anymore, he might actually consider staying.

### Saving Hawks

Getting enemies wasn’t a shock. It wasn’t hard. There were jealous fools everywhere. However, it was a little rare for these cowards to come together and attack him like this.

-

Hawks never thought he could feel this much relief and dread in the same moment. After all, who else but the person that he cared for the most could have found him and saved him? Who else but the kid who took down a bag-snatcher in a maid outfit could come flying in like a cartoon hero from the states? H

But unlike superheroes in comic books, Midoriya doesn’t have any special superpowers. Unless kindness was a superpower, then Midoriya would be the greatest superhero that ever lived. And well, even then, he’s certain that nothing would have changed.

Hawks had always thought that he knew the limits of the human body until he saw Midoriya brawl. Then, he thought that he knew too much, and that Midoriya was a much better fighter than he ever thought.

“Are you okay?”

“...What?”

“...Well, you look okay. You should be careful, you know?” Midoriya said, his worried expression turning into that tender smile Hawks knew him for, “As a handsome man, your face is your first priority, right?”

His tone was teasing as though he didn’t have a split lip and his knuckles were bruised and scabbing. The blond gulped, and suddenly, the weight of the situation fell on him.

This kid came running in to fend off eight adults and he won. He did that for Hawks, a guy he’s known for a couple of weeks before he passed him a key to his apartment. He did that for Hawks, despite how often the blond annoyed him and pestered him and caused mayhem for him and his roommates.

And that really, really scared the blond.

Just looking at Dabi and Shigaraki, he knew that he wasn’t special. This wasn’t something that Midoriya did for him, because he was special to him. This was something that Midoriya just did.

“...Why?” he asked quietly, “Why did you come?”

Midoriya’s tender smile turned into a confused one, like he didn’t understand why Hawks was asking. For him, it must have been obvious that this was what he did. Hawks was strange for thinking differently. He must have come up with something as his cheeks turned a little red. The sight of his embarrassed self was normally enough to pull a teasing remark or six from the blond, but he couldn’t muster it out right now.

Right now, he couldn’t focus on anything other than the fact that Midoriya was here.

“To be honest, I saw you out of the corner of my eye. It’s going to sound super starkerish, but I swear that I wasn’t stalking you or anything, I really did just see you out of the corner of my eye! And I saw those guys take you into a van, so I followed you-”

“No, why did you come here to help me?!” Hawks finally snapped back. “Why didn’t you call Dabi or Shigaraki? Why did you come here, by yourself? Why did you save me?”

His yelling must have shocked Midoriya. But that wasn’t fair. Hawks was the one that was shocked and confused. Why would anyone, especially someone like Midoriya who seemed to have connections with powerful people everywhere, decide to come alone to help him? Why did he come at all?

What if this didn’t go well? What if Hawks had been staring at Midoriya’s lifeless body on the ground instead?

The blond didn’t know how he would live after that.

The young man stared back, eyes wide in his surprise. He looked down at the ground, as though trying to find the answer there before he gave a small sigh.

“...The truth is...I want to be a hero,” he admitted. “But when I saw you get taken, I didn’t think about what a hero would do. Actually, I didn’t think at all. I guess… all I saw was that someone needed help so I just ran.”

The blond would never understand Midoriya or the way he thinks. This was something that he was willing to accept. He would never understand Midoriya, and he would never meet someone quite like this man for the rest of his life. That was fine. Having one Midoriya in the world was enough.

But Hawks also understood from that moment on that he would never forgive himself if something ever happened to Midoriya because of him.

“You’re crazy, you know that?”

Midoriya forced a laugh, not even putting in much effort, but his eyes were impossibly bright as he eyed Hawks.

“I’m glad you’re okay, too.”

### Chisaki-san’s Dinner Plans

Chisaki Kai, he thinks in terms of Ashida, is a Mood™.

What else does he have to explain the anomaly that is chisaki Kai. A man who clearly doesn’t care about the whole patient thing, but is profiting off of it so that he can put some funds into the…. Experiments that he is conducting. He’s a part of a group that’s a part of a group, and while he had no idea how he would ever win against a guy like him, he knew that he would figure it out or die trying.

It wasn’t ideal, but he didn’t know what else he could do.

So, the fact that Chisaki looks at him much differently than the Chisaki in his world did had to be a blessing.

Bonus since it seems like he wasn’t experimenting on children.

He felt like an absolute ass for thinking that, but it sounds like they take in <undesirables>.

People who tried to kill themselves but failed. People who ran a long debt with the Yakuza so they sell their children away. People that are just in the wrong place at the wrong time and crossed Chisaki when he was in a bad mood.

Eventually, Midoriya will save them too. He hasn’t gotten there yet. He’s a hero, every person he can’t save is someone that he has killed.

He knew that it’s selfish and hypocritical. He knew. But he wanted to save those that are in arms reach. He wanted to save as many people as possible. And not just save, but reassure them that the world is going to be a better place and that one day, living will be more appealing than dying.

“Well, Midoriya-kun, what happened this time?”

Chisaki’s voice broke him out of his thoughts, and he looked up to see the man walking in. The man took off his face-mask, and placed it on his desk before taking a seat.

Midoriya, with his hand to the bleeding cut on his neck, gave a sheepish smile. Honestly, he thought that Setsuno would take care of it for him again, but he supposed that Chisaki wanted a break from whatever it was that he did.

“...I see. Is it the same people again?”

Midoriya tilted his head to the side so that Chisaki could get a good gaze on the new cut on his neck that ran from his earlobe to his collarbone. Golden eyes narrowed, looking so annoyed and so disgusted that it honestly shocked him that he didn’t call Kurono right then and there. As inappropriate as it may be, Midoriya couldn’t help but think that some things just don’t change. It looked as though the older man was still as disgusted as always with blood and grime, but at least he didn’t break out into hives.

“...Honestly,” the older man sighed, reaching over to grab Midoriya’s chin to get a better look. Midoriya didn’t protest even when his neck was held in an awkward angle, and the doctor leaned back. “You should have taken my offer. You wouldn’t have to live like this.”

Midoriya chuckled at that, “I’m a terrible roommate,” he said, voice scratchy after he had screamed so much, “You’d try to kill me by dinner.”

Chisaki's fingers on his chin twitched, pausing for a brief split second, before he continued like nothing was wrong. He must sound worse than he thought. “Perhaps, but at this rate, it’s not like you’re going to last till lunch. Well, it looks like it wasn't deep. A lot of blood but nothing too serious. Six… no four stitches will be enough."

He was really grateful. Not only was this a lot cheaper than a hospital, but he always felt like he was wasting good supplies to the people who really needed it. Whereas when he came here, it always felt like they were going to give him the absolute minimum amount of service. If it's just four, he'll be fine as long as he takes it easy. So he’ll be extra vigilant not to jump out of anything higher than the second story for a week.

“Let’s see that arm.”

He grabbed him by the wrist, and Midoriya was glad that he had such a high pain tolerance. Another person would be screaming at Chisaki’s uh… gentle bedside manner.

“These are pretty clean cuts too. Nothing broken, but these are some bad bruises,” he said, and pulled off his glove.

“Ah, you don’t have to worry about those,” Midoriya said, tugging at his arm, “It doesn’t hurt that much.”

“...Izuku-kun, I’ll take good care of you.”

He blinked, and tilted his head.

“Sorry, I got a lot of strays to take care of. I don’t want to dump them onto you.”

Chisaki’s eyes, golden in color, always made Midoriya feel like someone had melted gold to pour into his eyes. It was a color that shined and these days, they looked brighter. But Midoriya had no doubts that if he fell in, he'd die miserably.

The sight of it made Midoriya smile too.

“...Thanks for the help, Chisaki-san,” he said, motioning at his neck. “Good as new.”

“I would rather if you stopped meeting up with me only to get patched up. Why don’t you stay for dinner? God knows how you got Hojo and Rappa to get so attached to you.”

Midoriya laughed back, the thought of seeing them made him giddy. To think, in another world, another place, they would be in a relationship like this. It felt like a dream, like glass, but if ever thought to get used to it, it would dissipate and break against concrete reality.

“...I wanna see them too,” Midoriya replied back, “Maybe I-”

His phone buzzed and he gave Chisaki an apologetic smile as he checked it. It was an automatic text message from his burner phone. Someone had used it.

He stared and a thousand possibilities ran through his head before he unlocked his phone and remembering whose company he was in, stood up.

“Sorry, something just came up. Looks like I gotta go deal with that,” he said. And gave Chisaki a smile, “What should I do for you this time? For this?”

Hopefully, it wouldn’t be more than a couple thousand yen. Any more and he would have to hit the ATM to pull it out of his savings, and he really, really didn’t want to do that. But, he wasn’t the type to swindle the people who were helping him, who would continue to help him, and he wasn’t going to start now.

“...Come over for dinner later this week.”

Midoriya’s eyebrows hit his hairline, “Uh…..”

Chisaki turned around, but it was too late and Midoriya could see how red the tips of his ears were turning.

“And bring your stupid strays.”

“Uh….”

“Well? Or should I just take your arms completely away?”

“No, uh, that’s fine,” he replied back, trying to swim through his mind to figure out what the fuck just happened. He gave a nod and stared at Chisaki’s back before a laugh bubbled out of his throat. “Hm, we’ll come swing by Wednesday. We’ll come around four so we can figure out how much food we need.”

“Yeah, whatever,” he replied back, “Just get out of here.”

Midoriya didn’t think he would be able to stop smiling even if someone were to punch him across the face right now. He pushed the window that he crawled in through, and gave another airy laugh, still reeling from the shock of what had just happened.

Wow. He thought. He was going to be eating dinner with Chisaki.

He let gravity pull him out of the window, managing to fire his grappling gun to the next building so that he could swing down to the ground. For now, he had to push aside those giddy feelings and move on,there were people to catch, his burner phone to find.

And Wednesday will come.

-

Wednesday came, with a disgruntled Shigaraki, an impassive Dabi, and Midoriya with an impressive black eye.

“...I haven’t seen you in three days,” Chisaki sighed, staring at Midoriya’s face.

The young man rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

### A Field Trip

-

“Well, we should use the cultural festival,” Midoriya said, “And then we can generate some money, and we can go on a field trip.”

“...You want us to… go on a field trip?”

Midoriya motioned to the pamphlets that he and Bakugo had collected from Todoroki.

“Yeah. It’ll be fun.”

-

“Well, we have like, actual rich people here,” Mineta said. “Why not make them pay?”

Not so subtly, he eyed Iida. Good old Mineta.

“Hm? Then it won’t be a school trip,” Midoriya replied back. “I think a school trip will be fun.”

The look that Iida gave him looked hopelessly lost, but it quickly disappeared into something fond.

“So, are we going to do a concert?” Kirishima asked, eyeing Jirou from the side of his eye.

“Are you guys sure?” Jirou frowned back, “It won’t be a Class 1\*A event then. And we have to get people from another school involved.”

The words hit Midoriya harder than he thought.

A concert wasn’t a Class 1-A event.

“Oh, that’s a good point,” Kaminari said, nodding. “Well, in like manga and stuff it’s always a cafe, right? Maybe we should do a caf-”

“Maid cafe!” Mineta shouted out. “We should do a maid cafe! With cat ears!”

Shoji’s face turned bright red at the thought.

Midoriya turned to stare at Bakugo and smiled. “I think that’s a great idea.”

“Don’t look at me and say that,” Bakugo hissed out, his face turning red. And after a moment, his eyes lingered to the top of Midoriya’s head and then back down. “But I… don’t think it’s a bad idea either.”

