### **Summary:**

* Winter: LOV + Hawks + Shouji
* Spring: UA staff + students
* Sets the stage of why they let Helmet do as Helmet pleases. The more people that come in, the more important that 'perfect ideal' becomes

### **Can't be a hero**

In hindsight, Midoriya Izuku was probably the last person that All Might got to rescue before the world ended, or started to end.

To think that by telling a 13 year old that a quirkless kid can’t be a hero would save him, but maybe it was because he knew that he couldn’t ever be a hero, he acted like this.

He’s not a hero. He doesn’t even have a quirk. As far as redeeming qualities, he’s down on that count too. He’s not smart or strong or fast or anything. He’s awkward at best and a stuttering mess at worst. These days, he thought that he was always at his worst.

### **Stain & Doggo (1)**

There was this crazy guy, Stain thinks, that has been diligently killing every Walker he comes across.

He was small and slow, and from the way he throws his body into each of his swings with reckless abandon, Stain was certain that he was a young kid or a really dumb and small adult. It was hard to get a gauge on him since he was completely covered from head to toe in athletic clothing and various protective equipment from several different sports. Good try. But his actions would only lead to the same result, another Walker waiting to be turned.

Whatever, it kept the majority of the Walkers’ in the area busy and away from him. So he went on his way.

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The fourth time he saw the stranger in a helmet, about two months since he had first seen him at all, he was holding a dog.

One of those bastards then.

Stain knows that, eventually, he’ll be starving and hungry enough to turn to hunting any of the numerous strays that wandered the streets, but he wants to get that desperate first. There was plenty of food, if you knew where to look, that is nearing their expiration date, and he wanted to get through first.

The dog was already dying, if its slow labored breathing and dripping blood was any indication. It would be kinder to just put it down. That bastard was probably marked by the other dogs in that pact now, and if Stain thought it was surprising that he lived this long to begin with, he was shocked beyond words when he saw him again, several weeks later.

Some dogs by his side, running around him, barking once or Twice, before running away. He gave them a little nod, and with his trusty bat on his shoulder, he kept moving to take out more Walkers.

What?

### **Chisaki - Unfamiliar**

Honestly, Chisaki Kai felt more dead than alive. With every passing day, the filth in the world became worse and worse, and honestly, he’s more surprised that there is anything left at all to ruin. After a year of wandering and wondering, he gets careless.

And he and Kurono end up exhausted and fatigued, surrounded on all sides of Walkers and he doesn’t even care anymore. They’re both injured from a messy get-away from the first horde that found them. It’s hard to stand on his sprained ankle, and he was bleeding from the probably infected cut on his arm.

They hadn’t been bit yet. But he thinks that it’s a matter of time now.

He was too tired and hungry to even try to use his quirk, and there wasn’t much that Kurono could do either. He doesn't want to kill himself. He doesn’t want to commit suicide. He knows that would desecrate the last memory of the Boss, but he doesn’t want to be alive anymore.

His lab had been destroyed and abandoned. All his research to cure the Quirk epidemic was lost before it could even begin. Still, he had little Eri back at their temporary base and he thinks that killing her to send her back to her family would be a mercy.

But even if he died, he had no one to reunite with. He knows that he’ll probably just be dragged straight to hell. He doesn’t know if that’s preferably to the eternal state of purgatory this lifetime was.

It was made even worse because the idiots that followed him, still followed him, still stared at him with awe and expectations. The bastards truly believed that he would find a way to cure all of this. For a bunch of tools, they had some audacity to try and expect anything out of him.

Bullshit.

They’ve been on the run for too long. He’s too tired to think, and as his entire life seems to play in front of his eyes, he thinks that he’s going to die today. Next to him, Kurono must be coming to the same realization. But alas, he didn’t know what he was saying because he couldn’t hear him.

The exhaustion hit him suddenly, and he succumbed to the pain.

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When he woke up, the first thing he smelled was laundry detergent. It was such a wonderful and nostalgic smell. He doesn’t know how he made it to heaven, but he never wanted to leave.

And then the pain came in.

He hissed, and tried to sit up. He got about halfway there before the door opened and Kurono walked in. He stared at him, and Kurono stared back. He opened his mouth, closed it, and then his eyes started to water.

“Kai…” he whispered out quietly, “You’re… up?”