“Yeah!” Kaminari shouted out, ignorant to the atmosphere building around his classmates, “Deku, you’d be hella cute in cat ears!”

Midoriya felt the rush of heat come to his cheeks and Bakugo stood up. He turned around and grabbed the blond by the front of his shirt. He shook him hard, ramping up the speed and power when the man started to cry.

“Well,” Uraraka said, diverting the rest of their attention away, “Do we have the clothes for that?”

Mineta wailed.

“What about a hero cafe?” Tsuyu asked. She looked at them and gave a shrug.

“Dressing up as a hero?” Kirishima replied, sheepishly rubbing the back of his head, “That’s… a little embarrassing, you know?”

“And wearing cat ears isn’t?” Tokoyami replied back. When his classmate couldn’t reply, he threw in his vote, “I think it’s fine.”

-

“If you needed money, you should have just asked.”

“And how could I ever ask money from a retiree?”

Chojuro rolled his eyes.

“You’re not cute at all. Obviously, I’d make a payment plan for you.”

The student rolled his eyes. “And it’ll end with an insufferable amount of interest. Can’t say I find it interesting.”

The older man placed his hand on his shoulder, the one that would never recover, eyes narrowed into slits.

“Then, why don’t you call in a debt?”

The young man tensed, a frown forming on his face as he batted the hand away. It didn’t work, and instead, he rested his hand to futilely push the other’s paw off of him.

“I have no debts to call on.”

Far away, in the safety of his private thoughts and feelings, he almost regrets ever getting involved with this man.

“But if I did, I would use it to get rid of this irritating man who has been stalking me for the past weeks.”

“Who? The blond?”

“You.”

Briefly, so briefly he almost missed it, the older man looked shocked.

“Me?” he said, before a grin curled up on his face, “How cruel.”

It was like Midoriya was a magnet for these kinds of people. He would really like a break.

“C’mon, as an apology for making you so sad, I’ll buy you something to eat.”

“I don’t want to eat with my stalker.”

“No stalker would eat with their prey,” he said, nodding along. His hand came around to Midoriya’s shoulders, absolutely dwarfing him in size. “Good thing I’m here to scare them away.” He leaned down a little more, so that his nose bumped into a few curls. “And it looks like you’ve brought company. If you wanted an audience, I could have brought some friends.’

Midoriya’s frustrated scowl relented just a bit.

“I can handle my own fights. Surely you have better things to do than pick on high schoolers.”

“Hm… I don’t know… Do I?”

Midoriya understood in a split second what he needed to do. He gave a defeated sigh and motioned to the area before them.

“Lead the way.”

Chimera grinned back, wolfish and downright terrifying, as he eagerly moved Midoriya along, half-dragging him as he did so.

The group of disgruntled teens looked a little put off, but they let them be. Good, they weren’t total idiots.

With Midoriya under his arm, Chojuro almost wanted to thank them.

### (pre) Cultural Festival \*Neighbors

“Oh, a cultural festival, huh?” Yamada whistled, “That brings back memories.”

“God, can you sound any older?” Aizawa shot back, narrowed eyes.

“Aw, Shota, you’re just upset because you missed all of our cultural festivals,” Shirakumo teased back.

“...Really?” Midoriya turned to Aizawa, and without meaning to, the image of his homeroom teacher overlapped the image of the host in front of him.

“Yeah, the school always made sure to get us all expelled before the festival,” Yamada said with much more joy than Midoriya thought someone could have about the memory.

“No, I’m pretty sure we got arrested the first time around,” Shirakumo said, tilting his head and trying to think harder about it. “Well, whatever, the past is in the past,” he said. He turned and grinned at Midoriya. “Don’t look at me like that.”

What kind of expression was Midoriya wearing? He didn’t know. What kind of expression was he supposed to have on when he heard about his two teachers, the people that he used to give so much grief whenever he was late, had missed their own cultural festival because they were arrested-

So what kind of expression was he supposed to have then? How was he supposed to handle this information? What was he supposed to say? What was he supposed to do? How was he supposed to feel?

“You’re such a strange kid,” Shirakumo said, reaching to ruffle his hair. “If you want us to come, you just had to ask.”

Shakily, he nodded back. He took a deep breath and with a trembling smile, he extended an invitation.

The three stared at him, and then made a show of checking their schedules like they wouldn’t have cleared it all for him, before agreeing with the promise that they get a discount for his booth.

### Parents are Heroes

Endeavor has made one mistake, in all the time that Midoriya has seen him work. It was not a large mistake, and if anyone else had done it, most people would have never noticed. But this was Endeavor, the CEO of Endeavor Corporation and the walking personification of perfection. And this was Midoriya Izuku, who had sharp eyes when it came to meticulous detail.

So of course Midoriya noticed his mistake.

Endeavor had, by mistake, left his personal calendar up. So Midoriya saw a brief glimpse of it right before it was shut off, almost violently. And all he could notice was that all the marked dates were color-coded in some way, and while he didn’t get to see everything, he did see the closest one.

There was a class play tomorrow.

Midoriya’s eyes darted to Endeavor, who didn’t catch his eye and didn’t threaten to dock his nonexistent pay for once, and he started to make plans.

The only person that had any relations to an elementary school had to be Fuyumi. That blue he chose was for Fuyumi, and maybe Endeavor cared a lot more than anyone could guess. It was creepy and probably illegal that he did this, but using some questionable methods, Midoriya got all the information that he needed to put his plan into motion.

In another world, he was called a hero for meddling into affairs that weren’t his own. Here, he was probably just a stalker.

Still.

-

Endeavor, predictably, was very unhappy when he found out.

“How dare you!?” he snapped like Midoriya had stolen from him and was causing his life to burn down all around him. “Get out of here! Never appear before me again!”

“Endeavor-san!” Midoriya screamed, struggling hard against all three security members. He lost himself to a life that wasn’t his as he yelled out, “I know that it’s hard! And I know that it’s scary! But you haven’t even tried!”

Todoroki Enji’s eyes were cold, but to pretend that this man wasn’t suffering wasn’t something that Midoriya could leave alone. He knows what the Endeavor plagued by regrets looked like and it was frightfully similar to the man in front of him.

“You can’t read their mind! And if you can’t understand them, then you can’t expect them to understand you either! So just talk! Just say it!”

“Security!” he called from a button on his desk, “Toss out this outsider!”

Midoriya winced but bit back the scathing remark that Endeavor approached him first. Instead, he gritted his teeth and didn’t even look at the security officers that came in. It was clear that they hadn’t expected to be tossing Midoriya out. Probably thinking about all the late night donut and coffee runs he did for them, they hesitated.

“Wait, Midoriya-”

“Are you going to make me repeat myself?” Endeavor growled out, every bit that imposing hero that struck fear in the hearts of villains all over Japan. The Security focused again, their hesitance disappearing away as they converged onto Midoriya.

The young man, for what it was worth, didn’t even pay them any mind.

“You don’t have to suffer alone! The first steps might be hard, but you won’t be by yourself!”

“Just-just shut up-” Endeavor stuttered, and Midoriya was probably the only person that noticed.

“Christ, this kid is strong-”

“Stop making our lives harder-”

Three full grown men came for him, but Midoriya didn’t even sound winded. He pulled at their grips, climbing over their arms, trying to think of the right thing to say but coming up with only one thing. Screaming with all his might even though the room wasn’t that big, Midoriya wanted to be heard. He wanted his voice to echo through Enji’s head like it was echoing through the room. He didn’t want his voice to be lost and he wanted Endeavor to know that someone was here. Someone recognized that he was trying.

That Midoriya was here.

“Endeavor-san! Did you know?! For kids, our parents are the first heroes we meet!”

Just like that, his temporary internship (slavery) ended.

-

The words would repeat in his head over and over again.

And then, Enji received his files. Actually, he had these files for a while, but he never had a pressing reason nor the time to flip through them. But now that he chased him out, he can’t think about anything but his haunting words and his bright eyes.

Who was Midoriya Izuku, then? Hopefully, he could gain some insight from this.

First of all, his name, written and spelled out, was Midoriya Deku. Deku, he assumed, meaning ‘useless’ and he is reminded of that nervous kid awkwardly eating at his dinner table until he bit down on the chicken karaage and was over the moon.

His eyes skimmed the file. A child whose mother committed suicide on his birthday. A child whose father walked out on him just a few months ago. A child with a series of noise complains filed against him and a dirty history filled with hospital visits and failed suicide attempts.

That kid came here, wormed his way into his and his family’s life, and told him that parents were heroes?

There was no way a file would be enough to explain everything. The more he read, the clearer that became. There was only so much he could garner from a human being using reports. But the child that yelled at him in his office at headquarters was nowhere to be found across the neatly typed words, as though he was a completely different person altogether.

His papers spelled out a tragedy, but the boy in his office was someone with hope and determination. The kid that managed to charm his way through his employees and forced his way into the Todoroki household affairs, could not be the kid that he was reading about here. Children who were abused and neglected and lost, like the child he was reading about, didn’t smile like that.

It was puzzling, but this too was a first step in deciphering what an anomaly that Midoriya Deku really was.

He placed his head in his hands and took a deep breath. This was supposed to be pathetically easy. He was supposed to squeeze every last bit of life out of him and force him to give his son up. He would finally get Touya back. He was so damn close.

He was going to use him against Touya in case he tried to keep this silly rebellion up. It would be better if Midoriya was sympathetic to his cause and if Midoriya could be the one to lead Touya to him. And if not, he was ready to twist Touya’s arm around, but now all he could think about was that shade of green.

Fuck. He thought.

Shoto had finally started to greet him in the morning. Fuyumi didn’t flinch when he turned the corner too quickly. Natsuo was starting to come home for dinner now. Rei actually smiled at him last night. His employees cheerfully greet him, and they don’t skit around him and excuse themselves out of his presence nearly as much as they used to. Kamiji even cracked a joke at him and he smiled and it didn’t feel like a crime for enjoying that moment of peace.

From the getgo, he never had any intention of collecting any money from Midoriya. He was going to give him the full pay that anyone who worked as much and as hard as he did at the end of all this and Touya and everything. But here they were, barely one month from when he was hired, and everything had neatly gone to shit.

With his head in his hand, he cursed again.

What the fuck was he supposed to do?

### Laid-off (reprise)

The security that was supposed to throw him out of the office, escorted him down to the main lobby instead. They had to drag him out since he put up a fight, but now that they were out of Endeavor’s office and by the receptionist desk instead, it was clear how much regret they held about the situation.

Midoriya felt bad, knowing that they weren’t bad people and that they were doing their jobs. He didn’t want to leave it like this, but to do anymore would be asking them to risk their jobs. And he couldn’t do that.

So instead, he gave a proper and formal bow to them.

“Thank you for all your help,” he said. “Thank you for looking after me all this time.”

Their eyes looked at him pityingly. It’s a gaze that he gets often, but he’s never felt comfortable under. But more importantly, he had bigger things to do. Endeavor clearly didn’t want this help, but you know what?

Midoriya was going to shove his nose into his and his entire family business whether he liked it or not.

“Midoriya-kun,” the receptionist said quietly, “Why are you… trying so hard?”

Midoriya looked her dead in the eye, because this was the same thing in both universes. People asked him this question like they didn’t know the answer and then they always looked confused at his answer even though it should be obvious.

“Because I’m a hero.”

-

Walking out of the office, however, thanking and denying any refreshments and snacks they wanted to give him before he left, the last thing he expected was to see Mirio.

“Senpai,” he greeted without thinking.

Mirio, the blond that he remembered just a few weeks ago, smiled even when he didn’t feel like smiling. The Mirio in front of him didn’t do that. His gaze felt as heavy as it was cold, and he looked from the building behind him and back to him. He narrowed his eyes.

“Is this why you refused to come intern with Sir and I?”

Oh no.

Midoriya felt the pathetically familiar feeling of despair curl in his gut. It was amazing how bad things could get for him so quickly. Just when he thought that he hit a new low, life just had to prove him wrong.

“Uh,” his brain, still on the high that was that yelling battle between him and Endeavor, failed him again. He hesitated and eventually ended up saying the worst possible thing he could in the moment. “It’s not what it looks like?”

Mirio’s cold expression turned into a smile. Cold sweat broke out on Midoriya’s back, and he wished he didn’t live with his foot in his mouth.

“Is that so? Then you don’t mind joining me for some coffee, do you?”

Begrudgingly, he did, but went with him anyways.

-

“Todoroki-san isn’t someone that takes in high schoolers as his interns,” Mirio said. “And in fact, I was under the impression that he didn’t take any this semester.”

Midoriya winced.

“More importantly, didn’t you just get out of the hospital?”

Of course, he knew about that. He winced again.

Should he come clean? Is that something he could do? Was that something that was okay to do? Then, where did he begin? With the fact that he doesn’t belong here?

Sometimes, Midoriya felt like he would choke on all the things that he wanted to hide and all the things he felt like was safer if he hid. It felt like, sometimes, all he did was lie and speak half-truths like that was his actual quirk or something. The thought made him feel empty. He wasn’t always like this, he would like to think.

“...Hey, I know that I sound mad, but I swear I’m not mad at you, okay?”

He blinked twice, wondering when Mirio became so blurry.

“You don’t have to cry. Just tell your senpai everything.”

Midoriya blinked, his hand coming up to his eyes, and realizing that he was just sitting there crying. Sniffled loudly. He wiped at his eyes and shook his head.

“I…” where did he start?

This wasn’t even his Mirio? Was this okay? If he told this to Mirio, who would he tell? Who would the information eventually circle back to? Wouldn’t that get Mirio in trouble? Wouldn’t that put Endeavor’s name deeper in the mud?

Could he do that? He knew that the man was finally making progress with what family he had left, and thinking of the hesitant way Shoto mentioned how his mom made coffee for his dad in the morning, knew he couldn’t do it. To begin with, wasn’t he the one that took Touya from them anyways? And then he snatched Shoto away from them since he didn’t know how to see his friend and turn the other way. Wasn’t he splintering this family even more?

This was karma, wasn’t it?

Maybe he should stop being greedy, if it bothered him so much.

“...Midoriya,” Mirio said, collecting his attention. “Tamaki, Nejire and I are going to get lunch on Sunday,” he said. “I… I don’t know what you’re doing and I get why you probably can’t tell me, but I wanted you to know that we’re friends again.”

Mirio looked infinitely kind, infinitely bright, in a familiar kind of way.

“Thank you for meddling.”

A pathetic sob ripped from his lips.

The blond abandoned his seat to come around the table. Large arms, not nearly as thick and strong as the ones that he remembered, wrapped around him. Pretending that this was someone else from a different time that never happened, Midoriya buried his face in his chest and for the first time since he came to this world, was comforted.

-

“I am so, so, so sorry about that,” Midoriya said at the end of that overtly emotional display of emotion. He bowed deeply and Mirio laughed goodnaturedly, like his entire shirt wasn’t drenched in Midoriya’s snot and tears.

“No problem, sounds like you had a lot going on for you. You sure you’re done?” he asked.

Midoriya’s face flushed in embarrassment and he nodded. “Yeah, I promise. Sorry about that-”

A hand came down to the top of his head, and with a beaming smile like he was the sun itself, Mirio ruffled his hair.

“I told you, didn’t I? You can come and lean on me whenever. This Senpai here will always comfort you.”

Midoriya sniffled again and the blond laughed.

“I knew it, you weren’t done!”

“I-I am!”

He ruffled his hair just a little bit more.

“Good, now then, is there anything you want to tell me?”

“Thank you,” Midoriya said, missing that Mirio’s expression crumbled for a second. Still, when he lifted his head up, his eyes were bright with the determination that Mirio didn’t realize he was looking for. “I know what I need to do now.”

They shared a little laugh, bid their farewells, and watching him leave, the blond tipped his head back. He didn’t even know that Midoriya was lost.

“One day,” he promised himself and willing himself to forget how empty his arms felt now.

Until then, he’ll just be Midoriya’s crying rag.

### Mirio \*Frustrations of Being Young

“Mirio,” Yagi’s voice was cold, “You’re just someone riding off the coattails of someone else.”

The reprimand, for it could be nothing else, seeped deeply into his heart and Mirio gritted his teeth in his irritation.

“But one day, you will own everything that I do. You will understand better then, and be able to make proper decisions then.”

But, Mirio couldn’t say, one day is already too late.

### Future Money \*housemates

Midoriya walked in, and before anyone could even welcome him back, opened his mouth and blurted out the truth.

“I got laid off but it’s okay, I got a plan.”

Dabi and Hawks, who had come to greet him, blinked in surprise and then at each other.

“Uh,” Hawks hesitated.

“You don’t have to,” Dabi pitched in. And after a brief pause said, “And that Host Club laid you off?”

“What? No, the other one,” Midoriya said, unknowingly digging himself deeper into a hole. He missed the way Dabi’s eyes narrowed, and Hawks’ wings fluttered just a little bit. “Well, anyways, I have a good idea on what-”

“Stop crowding the doorway!” Shigaraki snapped out, cutting the discussion short. He came out to glare at them, “Dinner’s ready, let’s eat. I’m hungry.”

The youngest took a small breath of relief, and right as he walked by, Shigaraki spoke again.

“We’re not done.”

-

Midoriya’s chopsticks didn’t even get to his mouth before Dabi started.

“I told you that you don’t need to worry about working anymore. Between the three of us, we can figure something out, so just quit that stupid host-club too.”

“And I told you that I’m not going to use your money. You should be saving your money for what you want to do-”

“Then what about you? You think Shigaraki and I didn’t know that you were throwing your money away for us? That you’re still doing it? Where’s your savings, Izuku?!”

Hawks and Shigaraki jolted, since it was so rare for Dabi to raise his voice, but Midoriya didn’t lose face. Instead, he gritted his teeth.

“I do have a savings-” he lied, because it wasn’t really his.

“Are you thinking about the future? Are you thinking about your future? Do you think you have a future? You make a mess out of our lives so that we can have a future, but what the fuck have you been doing? Or what, Izuku, are you still hoping that all of this will just end after all?”

This whole thing began to fall apart. Their carefully kept peace trembled like Dabi’s voice. But the last bits of it shattered when Midoriya stood up too. His chair screeched behind him, and a rare expression of actual anger flitted across his face.

Maybe it was the exhaustion of constantly running around, and the fact that he had been stretched far too thin, or the constant emotional exhaustion that came from staring at the people he thought he couldn’t save. Maybe it was the fact that he recently realized that he was the biggest villain all along. Maybe it was because, these days, he couldn’t remember what he had left behind.

“What was I supposed to do? What am I supposed to do?” he snapped back. “You think I haven’t been trying? I’m just doing what I thought was the right thing to do!”

Dabi flinched, clearly not expecting that Midoriya would yell back. He stared at him for a moment, the realization sinking in as he spoke.

“Are you… fucking with me right now?” he asked quietly. He narrowed his eyes. “You always ask about other people but you’ve never said it yourself, did you? What the fuck do you want to do with your life? When you tried to make everyone else face the future, what the fuck were you thinking of? How can you pile expectations onto other people like that when you don’t even know what you want to do with your life!?”

And Midoriya, at his wits end, shouted out, “Because I didn’t think I’d still be here!”

Surely, those words sounded much worse for them than what he thought. The look on Dabi’s face was painful. Someone as proud as him shouldn’t ever look like that.

“...No way,” Shigaraki said quietly, “You picked us off the streets because you didn’t want us to die, but you didn’t think you were going to make it?”

Midoriya wanted to correct them, but it wasn’t his place. This wasn’t something he could say. He couldn’t make this decision for Deku. His hand came up to his chest, right at the mess of bullet wounds that he never told them. He couldn’t tell anyone, and no one would ever be able to tell Deku. He wanted to go home. He wanted to be Midoriya Izuku again. He wanted to return this body to Midoriya Deku and just be gone.

He didn’t want to be here anymore. He didn’t want to make a home in a place that wasn’t his.

He really, really, really thought that he would be home by now, with his mom. This was Deku’s shambled mess of a life that he made a worse mess of, yes, and there really wasn’t any excuse but.

“...Say something,” Dabi said, pleading.

“...I’m sorry,” Midoriya replied back, knowing that it was all he could say.

“Anything but that,” Dabi said, his head in his hands.

And without his apologies, what did Midoriya have? The truth? Let them know that he’s been lying to them this whole time? Then, what? Should he just keep lying? Just add more sins to his original ones by lying his way out of this?

He opened his mouth to do just that. But staring Shigaraki in the face, his courage deserted him instead.

He couldn’t do that.

Midoriya could not look at Shigaraki or Dabi or Hawks and lie.

The realization was sobering. He looked down and unable to find his words, did the only thing he knew how to do.

He ran away.

-

“...Do you think it’s possible for me to have a future?”

“Yes,” Midoriya replied back, certain in a way he didn’t understand.

“...But you don’t think there’s a future for you?”

He looked back down.

Dabi sighed back. Leaning back into the bench, his arm came out to rest on the back of the seat. He took a slow breath, and tipped his head back to stare at the sky between the tree leaves. Next to him, Midoriya hunched over, looking tense and coiled, probably ready to fight.

Knowing him, and the fact that it took four hours of straight sprinting to find him, Dabi was more likely to believe that he would run. For a fighter, Midoriya’s flight game was no walk-in-the-park. Kid knew how to survive. When he thought about that, it made him wonder about all the injuries he came home with.

Home.

When did he start referring to it like that? When did that word start to have meaning? He still didn’t know.

“...But you know, I think I finally know what I want,” Dabi said, deciding to go with a different route instead.

“...Really?”

Dabi waited until Midoriya picked his head up to stare at him before he gave him a lopsided grin. He couldn’t believe this kid.

They were strangers when they met. Strangers, but Midoriya was really willing to take the plunge for him. Strangers, since Dabi never actually told him anything about himself for no good reason other than the fact that Midoriya never asked. Strangers, since they never really formally introduced themselves, and Midoriya didn’t know that he had dined with his family without him. Strangers, but Dabi had never felt closer to another person before.

“Yeah,” he said. He spoke slowly at first, looking back forward instead of the teen next to him. “I got a job. Some savings. I live in an apartment and I read in my free time. So I’ll use my savings to go on book tours or big signing events,” he explained, and the more he talked about it, the more he realized how tangible his ideals have become.

His eyes turned a little distant, and he swore that he could already see it all planned out in front of him.

“I wake up in the morning with breakfast on the table, I get a bento for lunch with octopus-sausages, and head to work. When I come home, I eat dinner. I have people that wait for me, and I wait for the rest. I help out with the dishes. I go and visit my family eventually on the weekends or go to a live concert or play baseball with my annoying neighbors and win against the neighborhood police team. I… I think that this is what I really wanted.”

There was a long silence, stretched as the wind carried it in with a few leaves. The two were silent for a long moment. He didn’t mean to go on a tangent, but he didn’t realize it himself until now. This wasn’t about paying back debts or getting spiteful revenge. He wanted to do the whole, “domestic, peaceful lifestyle” that he didn’t understand in the past. He wanted that boring life. He wanted something for himself now. He wanted to be alive. He wanted to live.