Chisaki stared at himself. He was patched up, and he can recognize Kurono’s work when he sees it. The man had patched him up? How? How did he get them out of that position? How did he procure these kinds of supplies?

“We got saved,” Kurono explained. “Lemme get you some…” he rushed out and came back in a few seconds with two bottle waters, a bottle of pain medication, and a can of peaches. His hands were shaking as he dropped them onto Chisaki’s lap, and he apologized.

But Chisaki didn’t care for his apologies. “...Where did you get these?”

“...After you… After you passed out, someone came and saved us. He killed every single last one of the Infected. Then, he carried you all the way here. We are currently at an apartment complex about four miles from the alleyway we were at. I haven’t seen him since, but he brought all this food, medicine, and clean clothes to us,” the more he talked, the calmer he became. His report, as always, was short, to the point and simple.

“...You mean a survivor? A single survivor?”

“Yes.”

It sounded too good to be true. Had someone truly survived, after all this time, there had to be something wrong with him. There was just no feasible way for anyone to be alone and offer all of this to a bunch of strangers. And yet, Chisaki noticed with a critical eye that nothing had been tampered with.

“...This is cold.”

Kurono nodded, “At this apartment complex, there is running electricity and hot water.”

Despite himself, Chisaki straightened. Did that mean… they could take a hot shower? Or even a bath? Be clean?

Kurono must have seen the desperate look in his eyes because he nodded again. “The guy who brought us here said we could take hot baths.”

The former yakuza boss felt his breath catch. Could they… really be clean again? Even washing with cold water felt like a waste of such a precious resource, he couldn’t imagine the thought of taking a hot shower after all this time. Their water heater broke on the second week of winter, and it wasn't like they could rely on their quirks...

“...You said you haven’t seen him since?”

His childhood friend hesitated, “No. He dropped us off, gave us supplies, and left.”

He then pulled out a single key out of his pocket.

“...You mean…”

Kurono nodded back, “I don’t know if he has any master keys, but I have the door bolted and barricaded. We are on the second floor, and all of the windows have already been boarded up.”

Chisaki stared at the supplies on his bed, and understood that he didn’t have enough information to decide on a conclusion. And, from the sounds of it. Kurono was no help in that sense. He needed more information first.

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Chisaki met the ‘man’ that Kurno spoke of about three days after the incident. Both of them were almost back to full health, thanks to a good diet and plentiful rest.

There was an abundance of food in the apartment, and after a year of living frugally, it felt wrong to eat all of it. However, they found perishable food in the fridge, fruits and vegetables that they never thought they could see again.

They indulged on those. It would be a waste to let them spoil, after all.

But they otherwise lived minimally. Chisaki allowed himself one boiling hot shower, but got out quickly. It had felt so good, too good. He wanted to stay here forever.

More importantly he needed to stay on his guard. A place like this just couldn’t exist. It goes against everything every survivor stood for. People rarely helped others for nothing before the world ended, why would they change now that the world has fallen into disarray?

The sun is starting to dip into the horizon when he finally claps eyes onto the man.

With the way that Kurono described him, the first thought he had was that he was very short. He didn’t think that he had lost that much weight since the start of all of this, but he must have since this shrimp barely came up to his chest, but had apparently carried him the four miles and two flights of stairs with a bag of supplies.

He was in a baggy sweater and loose jeans. The sleeves at his wrist and ankles were tucked into his large gloves and bright red sneakers, and taped down with duct tape. He had an obnoxiously bright yellow backback on his back, a fucking fire hydrant at his side-duct taped to his thigh, but he doesn’t walk with a lean. It was something that he was clearly used to. He had two metal bats, one fitted snugly against his back, held by the straps of his backpack, and another in his hand.

He had a black full-face helmet, and his dark visor made it nearly impossible to see any facial features. His neck was completely covered, and with the way it seemed to tuck under the helmet, it was clear that he had himself completely bundled up.

All in all, his attire was clearly homemade, probably made from stealing various sporting goods and applied with a generous amount of do-it-yourself.

“...Thank you for helping us out,” he said. “As well as sharing your supplies and resources.”

It was hard because there wasn’t much to go on. Without a face to look at or any obvious signs of body language to go off of, he might as well have been talking to a wall. As it was, he just kept talking.

“It means a lot to me that you came to save me and my friend Hari. Please, let us know if there is anything we can do to repay this debt to you.”