He wanted...

“But that future, for me, is only worthwhile if you’ll be there too.”

Green eyes, soft like grass after a rainstorm, shined and Dabi felt so, so stupid.

This whole time, this kid needed help. The same way that Shigaraki and Dabi and Hawks and all the dumbasses that they’ve met in the last few years were helped by Midoriya. He needed help too. It was dumb and he despaired at the thought that he never thought to do this before.

He stood up from the bench to stand in front of Midoriya instead. He extended his hand out to him, the same way Midoriya did for him on that rainy day.

“Deku,” he said, “Let’s go home. We can work on the future everyday, together with everyone.”

Dabi would think that he had finally gotten to him, and that Midoriya finally understood the true meaning behind his words. This wasn’t something made from his gratitude, and it wasn’t about paying him back or anything. It was something else, but he didn’t want to say it yet.

One day, when Midoriya could speak confidently about the future, he’ll say it properly then.

Midoriya stared at him for a moment longer, before he took his hand with a watery laugh. Dabi’s face started to hurt from how big his grin was, but he couldn’t bring it in himself to say anything about it. Hand-in-hand, he almost couldn’t believe that the person who always ran to help people instinctively had a hand that could be engulfed in his.

They’d get home, and between Shigaraki’s large frown and Hawks’ worried face, they’d be fine. They’d get dinner. They would eat it, and they would eventually take turns talking about their future goals and aspirations. It was no longer just a long list of appliances to replace and purchase, but also experiences that they wanted to share with each other. Their long list included the places to visits, food to eat, the possibility of future occupations and the likes.

And Dabi wouldn’t have known, would have never guessed, that this was the opposite of what Midoriya needed.

### (Spring) Cultural Festival \*

“Welcome!”

Yamada gave a whistle as he walked in, “Man, I haven’t been in a school since… since our graduation!”

“Aw man, were these seats always this small?” Shirakumo gawked right back.

“Table for three,” Aizawa said at the front. “...Is Izuku here?”

Their receptionist, a young girl with giant floppy bunny ears paused as she assessed them a look.

“...Izuku…?” she repeated.

“Uh… Midoriya!” Yamada called out, as though he had to think really hard about it.

“What? I thought his name was Shigaraki?” Shirakumo repeated back.

“Yeah but that’s the name that’s written on his door,” the other blond said.

“Oh, Midoriya-kun?’ their receptionist blinked back and smiled a little more nervously, “He’s not a server. He’s on cook duty.”

Yamada pointed at their butler-maid cafe display next to them.

“But! But! We came here to see him in bunny ears!”

The young girl giggled a little, clearly unfazed at the volume that Yamada could speak at. Aizawa, after all these years, wished he could say the same.

“Would you like to sit down or what? You see, we have a long line to get through,” she said, a smile on her face as she tilted her head to the side. The tone felt a little threatening, and the three stepped back on instinct.

“Uh yeah, that’d be great.”

“Boy, Midoriya-kun is so popular,” she sighed. “I can’t believe all these big wits are coming to see him. Too bad that he’s in the back, huh?”

“Wait, what do you mean big wits-”

“Ah, of course you’re here.”

And they came face to face with the other people that have been polluting Midoriya’s life.

A young man, in a butler outfit and a head of a bird, came up to them. He gave them a menu, just a page long, and they took it with little fanfare.

“What do you want?” he said after a moment.

“Whatever Izuku is cooking is fine,” Shirakumo said, eyeing the menu. “Actually, it says here that we can order a server of our choice and get some custom service,” he said, pointing at it. “Three of these then. So can Izu… uh… Midoriya come out to play?”

The look that the young man gave him was full of disdain.

“Midoriya is in the kitchen. He’s a cook, not a server,” he said, narrowing his eyes, “And if you don’t like it, leave.”

“Gee, what a sourpuss,” Yamada frowned back. He thought about it and then sighed, “But I guess that makes sense since we do the same at our club. Our customer service is so much better though.”

His two friends gave him a dry look but looked down at the menu.

“One coffee,” Aizawa said, “Black. And the curry will be fine.”

“Oh yeah, if it’s Izuku, definitely curry,” Shirakumo muttered back, rubbing his chin. “Okay, curry for me too. And this deluxe green tea parfait.”

“Then I want the strawberry cake and the curry and the ice cream and the-”

“Dude, Yamada-”

“-and a big heart on a latte,” the blond finished. He turned and gave a grin, “Because Izuzu is the cook, right? Then he can give me his heart.”

The double innuendo didn’t go unnoticed by everyone in earshot, and the playful grin on Yamada’s face seemed to hold a dangerous edge.

The server narrowed his eyes at them, looking like he was a breath away from throwing them out on their asses.

“...Whatever,” he said, turning on his heel and back to where the others were cooking.

-

“...You know some strange people, huh?” Tokoyami asked as soon as his eyes landed on Midoriya.

The young man, about to go on his break, tilted his head in confusion.

“Huh?”

### Cultural Festival (post)

“I’m really, really sorry that I couldn’t make it,” Dabi said.

“Nah, you’re fine,” Midoriya said, “You should stop your life just because of me. It happens.”

Yeah, it does, Dabi knew because he had a whole childhood of blaming his folks for never being there for him. He knew, and from the look on Shigaraki’s face, it was something they both knew intimately well.

### Picnic (Spring)

“Hawks,” Shigaraki said, “Can you get next saturday off?”

“Uh…” he ran his schedule off the top of his head.

Normally, the weekends would include him going out and partying or clubbing and mainly selling his fame and reputation, but he had stopped doing that since he moved in. Since he’s moved in, however, they usually spend Saturday cleaning up the apartment and stocking up their fridge. Coming to a conclusion, he nodded.

“Yeah, probably,” or at least, nothing he can’t cancel, “What’s up?”

Were they going to join Midoriya in some crazy adventure? Were they going to go eat out with everyone? With Midoriya, the possibilities and the people that he met were endlessly entertaining, so Hawks definitely didn’t want to miss out.

“We’re going on a picnic. You good at climbing a mountain?” Shigaraki asked.

“What?”

-

“I-I’m fine, really,” Midoriya said, even as he stared at the swelling mess of an ankle.

“Nah, this is sprained,” Yamada whistled. “It’s fine.” He looked up to where Shigaraki was heading the trail, and shouted out, “Oi! Let’s turn around!”

Incredulous sounds of protest were heard, as Midoriya reached for the blond. His hands gripped his shirt tightly, his tracksuit that he got for the sake for their biannual picnic wrinkling under his grip.

“No, it’s fine. It’s-”

“What happened?”

He looked to where Hawks’ easy smile and Twice’s excited figure came into view.

“I just need a small break, then I’ll be fine-”

“Izuku,” the blond said, his hands squeezing his cheeks as he brought their faces closer, “We can take a break here and go back down, alright? You want some water?”

“No, no, really, I can go on. I-”

He couldn’t let Hawks’ and Twice’s first picnic with them end like this. Not because of him. There was so much that this world robbed them off, and he wanted to give them something.

“I-”

“Wow, that looks bad,” Hawks noted as he came up to him. A hand dropped to his shoulder, and Midoriya saw Hawks smile on his sweaty face. It should be a crime to look that good while sweating, but if anyone could pull it off, it would be Hawks. “C’mon, I’ll help you down-”

“You can barely get halfway up without losing your breath,” Aizawa snapped back. “Move. I got him.”

“Really,” Midoriya said, his voice getting quieter, “I’m fine. It’s okay. I’ve done worse so-”

“If you’ve done worse before, then you should know better by now,” Aizawa said sternly. He crouched down in front of Midoriya, so that his back was facing him, and opened his arms up, “C’mon, before Yamada starts crying.”

“Boo hoo hoo,” Yamada sniffled loudly. Shirakumo, who finally made it to them, made a show of collecting him into his arms and rubbed his back.

“There, there, we’ll protect our Problem Child” he said, wiping at his eyes and sniffling dramatically.

“See? Look what you’ve done,” Aizawa said, even thought a crooked grin was appearing on his face. “Now they’re going to be inconsolable.”

As though those were the wards they were waiting for, the two threw their heads back and wailed loudly to the sky.

Midoriya didn’t know if there was a Shirakumo in his world, but he hoped that he was someone who laughed and cried just as energetically as the one in this world. Well, he didn’t know everything about his teachers from freshman year, so maybe they were all still friends that met up and got dinner together. He hoped so, especially if they were this happy.

“Now, as punishment, I’ll carry you down.”

With that, and Dabi’s stern expression from further away, Midoriya’s arms came around his neck and was lifted onto Aizawa’s back.

He was definitely thinner than the Aizawa-sensei that always came to defend him from the media as a student. Somehow, he felt just as reliable.

-

“Ah, it’s fine. I can just wrap it and be done-”

Aizawa’s hand squeezed down on the swelling and Midoriya hissed back.

“What about now?” he asked dryly. His eyes came up to meet Midoriya’s confused expression and he gave a small huff. “Just shut up and accept it. What, are you scared to owe someone or something?” He reached over to grab the wrappings to begin. He took the ice pack off his leg and passed it to Midoriya to hold.

“I… I just feel bad,” the young man said quietly, eyes resting on the precipitation beading on the package. He still can’t believe that Shigaraki packed an extensive first-aid kit. “I really wanted to go up and eat lunch with everyone.”

“...Izuku, we can eat lunch whenever. We’ll come back and climb this mountain again whenever. It doesn’t matter to us,” he said, wrapping his ankle in a gentle way.

As he finished, he slowly maneuvered Midoriya’s foot down. He placed his hand on his other thigh, close to his knee and leaned into the young man’s space. Their noses almost touched, as Aizawa’s eyes met his.

“All that matters is that I get to have you.”

Red eyes flitted from Midoriya’s green eyes to his lips and then back up. He tilted his head a little more, leaning in dangerously close, until Yamada’s loud, encroaching voice came running to the car.

As though nothing had happened, Aizawa leaned back and packed away the rest of the kit.

“Hey there, little Listener! And Shota, I guess,” Yamada said, poking his head in, “You guys done? Let’s eat.”

“Yeah, lemme just finish this up,” Aizawa replied back. He rummaged through the contents, but didn’t move from his place in front of Midoriya. After a moment, he looked back at Yamada, “I’ll handle it, you should go ahead.”

“Eh? Ah, but you carried him down, so I’ll take care of getting him to our lunch table.”

“I carried him since I knew neither you or Shirakumo could do it,” Aizawa replied back, his voice blunt and hard as stone. “I’ll take care of it.”

“Shota, don’t be greedy,” Yamada said, and Midoriya was certain that he would start stomping his face when he pouted. “You’re not the only one that started working out after that first picnic.”

“You guys what?”

“Oh, I wasn’t supposed to say that,” the blond said. He looked from Aizawa to Midoriya, and with a sheepish grin, slinked away.

Which left Midoriya and Aizawa alone again. He stared at the host, who rubbed his temples with a deep sigh.

“He did that on purpose, that little fuck,” he muttered to himself. His lips twisted down into a scowl and his cheeks turning a rosy red.

“Was it supposed to be a secret?”

He scratched the back of his head as he stared at the floor of the trunk next to Midoriya, “Not a secret,” he admitted. “And it wasn’t because of you, either.”

Midoriya’s patient smile stared back at him, and he gave a long sigh.

He looked at his hands.

“You were a big part, the final push, I guess. But I… I did it ultimately for me,” he said quietly. “I feel it too, like for the first time, this is my body that I can do whatever I want to. I know exactly what I can do and how much farther I can go.”

He opened and then closed his hands. With a deep breath, he motioned to Midoriya’s bandaged ankle.

“I’ve gotten pretty good at this, right? I’m not that guy you saved in that alleyway anymore.” He gave him a crooked grin as he reached out to ruffle his hair in his hand. “I’ll take care of you for the rest of your short life.”

“...Why does everyone assume that I’m not going to live long?” Midoriya asked, the beginning of a frown pulling at his lips.

Aizawa’s grin turned more exasperated. “That’s what you’re going to focus on?”

“Oh! I mean, thank you for the offer but it’s really unnecessary,” Midoriya added, giving him a polite bow as best he could while sitting. “It’s not saying much while I’m like this, but I promise that I’m actually super reliable!”

The large hand, thin and boney, grabbed the top of his head, and with so much familiarity that Midoriya could cry, he shook his head.

“Listen to me when I speak,” he growled out.

But, eventually, he was picked up, like a princess, and no matter how hard he tried to fight and splutter and argue, Aizawa’s smug grin only seemed to intensify.

-

“I can-”

“-If you’re going to tell me that you’re going to walk up the four flights of stairs to our apartment, I’m going to hit you,” Dabi said, cutting Midoriya off.

Midoriya closed his mouth. The florist rolled his eyes as he turned around for the young man to get on his back.

“Are you sure?”

“C’mon, the faster we get up, the faster we’re home.”

Still, Midoriya’s fingers hesitated, and Dabi wondered why. Was this something he could ask? He wanted to know though. He wanted to know everything there was to learn about Midoriya, even the things that the young man might not know about himself.

It was unfair to think that, when he wasn’t exactly open about himself. However, he would tell Midoriya anything he wanted to know, should he ever ask. Unfortunately, he didn’t think that Midoriya was the same. There were things about himself that he didn’t want to share. As much as he wanted to be understanding, he was too selfish and greedy to think that.

And other times, like when he realized that Midoriya knew someone who looks at him the same way he does, he felt like the ground was unsteady under his feet.

Grip tight on the man’s legs, he climbed up all four flights of stairs. He didn’t complain about the death grip on his shoulders, and hoped that one day, he would have earned that trust.

### Enji tells Rei

“...Rei,” he said suddenly, “Are you busy?”

His wife looked up from her book and tilted her head. Was it that surprising that her husband came to talk to her? Thinking on it, yes, it was. Enji tried not to let the shame creep up into the forefront of his mind.

“...There’s something that I wish to discuss with you.”

In that moment, Rei honestly thought that he was handing her divorce papers. She opened the manilla folder though, and stared at the information inside.

“...You looked into him? Isn’t this private information?” she asked, a familiar anger beginning to bubble up inside of her.

“Just read it,” Enji scowled at her. And then, after a moment of just glaring at each other, sighed.

Rei was never one to listen to him, but this wasn’t something that he couldn’t onto by himself anymore. His expression pinched, and he dipped his head forward in a show of his sincerity.

“Please.”

Rei frowned, it was rare for Enji to plead. It was rarer than him smiling.

She looked at the papers.

The part of her that respected Midoriya, the child that brought the smile back to Shoto’s face, wanted to throw the papers back in Enji’s face. The rest of her was stuck on the fact that Enji was pleading.

So she read it.

She read the file on “Midoriya Deku” and wondered who this could be talking about. It was a report on the violence in his life, the tallied analysis based off of the police reports conducted, and the compiled information from school information, and the accumulation of it all spelled out a tragedy. She looked at it and then at Enji. On another person, she would have said that Enji looked like he was in pain since learning about Midoriya, but she knew Enji too well. That expression on his face was foreign but not completely unrecognizable.

Enji had, at some point, decided to take responsibility for this boy. At some point in time, he looked at Midoriya and recognized and began to value him in his life. He had to, because Enji looked like he was disappointed in himself.

The entire situation, from learning about Midoriya Deku to Enji’s humanity, was bizarre. She almost wished that it wasn’t real.

“...What… what did you want me to say now that I read this?”

“I don’t know how to help him,” her husband said quietly. ‘Please help me.”

Rei looked at Enji, feeling just as lost as he looked.

The two of them together brought together a jagged family. The closer they tried to come together, and they tried, the harder they pricked and prodded against each other. As a result, they tore at each other until the only thing that was left was ten years of open, festering wounds.

Looking at each other, they had no idea where to even begin.

-

“Shouto,” Rei called out, “You know, you should invite Izuku-kun over for dinner again.”

Shouto looked at her, his blank expression twisting in confusion.

“Why?”

She winced.

“Aw, why not? I like the guy.”

Rei could have hugged Natsuo for his perfect timing.

“We usually go out with everyone for dinner,” Shouto said slowly, narrowing his eyes. “And he has work on the weekends.”

Rei’s smile turned even more strained.

### Graduation Viewing

“Congratulations!” Midoriya laughed, presenting Tamaki with another bouquet of flowers to join the several others he had.

Tamaki stared at him, a bright grin stretching across his face. The pride and joy in his expression didn’t fit the image of Suneater he had in his head, but he thought it looked very nice.

“Thank you!” he said, genuine and completely different from the sarcastic senior that Midoriya met at the beginning of the school year. “But just because I’m graduating doesn’t mean I’ll be gone forever.”

Green eyes shined, and he wondered how the Tamaki back at home was doing. Obviously, he kept in touch with Mirio and kept tabs on Tamaki and Nejire, but how was he doing? Since he felt to become a hero, was he happy? Did he smile like this at his graduation?

He grinned at Tamaki.

For as long as he was here, he’ll keep an eye out. He’ll do better with the whole, ‘keeping in contact’ thing too. He’ll do his best, going Plus Ultra.

And then, hopefully, it’ll be easy for Deku-kun to fall into those habits and fall in love with the wonderful people the same way Izuku did.

-

Just like that Midoriya became a second year in high school for the second time.

### (July) Dinner Party

Izuku groaned when the doorbell rang. He pulled himself up from the table and made his way over to open the door, and stared in absolute shock as Shimura stood there. He stared and stared, and the older man looked at him and then the doorframe and then back to him.

The taller man shifted a little, and Izuku’s eyes flitted to the nearly bursting plastic bags in his hands. It looked like they were filled with food and drinks.

“...Let me in.”

“O-oh, right,” Izuku said, stepping back to let his housemate in. He hesitated again, and bit the bullet, “What’s… all this for?”

The older man gave him a withering glare.

“You forgot already? Well, whatever, the others will be here soon enough.”

“...Others?”

The doorbell rang again, and accompanying it was the frantic slamming of the door.

“Fucking nerd, open the fucking door up! This shit is heavy! The meat is all going to go bad!”

Operating on instinct, Izuku yanked the front door open and gaped back when Bakugo scowled back at him. Behind him, Yamada gave a happy wave as he lifted the plastic bags in his hand.

"Special delivery! Don't worry, Aizawa is going to get the cake."

"Cake?"

“Christ, you’re a shit host. And go outside and help fucking round-face and turbo-engine with the ice box!”

“Y-Yes sir!” he cried back, slipping on some slippers as he ran outside. What the fuck was going on?

"Put your fucking shoes on!"

"R-right!" Midoriya blurted back, nearly tripping over his foot as he rushed out, barely remembering to do just that.

“Midoriya! Help!”

He stared in no little amount of shock as Uraraka came forward, holding several bags of snacks of some sort, and watched as she threw a glance back.

“Shinsou-kun is helping Chisaki with the meat pan, but I don’t know who is helping Iida with the drinks!”

Before Izuku could ask why Chisaki had a meat pan, why Shinsou was helping Chisaki, or why anyone was here at all, he only heard that Iida-kun needed help and went running towards the stairs to his apartment unit.

Imagine his shock when he saw Stain and Iida, each holding one side of the giant ice box, walking up the stairs. It was a combination he never expected to see, in any capacity.

“Oh! Midoriya-kun!” Iida said, a bright smile on his face as he waved, “You might want to step a little to the side while we come up,” he said.

Numbly, Izuku did just that.

“Hey,” Stain said, “Spinner said he’ll be a little late. He has my gift.”

“Late... ?” Izuku replied back. "Gift…?"

“Nii-san said he and Toyomitsu-san will be by with Tsukauchi and the others after their late night shift. Please let me know if they overstay their welcome,” Iida said, slightly out of breath but with a wide grin. As always, it pinched his heart a little to see the innocent shine on his face, but experience made it a lot easier to return that grin with one of his own.

“I knew we should have done this at the estate,” Shoto sighed, coming up the stairs holding several insulated bags. “There’s no way we’re all going to be able to fit inside of your apartment.”

“It’ll be a cold day in hell because I go back to the compound,” Dabi replied back, also with his own assortment of insulated bags as he wiped his excess sweat off his face and onto his shirt sleeve.

“Hey, Izuku!” Natsuo cheered, coming around the corner to climb up the staircase with Fuyumi behind him, both of them were carrying insulated bags.

...Should it worry him that they all had so many insulated bags? Why did they have so many insulated bags anyways?

The four looked at him and gave him a variety of waves and grins. It was in that moment, with their smiles side by side, that Izuku is reminded that they are family. It’s a humbling and a little lonely to think about, but he’s ultimately glad that they get along much better.

He’d never know this for certain, but maybe it was easier to forgive people in a world without heroes.

“Wha… What brings you guys around?” he asked, almost forgetting himself even as everyone seemed to pile in.

Dabi and Shoto frowned, in the exact same way at the exact same time, but before they could say anything, a young girl came running to hug him around the waist.

“Izu-nii!”

Eri’s smile could end all wars, and Izuku felt his chest threaten to burst at the sheer magnitude of joy he felt when he saw her toothy grin. Without thinking much about it, he lifted her up by her pits and spun her around with a loud laugh. She shrieked back, and thinks that there is no greater honor than to be able to hold her like this.

He was certain that her laugh infected him, and he was glad that this part of her hadn’t been ruined.

“Hey, Eri!” he said brightly. “What brings you here?”

“Happy birthday, Izu-nii!”

Izuku’s smile froze and he put her down.

“...Birth...day?”

“I told you he would forget,” Chisaki’s smooth voice came through as he stepped forward with a grill under his arm. He tipped his head forward to the young man, a bouquet of flowers in his arms as he extended it towards him, “Happy birthday, Izuku. The others send their regards.” He eyed the off-duty police officers to the side, “We’ll swing by again later.”

Izuku blinked back.

“...My birthday…?”

There had to be a mistake. They were here for him? For his birthday? How could that be?

“Yeah, Izuku, it’s your birthday, that’s why we’re all here,” Shinsou said. “Are you okay? You look green.”

“Wait, no, I…”

"Amazing. Telling him we are here for a birthday party short-circuited him."

"Izu-nii," Eri chimed in happily, "You don't have to spend your birthdays alone anymore because I'll spend them with you!"

His eyes started to water.

"Oh god, now he's crying."

"Hey, assholes!" Shimura called from three floors above at the railings, "If we wanna eat by six, we gotta start cooking now!"

"Stop fucking cursing in front of minors!" Dabi snapped back.

Walking by Izuku, he gave him another look, pausing just long enough to ruffle his hair before heading up.

"Don't just gawk there."

Izuku, numbly, nodded and let Eri lead him away by the hand. He rubbed at his eyes, and wondered if it was Deku-kun crying or him.

It couldn’t be him. His birthday wasn’t for another week and a half. So it must be Deku-kun’s birthday. He could hardly believe that they were a week apart in age, or that Deku was actually older than him. But he swallowed the dismay and guilt at accepting someone else’s birthday gifts as his own.

-

His tiny apartment was packed. They were overflowing and snapping at each because elbows were in each other's ribcage and no one could turn or move more than a foot and a half in any direction. His windows were all open but it remained too hot with all the food and bodies packed in.

"We are never doing this again here," Tokoyami said darkly. Beside him, Koda nervously eyed the way Shigaraki was yelling at Aizawa, and the unattended fire that Yamada was pouring more lighter fluid into. The resulting burst of flame had several of them reeling backwards. "There are way too many people here. This is a fire hazard."

“Yeah, we’re going to die,” Kaminari said, as though he had already accepted his fate.

And while Izuku agreed, he doesn't think he has ever been in a place with this much life before. Everyone had given him one or several pats on his head and his back, he's gotten hugs and an overwhelming amount of warmth. While Eri and Chisaki had left earlier, it didn’t ease the crowded space by much.

His table was packed with food and there weren't enough room for the people around it.

"...Oi, Deku," Kirishima said, handing him a handkerchief. "It's okay. It doesn’t actually bother us that much."

"Yeah," Izuku said quietly, taking the offer to wipe at his eyes. "It is, isn’t it?"

### (July) \*Visiting Mom

“Where are you going?”

“I’m going to visit someone,” Midoriya replied back. “I’ll be gone for the day. Watch over the house for me while I’m gone, okay?”

“No wait,” Dabi frowned, “but where are you going to be? Who’s going to be with you?”

Midoriya stared at him for another moment and then burst out laughing. Never one to outwardly show his irritation, Dabi tilted his head instead and waited for the man to calm down.

Wiping a stray tear from his eye, he continued, “Really, don’t worry about it. I’ll be back sometime tonight. Oh man, you sounded like an overprotective brother for a moment there-”

“Then, should I come with you? You wouldn’t make me worry, right?”

The laughter died down, and the young man smiled.

“...I’ll be in the next town over. There’s someone I have to apologize to,” he said. “It’s going to take all day, and it’ll be really boring.”

“Knowing you, you’ll end up at the center of a crime syndicate.”

He winced, but after that stunt a few months ago, thinks it’s a justified response. He rubbed the back of his neck.

“I… Sorry, Dabi,” he said at last, “I want to be alone.”

“...You have your phone?”

“Huh? Yeah, it’s right here-”

“Just keep me updated then. Be back for dinner.”

Midoriya blinked owlishly before he grinned back.

“Thank you,” he said.

-

This year, meeting Deku’s mother was just like meeting Deku’s mother last year too.

Except, when he was walking out, there was a man who grabbed him by the arms.

### Creepy stalker (?)

>> idk i might make it nine’s older brother, who is university professor that <3 inko.

>> and saw ‘inko’, actually Midoriya, and goes absolutely Full Psycho Stalker. Hires Kamui as a Private Eye to stalk Midoriya. Eventually gets put down by the police (Stain is Unhappy) and Nine comes to him like “yo so sorry about this” & eventually hears about midoriya from gossiping nurses.

>>btw Shigaraki works for Scissors. And Dabi works for Kamui’s folk. So.

>> Midoriya hires Sakamata because he thinks that the stalker is dangerous.

>>in reality, 3 groups are stalking him. NotDangerousButSuperCreepy!Professor, and a group that Chimera is looking into like “yo you got a name for yourself in the underground… how?” [ie the guy from vigilante or it’s the professor?] and brava (who is like, Gentle’s a ...fan of who?)

[yoshino inoue -> ie the VA’s name ]

-

### Hiring Sakamata

“...Hello?”

“...Sa…” the voice cut out, coughing once before it came back, “Sakamata-san?”

Sakamata pulled his phone out to physically check the unidentified number.

“Izuku?”

He couldn’t believe it.

“Ah, yes, this is Izuku. I-I’m terribly sorry for bothering you so late at night-”

“No, not at all. I was just surprised. For a while, I thought you were just going to ignore me until I hunted you down myself.”

Of course, Sakamata was definitely not doing that. He wasn’t slowly making his way through all the possible people that Midoriya could have been in contact with. He wasn’t keeping tabs on the whereabouts of all the high schools in the area until he could cut down to the one that mattered the most to him. He was going to carefully bide his time, and jump in as soon as Deku before the young man could even ask.

Needless to say, he got very busy trying to just find the shadow of a teen named “Izuku.” By the time he found any trace of him, it was long after the events had occurred.

“Haha, I guess we just kept missing each other,” he said, nervously. Truly, he had to be the worst liar ever.

“Well, I sincerely doubt that you’re calling to check in on me,” Sakamata said, eager to get to the meat of why this man finally called on him, “What gives?”

“I was hoping to get some advice, actually,” he said.

“Alright. I’m free tomorrow evening,” he said, motioning at his secretary.

Said secretary leapt up to his feet and began to scramble around. Heh, that’s what he gets for eavesdropping so shamelessly. The man ran about until he showed Sakamata his tablet screen, and his boss narrowed his eyes. Damn words were too damn small. Well, it looked like he would be wrapping everything up by four, considering travel time and the time to freshen up...

“Does six work for you? Let me know where I can pick you up.”

“Oh, no, it’s just a question. You don’t have to clear out your schedule-”

“Are you rejecting me? I guess I was the only one who missed the other.”

From the pinched expression on his secretary’s face, it was a low blow. Or cringey. He wasn’t sure what would be worse.

But whatever, he said it. It had been a long time since he’d gotten rejected, but it’s fine and he can deal with it. Of course, it had also been a long time since he put himself out there like this, but that's another story for another time.

A long sigh came through, “Thank you for making the time for me. I’ll see you tomorrow then.”

Sakamata’s grin was so wide his face hurt, even though Midoriya hung up almost immediately afterwards.

“...Sakamata-san,” his secretary said, eyebrows pinched and shoulders sagging.

“It worked,” he said, radiating with joy. “Go order me a new tie. It should… match a forest green.”

“Sakamata-san…”

He took a deep breath and bowed forward.

“Yes sir.”

-

Standing in a crisp suit with a bouquet of roses, ranging from white to red in color and tone Thursday evening, wasn’t how Sakamata thought his week would go. However, standing at the park entrance, right in front of the backseat car doors to his expensive and sleek black Mercedes, he couldn’t think of a better way to spend his time. Even his own men were excited at the prospect of seeing *him* again.

“Gang Orca-san!”

He looked up, because what the fuck was a Gang Orca, and he felt something in his heart tighten when he saw the person he had been waiting for.

“Izuku,” he greeted with a frown, “You look like shit.”

The last time he saw this kid, he walked like he carried the world on his shoulders as he limped after brawling (and winning) with his men for the better part of an hour. Spitting out blood, his eyes glowed with a determined fire but he never forgot his manners. Midoriya had carved his name into Sakamata in an instant.

“Is it that bad?” Midoriya asked back, rubbing the back of his neck in an endearing way. He sighed and then gave a helpless smile back at the older man. “Well, you look good though. Did you come from somewhere?”

He wished he could say the same. Midoriya looked like he hadn’t slept in days. He was pale like he hadn’t seen the sun in a while, and thin in a way that made it feel like the wind would blow him away. Sakamata didn’t really think about it, concerning the area that the kid lived in and his eagerness to always do the Right Thing, but perhaps his home life was worse than he thought.

He wasn’t sure when Midoriya became one of His, but there was no going back now.

Could he just steal him away? It was probably morally ambiguous, but he had the money and the means to do it and get away with it. It would be fine as long as the parents don’t fight him on it, right? If they didn’t care that their kid was out till early in the morning, supporting broken bones and spewing blood out of his mouth, then they wouldn’t care if he took him, right? At least, if Midoriya stayed with him, he would fill out more. He would get the proper training and nutrition so that he didn’t look so bone-weary tired. And all his employees adore him already.

Filing the thought for his secretaries to look through, he stepped back to pop open the car door.

“Let’s go,” he said.

Midoriya eyed the car and then looked back at him. Right when he looked like he was going to fight him on this, the older man shook his head.

“I don’t have the time for this. Just follow my schedule.”

“Oh, right.”

Midoriya looked so defeated when he said that, but he obediently climbed in. Sakamata got in afterwards and motioned to the driver to start making their way to their reservation. He looked at Midoriya, and the way he looked around the car in childish awe.

What was he thinking? If he took this kid away from the dangers he sprinted to, would it still be Midoriya? If he could remove all the danger from around him, could he look at Sakamata like that?

He gave a low sigh.

He had to pick up someone really troublesome, huh?

-

“...Boss, we are here,” the driver said, aftering coming around to open the door open for him.

Sakamata gave a curt nod, and climbed out of the vehicle. After a moment of pause, he turned back to where Midoriya hadn’t followed him. Without thinking much about it, he extended his hand out to the young man.

“C’mon,” he said. “We don’t have all night.” Even though he really wished that wasn’t the case.

However, Midoriya defied all expectations, as he always does. Instead of looking repulsed at the fact that Sakamata’s sweaty hands were large and webbed, he took it without hesitation and didn’t even blink twice at it.

If the bright-eyed look his driver was any indication, this was something that would be told to the rest of the company as soon as he turned his back. He didn’t pay them to gossip, those damn bastards.

He narrowed his eyes at his driver, and the man dipped his head into a bow. Midoriya, bless his heart, thanked him profusely for the safe travel and the two gushed about the car. Well, the driver gushed and Midoriya was earnestly impressed. If Midoriya wasn’t careful, the rest of them would kidnap him instead.

He cleared his throat and gave his driver a meaningful stare. The man nodded back curtly, and after getting a chirpy farewell from Midoriya, left with the car.

“And uh… where is here?” the student asked, eyeing the tall skyscraper in front of him.

“I’m hungry,” Sakamata said, “so we will be discussing this over dinner. ...Are you not hungry?”

Just then, his stomach growled and Midoriya’s face turned scarlet. The larger man had the decency to cover his face when he tried to stifle his laughter.

“I-I’m really not dressed-”

“Relax, this is a place that doesn’t mind how I look,” the man said smoothly. “They won’t care how you're dressed since I’m the one that brought you.”

“...I…” Midoriya looked up at him, before his confusion gave way to a determined gaze, lit up by the lights of the hotel in front of them. “I won’t let you down!” he declared boldly.

With another gaze, he turned to walk into the hotel. He shortened his strides so that the young man wasn’t jogging to keep up with him, and relished in the warm gaze that he gave in return.

-

The good mood of the dinner took a nosedive when Midoriya finally explained why he called him up so suddenly. He supposed that it was wistful thinking that Midoriya just wanted to meet up with him just to talk. Even in the private room, with the city nightscape sprawled out to their side, Midoriya took two bites of the delicious foot before turning to business. Sakamata figured that there had to be a lot of things going on if this kid asked for help but…

“So, I was wondering if I could hire your expertise to help me protect them.”

...as it turned out, it wasn’t even for himself.

“You know, my services aren’t cheap,” he said.

“I have some savings.”

A dull pang echoed in his heart. Midoriya was a responsible kid, but reckless when it came to the possibility of helping someone else. He figured that was the case before, and after following the breadcrumbs of cases that he left behind, he had formed that theory. Right in front of him, however, the certainty.

He didn’t like it.

“It’s just for a week. I’ll have everything figured out in a week. But I can’t… I can’t be in two places at once,” he explained.

“And what are you going to be doing for the week then?”

There was no response. Sakamata stared at him, unsure what to make of the emotion that sat in his gut.

He couldn’t believe it. Most times, he’s counting down for the business dinner to end. His mood soured so quickly when people strayed from the business talk to bring up personal issues. He hated it when people tried to butter him up by bringing in unnecessary details.

And here he was, asking for details not pertaining to the job.

“You don’t need to know that for the job.”

He could hardly believe it. He was becoming the person that he hated the most. And at the center of all of it was the growing frustration that some 14 year old boy didn’t trust him. He shouldn’t care about it. This shouldn’t bother him.

He took a swing of his water. He felt so fucking pathetic.

“But thank you for considering it,” Midoriya said, and Sakamata hated his gentle gaze. “You’re really helping me out.”

-

“Just a security detail, huh?” he thought to himself, looking at the outline that Midoriya had lined out.

If he hadn’t experienced that craftmind before, he would have said that this kid had a wild imagination. If he didn’t meet the witnesses that experienced the Force of Nature that was Midoriya, he wouldn’t have believed it.

Staring at the details on the paper, it only confirmed it. The kid was ridiculously good at what he did, to a meticulous level. The information was detailed in a way that made Sakamata wish that Midoriya could come with him to every meeting.

He tucked the papers back into the manilla folder. The case was too easy. His services were a waste here. The offered pay was lower than anything he had to do before (although it was enough that he had to wonder where Midoriya had that kind of money).

He didn’t hesitate to take it.

### The one where (almost) everyone met up

“...Takami-san?”

Takami jerked out of his stupor, his eyes turning to the person he was talking to. “Yes?”

“No, I just… did you see someone you know?”

The blond, despite himself, turned his head to where he last saw the shock of green. He couldn’t see it anymore, but the thought couldn’t stop nagging him. If that was Midoriya, who the fuck was that whale-guy that he was with? How many people did he know? Why doesn’t he ever share?

Was that why he was coming home late now? Was he involved in trouble again? Was that guy trouble?

“...Takami-san?”

“Ah, sorry, sorry,” the blond said, turning back to his companion and shoving the thought away. “Guess I’m more tired than I thought.”

His agent frowned and sighed. She shook her head and looked down at her tablet.

“I’ll cancel everything for the rest of the day and tomorrow,” she said, “Go get some rest.”

“Eh? No way, I’m fine-”

“Go,” she snapped back. “Your wings have been fluttering for a while and it’s annoying. If there’s someone you’re that desperate to see, then go.”

The blond stared at her for another moment, trying to register what happened. However, before she could change her mind, he nodded.

“Thank you,” he said, his grin replaced with an earnest expression that looked strange on him. “I’ll make it up to you later-”

And without another word, he turned back to run.

Across all the gray sidewalks and neon lights, he looked for that green.

-

“Today, at work, there was this guy that came in. He was huge, some kind of… animal quirk that made him look the way he did. Killer suit though. Looking at him, I felt like I could feel how rich he was from where I was behind the registrar. Standard thing, right? Except he got this ridiculous bouquet of flowers, a huge thing filled with roses, white, pink, and red. I would know, since I wrapped it. He said it was for a friend that he wanted to be noticed by,” Dabi said.

He touched the petals of one of the roses sitting at their kitchen counter. He rubbed the soft petal between his fingers, his expression carefully blank as he kept talking.

“Imagine my surprise when I came home and here it is, in my kitchen.”

He turned to Midoriya slowly and Midoriya kept his eyes on the ground.

“I didn’t even know that you had ties to some port-mafia boss.”

“Sakamata-san isn’t mafia,” Midoriya immediately defended, turning to frown at Dabi. When their eyes met, he saw the exasperated expression on his roommate’s face and deflated. “Uh. I mean-”

“Sakamata-san, huh?” Dabi replied back, his voice neutral. “Could have fooled me.”

There was another moment of silence. Blue eyes bore into green curls.

“He’s a bodyguard. Works… at some security company,” Midoriya said eventually, giving up.

Dabi arched an eyebrow at him.

“We met by accident. Don’t worry about it. We just met up for dinner and stuff.”

“Oh, a date.”

“No, no, no, not at all. He doesn’t like me at all. I’m just taking advantage of the situation. He’s not like that. I just… I’m just selfishly using him to my own ends.”

Dabi almost lit the entire bouquet on fire.

“Really?” he asked, turning back to the younger man, “then, what do I have to do for you to take advantage of me?”

Confusion flooded the younger man’s expression. The sight of it made something tighten inside of him.

“Dabi, what are you-”

“You’re getting involved in something dangerous again, aren’t you?”

“Don’t worry, I won’t get you involved,” he said quickly, as though that was the problem.

In an instant, Dabi was shoving him backwards and against the wall. His hands gripped his shoulders to ensure that he couldn’t escape. Midoriya yelped, surprised, but it was hard to hear when Dabi raised his voice.

“That’s not what I was worried about, you fucking idiot! Did you think that I wouldn’t help? Why didn’t you talk to me? Why didn’t you say that you wanted help? What...” he stared, lost and confused. The fight deserted him as his face twisted into something painful. “Just… what am I to you?”

Uncertain what to say, Midoriya spoke the truth.

“You’re Dabi.”

Dabi’s hands tightened even further, bordering on painful, before his hands relaxed. He gave this huff of a laugh, like he couldn’t fucking believe the shit that Midoriya said.

“Right,” he said quietly. “I’m just Dabi.”

Midoriya’s hand caught his hand. Eyes peered up at him, worried.

“Dabi, are you okay?” he said.

“Let me go.”

“No.”

When Dabi looked up to start yelling again, Midoriya shook his head again.

“You don’t look like you want to be alone right now.”

And it was amazing that Midoriya, somehow, said the words that Dabi had been waiting for.

### Creepy Stalker \*End (?)

-

“I’m used!” she screamed, “I’m broken! No one will ever want me!”

She sobbed, her hands covering her face as she cried.

More than any punch or kick, her words hurt him the most.

“Why did you have to come?” she cried, “Why did you have to tell them? Now, I’ll only ever be a victim. If you had to butt in, why couldn’t you have actually saved me?”

And he realized that he was wrong the whole time. Heroes or not, villains or not, this world wasn’t that different from his in the slightest.

His hand came up to his heart, and he wondered how Deku saw himself.

### Used and Broken

“...Is it better to be with someone who’s never been together with someone else?”

Shigaraki’s knife slide against the cutting board, Dabi choked on his water, and Hawks’ jaw unhinged.

The three looked towards each over before they turned their full attention to Midoriya, who was finishing his homework.

“What… brought this up?” Hawks asked slowly.

“...Ah, some of the guys in class were talking about it,” Midoriya lied, still unable to forget the way that girl was crying. Well, it wasn’t exactly a lie, since the boys did talk about this, but exactly about what he brought up.

“Phew,” Shigaraki sighed back.

“Hm, personally, I think it’s better to be experienced. There's less unreasonable demands and fantasies and stuff,” Hawks spoke up. He crossed his arms over his chest and leaned back, “But I get what people mean by the ‘first-time’ should be special.”

“But if they don’t… if they’ve… already had their first time,” Midoriya said, placing his pencil on his notebook to stare at the older man, “then it’s not… not a bad thing, right?”

His hand was shaking, and he wondered if it was him.

“I don’t think it’s that big of a deal,” Hawks said, his eyes turned to Midoriya, and a gentle smile began to stretch across his face. “Some people really care and some people really don’t. But for me, I just want to be with someone who wants me as much as I want them. We can figure it out from there. That’s why we call it love, right?”

Seemingly satisfied with the answer, Midoriya nodded slowly.

“...The person that you like is a lucky person, Hawks,” he said, giving him a blinding grin.

The thought of his loved one must have been amazing, because the blond’s smile melted down to something even more gentle. Just the sight of his eyes, raw and open to the world, made Midoriya’s cheeks heat. Hawks was always a dangerously handsome man, but sometimes, he looked at Midoriya like that, a gaze that he couldn’t decipher, an emotion that he couldn’t name.

He gave Midoriya a tired smile.

“Yeah,” he said quietly, “Something like that.”

-

### Stain Finds Clips

The last thing he expects is to see Midoriya on the screen.

The small smile the kid used to give him is overlapped with the dead-eyed view of the same kid in front of him. He stared for much too long, too shocked to do anything else but stare in absolute horror as the clip of someone forcing their way into that kid's body appeared on the computer monitor. The sound was quiet, like it was plugged into a pair of headphones and set to full blast, but he knew that he would never unhear it.

He saw the lifeless look in his eyes, the tired slump of his body, and if Stain wasn’t familiar with the vulgar scars that danced along Midoriya’s chest, he wouldn’t have ever thought they were the same person. But the more he stared, the more he saw.

The more he saw, the less it made sense.

"Oh fuck!" One of the men yelled out.

"Shit, who the fuck are you?"

He remembered Midoriya's little laugh when Akakuro once told him that he would protect him and only felt the roar in his ears call for blood.

-

When he comes to, Tsukauchi and his new black eye is staring back at him.

"... You with us now?" He asked quietly. "You really gave us a scare you know. We almost had to call the whole operation off.” He passed him a bottle of water, looking weary and tired as he sat down on the seat, staring at Akakuro sternly. “Here's some water. Tell me what happened so I can try and save both our asses to the Chief."

Akakuro stared at the cup of water. He doesn't know when, but he feels like his entire life could be explained in terms of Midoriya, the kid who once asked him to step down from the ledge. He doesn't know how to feel about that.

He drank the water and tried to sort through his thoughts.

"...On the monitor," he said quietly. He had a good idea on what had happened, but he didnt think that he had ever lost his temper like that since he was a child. "...I know the guy who was on the monitor."

Tsukauchi gave a long, suffering breath. "I see. Midoriya-kun, right?"

He couldn't bring himself to say anything, so he nodded.

"...I figured that would be the case, so I already told the boss. I… we will figure out the tape," he said. He looked Akakuro right in the eyes. "We're going to stop… whatever that was. But for now, you’re on probation. Go to him and bum off him for a week okay?"

Akakuro would happily blow off his entire pay if it meant he could express to his partner how thankful he was for him.

"You… If it is Midoriya-kun… we will need to talk about that, too. So if you… just take some time okay?"

It wasn't said, but if that was Midoriya, then there were a thousand things that they needed to cover. Starting with the fact that there were videos of Midoriya being gang-bang’d and mutilated, there was a long list of perpetrators that Stain would hunt down. Given the fact that the kid hasn’t even finished his first year of high school, this had to have been filmed in middle school. Aside from the obvious child pornography laws that would explode out, this was going to haunt Midoriya for the rest of his life depending on how widely distributed this video was.

But more importantly, he literally saw Midoriya yesterday. They had a late-night snack together at the oden stand that Stain found and thought he would like (and he was right, Midoriya was over the moon when he took that first bite).

He felt physically ill.

-

“...Stain?”

“...Izuku,” he said quietly.

Akaguro still has to check the number plates on the apartment doors to get to his place, but he doesn’t even know which number plate is Midoriya’s yet he’s never been wrong.

“You’re back!” he cheered. Immediately, the sight of his smile was overlapped with the exhausted expression on the video, and Akaguro felt his heart twist. “We just finished dinner, but we made way too much. You’re probably really hungry, right? How was your shift? Come on in-”

Akaguro grabbed Midoriya’s wrist, and when Midoriya didn’t flinch but just turned curious eyes up to him, he realized that he didn’t know anyone stronger than Midoriya. His eyes were bright, clear and radiant, and the sight that used to bring peace to his thoughts were now tainted.

“I’m sorry,” he said, because someone needed to say it.

Midoriya stared back and his expression turned into confusion.

“...It’s just dinner?” he said, “But if you’re really sorry, can you go buy some more rice for us?”

He stared a little harder, the frustration bubbling up and he didn't know what else to do but stand there. There had to be something, but nothing came up.

“I saw the video,” he said quietly, after a long moment of looking for what he should say,“Where… where you were in middle school.”

All the color in Midoriya’s face drained, and Akaguro felt the cracks in his heart widen.

“...Let’s… take a walk,” he said quietly.

-

They sat down at some bench in the park closest to Midoriya’s apartment at some odd hour in the evening. There were plenty of young people, specifically couples, that were also here, but no one seemed to notice them.

They sat there in silence, as they did the whole walk here. To his defense, Akaguro tried hard to think of something to say, but came up with nothing in the end. He didn’t know what to say or how to say it. He didn’t know what the [right thing] to say was, or how he was going to inform Midoriya about the investigation process.

“...I’m sorry,” Midoriya said quietly, gathering his attention in an instant. “I… probably sounded really insincere, right? All the times that we did talk.”

“...You shouldn’t be sorry,” he said quietly, after a pregnant pause. “You, of all people, shouldn’t have to be sorry.”

“...I think someone should apologize for putting that look on your face,” Midoriya replied back. “It’s okay. It was a long time ago. I didn’t even know you back then-”

“Are you comforting me? Are you seriously trying to comfort me right now?”

Green eyes stared at him and then nodded. “Yeah,” he said.

“I should be the one to comfort you. They… You-You couldn’t even fight back-” Akaguro cut himself off. His throat felt tight, but his eyes remained dry. Filled with a misplaced anger, he doesn’t know what to do with all this emotion he’s never had before.

“Yeah,” the young man said, shrugging, like this wasn’t his problem or something. “And I got better. It’s fine. So you don’t have to worry about it anymore, okay?” He leaned in to stare at Akaguro, eyes still filled with genuine concern, and Akaguro doesn’t understand how he dared to find comfort in that.

Akaguro doesn’t know what kind of expression he must have had, because Midoriya’s hand reached to rest his hand on his thigh and squeeze lightly.

“I’m okay. I’m here,” he said, voice certain in a way that made Akaguro feel like a lost kid. “Don’t worry, okay?”

One day, Akaguro swore to himself. One day, Midoriya won’t need to be strong, and he wouldn’t need to comfort someone because he had been wronged.

On that day, he’ll be there to make sure of that.

-

“I don’t know what you said to Izukun here,” Yamada said, bright and dandy although his eyes promised a painful death, “And I really don’t care.”

Akaguro stared back, and felt the piercing gaze from behind those obnoxious orange sunglasses.

“But you know, you should really watch yourself. Just because you’re a cop doesn’t mean you’re untouchable, you know?”

There was no veritable proof, but Stain has no doubt that some of the strays that Midoriya collects have a certain type of darkness to them. He knows this, since he used to be one of them, too.

“And making people disappear is what we were known for. If you catch my drift.”

To so boldly threaten a police officer, Akaguro has no doubt that Yamada would live up to this threat even if he was up against the entire JSDF. While Midoriya had a perchance to invite a certain type of danger to him, he also knows how to find a way for the most dangerous ones to stay loyal to him. If it had been anyone else other than Midoriya, Akaguro would have been concerned.

He almost wants to tell Yamada. And then he wants to turn in his badge so they can go on a crusade to find all the people who have ever dared wrong Midoriya in such an irreversible way.

He thinks about the smile on Midoriya’s face, and decides to trust the young man who saved him all those months ago instead.

### Future Plans ( 2)

“Yeah, I thought about the future and stuff,” Midoriya said, nodding. He tipped his head back away from the soup he was stirring. “But apparently, I can’t join the police force.”

Shigaraki’s head snapped over from where he was cutting through all the vegetables, “You? Wanted to be a cop?” he asked, incredulous. And then, after a brief moment of consideration, nodded, “No, you’re definitely the type. Probably thinks that cops are good and shit.”

Midoriya gave a little huff of laughter, eyes shining in their mirth. “Of course, the police are there to protect the people, you know.”

Shigaraki rolled his eyes, “In a perfect world maybe.”

“So, why aren’t you?” Aizawa asked, not even pausing from where he was peeling potatoes in the corner of the room.

“Huh? Oh, they did a background check and said I was too high-risk,” Midoriya replied back.

“Oh wow, and they didn’t arrest you?” Aizawa asked.

“Why would Tsukauchi… oh!” Midoriya snapped his fingers, “No, no, it wasn’t because I went all Vigilante on them,” he said. “I’m pretty sure they all know too, but they’re super nice to let me keep going, huh-”

“Then what did they find in your records that they can’t have?” Shigaraki said, frowning.

“Ahhh….” Midoriya drew the sound out for a bit and then turned the fire off. “The soup’s done-”

“Why’d you bring it up if you didn’t want to talk about it?” his roommate snapped out.

“It’s just,” the young man hesitated, wringing his hands together. “Uhm… Don’t be angry, okay?”

There was a long silence.

“...They said that I was high-risk because there’s a lot of uh… videos of people I’m in contact with doing really bad stuff floating around. And it makes the background check really hard,” he continued. His hand came up to rub at his arms, “And I end up in the hospital too often.”

“Those are some shitty excuses,” Shigaraki, who doesn’t know the content of the videos of what happened to Midoriya, replied back. “This just goes to prove that they’re shitbags. They probably don’t want someone who will make a decent change in the world.”

Midoriya figured that it was gross to be with someone who’s been used as a public toilet before, but doesn’t know how to explain it to Shigaraki. So instead, he smiled.

“You think really highly of me, huh, Tomura?”

The way red eyes widened, before the bright flush that crawled onto his face, was a new memory that Midoriya would treasure.

“I’m just messing with you,” he giggled out. Aizawa snorted, and he wondered if, in another world, he and his teacher could have gotten this close.

The thought leaves him, as always, a little hollow on the inside.

-

“What happened to your farm?”

“My farm?”

Midoriya blinked slowly and then tilted his head to think about it. Shinsou stared at him with no little amount of fondness.

“My farm!” he exclaimed with glee, and then, after thinking a little harder about it, groaned. He sat back down, “Can’t leave the apartment,” he said. “No farm for me.”

He placed his head on the table and groaned.

“We would have been great farmers, too,” he sighed.

Sympathetically, and Midoriya was certain that Shinshou was the only person that could feel any form of sympathy here, his friend gave him an awkward pat on the back.

“There’s plenty of other things that you could do,” he tried to reason.

“Like…?”

“...Like something,” Shinshou replied back after a long moment of deliberation.

He snickered when Midoriya groaned back. He peeked up at him and smiled against his arm. He was glad that Shinshou was finally in a good enough place in the world where he could joke about these kinds of things now. He was glad that they were friends, he was, really.

But he had a Shinshou back at < home >.

With how crazy everything was here, he had completely put his <getting back home> plans on the shelf, but now that he finally felt like everything was going to be okay for everyone here, he can go back now. They were all taking steps in the right direction, and they were starting to really step out into a better world.

It might just be because he’s impatient, but he does want to go home. He wants to return this world to the Deku-kun that he stole this from. He was certain that Deku-kun going to be okay now. It could be a little lonely at times, but he wouldn’t be alone anymore.

The phone that used to only be filled with vulgarities and insults has been completely replaced with pictures and videos of people who instinctively smile when they see him.

He leans back against his seat, taking in the small smile on Shinsou’s face, and returns it with a smile of his own.

He wants to go home.

### Shadow of Him

In the corner of his eye, he would see a shadow. When did this begin? He didn’t know. It was quite possible that he’s been here this whole time, and Midoriya was only now recognizing it.

And then, one day, he looked out the window and thought about what a nice day it would be to eat lunch outside, and he saw himself.

Or perhaps, what he saw was Deku.

Standing in a hospital gown, hair matted and covered in dirty bandages, Midoriya was forced to stare at his other self-it had to be him\*as he was when he woke up here, all those months ago. At the gates of the school, those eyes\*exhausted and devoid of life\*stared back at him. It wasn't angry. It wasn’t accusing.

He was just staring at him. Haunting.

“Midoriya-kun?” he heard distantly, “What are you doing?”

And then, the him from a few months ago-but it couldn’t be\*turned around and Midoriya didn’t hesitate. He unlocked the window and, without any regard for anyone or anything else, he jumped from the second floor.

He rolled off the jump, and broke out into a blind sprint. He didn’t know how to explain it but that he needed to do this. If he let this ghost-this illusion\*get away now, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

-

Moreso than blindly running, he felt like he was possessed.

He got hit by a car and he just got back up and kept running. He ran through some signs, tripped over several things, got dinged by a bike, and he kept running. He ran through several buildings without regard for anything. He fell hard when he jumped over the railing between the wildlife and the road, and skinned his entire arm on the fall down. His uniform was ripped and stained. There were probably twigs in his hair.

But he didn’t feel tired or hungry or thirsty, and instead just ran like it was the only thing he knew how to do.

He doesn’t even realize that it’s way in the middle of the night until he plunges into the water. What? Water?

No way, did he seriously run from the school to the port? That was… a long distance, wasn’t it? No, no, that’s not what mattered right now.

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.

“Midoriya!”

He jerked, eyes coming off the waters and resting on Sakamata.

“W-what the fuck were you thinking?! Do you know what time of the year it is?!”

The man, also soaked to the bone, stared at him. Around them, his men fretted nervously and a towel came around him. Did he pull him out of the water? How long had he been there?

Midoriya’s eyes turned back to the waves, where he could have sworn that Deku-kun was, and felt his eyes water. 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 streamed down his face, an aching pain 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. Dry-heaving and sobbing uncontrollably, this body finally responded the way he wanted it to, and it made him feel awful.

### Post Coma

Weary from sprinting for several hours straight, plunging into the cold waters for some time, and exhausted from the emotional trauma that came from realizing that he’ll never go back, 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 Shigaraki 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 understands that he really 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.

“Deku?” Shigaraki’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.

Shigaraki 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 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... my hand?”

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

Shigaraki, 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.

“Don’t go where I can’t follow you,” he whispered quietly. “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.

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

Dabi 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.

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

“W-wait, it’s not Shiga-”

Dabi’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.

“You fucking 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 Dabi’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.

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

Midoriya felt his heart stutter in its beat, and he closed his eyes tightly. 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, without you?”

### 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.

It was on purpose, however. He chased a ghost halfway through the city and ended up in the waters, completely willing, after all. How should he answer this?

“Was it… on purpose?

But if he said that, 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 and got into a traffic accident,” 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.

“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 Dabi and Shigaraki, 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 living beings. 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.

“Why was I worried about you?”

“Because, Kacchan,” Midoriya said, a painful smile on his face as he regarded him, “we’re best 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 even noticed. And no one even cared. 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.

“...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 a 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. Touya breathing started to turn erratic and he bit down on his lip.

While watching, Dabi 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 Dabi’s veins turned to ice.

“Izuku…?” he quietly approached him. He didn’t want to contribute to the nightmare, but if he, with his face, woke him up, then wouldn’t it make his nightmares worse? He didn’t want that. He didn’t want confirmation that Midoriya thought his face was scary.

“Please… Please 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.

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 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. His other hand ran through his hair, “I-I’m fine. I…”

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.

“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.

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. “Gnight.”

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.

### Height- 2 weeks later

“Oh, well, what do you know?”

Midoriya looked up as a hand came to the top of his head and ruffled it playfully.

“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’s, or anyone else’s, body that he was trashing anymore. Just his.

“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 and laughs was safer and better for him.

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

And Deku was no hero.

### Future With Deku

Dabi 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 Dabi 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.”

-

“...Esteem 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 he?”

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

Enji eyed him, and took a deep breath in. Touya didn’t know who was his therapist, but 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. 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. A piece of plastic 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.”

### waa