And of course, if the price was too high, he was certain that he could get rid of this man before he does anything unsavory to them. Kurono never mentioned a quirk, which led Chisaki to believe that this man was someone whose quirk wasn’t useful in combat, or someone whose quirk only worked on living beings and not the infected. It was a dangerous gamble, but Chisaki was feeling at the top of his game.

The man stared at him, or he assumed that he was staring at him, since the helmet was facing him head on, before he turned away and began to walk away.

“Hey!” Chisaki snapped out before he managed to stop himself. With all the tension and disparity that had been building for the last few days, weeks, months, his nerves had all been shot to hell and his temper was dangerously short.

It was made even worse because of the place they were at. It was everything his lab used to be, safe and clean. It was well-stocked with supplies that could easily last them a few months, especially if the other apartments were similar.

“...Do you… understand me?”

The helmet turned back to him and nodded.

“...Are you mute?” he asked.

Again, another jerk of a nod.

Chisaki took a deep breath.

“...Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help,” he said. “It’s the least we can do for you.”

The helmet shook left to right and he frowned.

“...We’re trying to settle a debt. Do you understand? You saved our lives, gave us clean clothes, sheets and hot water. You gave us medicine and food in no little amount. We are trying to repay that back to you,” he stressed back.

This time, the helmet just turned back to the staircase and walked up instead. Chisaki stood there in shock.

It would be another day and a half before they saw each other again.

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Kurono and he felt good enough to take a walk around the block. It was a little scary, a little worrying, because they didn’t know what to expect.

As it turns out, their expectations were for naught, because there was literally nothing.

For a moment, if they just ignored the bloodstains here and there, it was like it was just the two of them in the whole world. With nothing but the breeze blowing between them, they walked around the block without even seeing a body. After all this time, it was such a strange concept.

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"...We will come back with our friends," Chisaki said, something burning brightly in his eyes.

It was such a nostalgic sight, and looking at it, Kurono felt dazed. He had forgotten how bright those eyes could get.

"Thank you again," he said. "We will definitely repay this favor."

### **Ojiro -**

Ojiro was a part of a group that was fine, and everyone got along, until the food ran out. This was a story that almost all survivors could relate to.

They fought, as people who both think that they are right do. The anxiety and helplessness boiled over, until the commotion drew a crowd. Looking back at it, Ojiro Masahiro understood what had happened, how it happened, the accumulation of events that occurred. In the moment, however, he was a 13 year old kid who just watched the adults, the people that he grew up with (Yama-ji who always slipped him free toppings on his ice cream, Kawasaki who went on a jog at the same time Ojiro commuted to school, Sasagawa who played the trombone when the sun started to dip into the horizon…) began to shift into the villains he grew up seeing on the television. The hands that used to ruffle his hair turned into fists, and the mouths that always had advice to share spat out venom.

“Mine! Mine!”

“ I don’t want to die for a kid!”

“Shut up! Shut up! You think you’re the only one that wants to live!?”

“Nothing matters! It doesn't matter! Look! Look outside?! For all we know, we’re the only ones here left!”

“I have to live! I have to get out of here! This can’t be the end for me!”

“You don’t need that! You’re plenty fat without that!”

“Give it to me, that’s mine!”

He didn’t even know who said what. He didn’t know if this was something they always thought, or if this was something that came as a result of being shoved into this awful situation together.

Human greed was an ugly, ugly thing. Ojiro, who wanted to be a hero and save people and instill hope into them, never knew how greedy he was for wishing for that. Peace was fragile. Humans were weak.

The monster came then. He wasn’t sure if it was better to watch everyone die from starvation, each other, or the monsters. A death as gruesome as the people that they were becoming.

A college-aged niichan in the neighborhood once told him that growing up meant that the world stopped being bright. That adults were boring because they no longer saw anything dazzling. Ojiro didn’t really get it then, but in the last few months they were holed up in the convenience store he used to get snacks from after school, he thought about it more.

Heroes stretched across candy wrappers and potato chip bags no longer looked brilliant to him.

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Lying on his back, wondering if he was about to die, he met a person in a motorbike helmet.

A lifetime of watching pop culture told him that this man was suspicious and probably a good person. A few months of spending time with people whose sweet smiles and encouraging words rotted away into something detestable made him cautious. Hide-san, who had forgotten who he was between losing his parents and his home, laid down at his feet, his head nothing more than a smear of gore blooming on the tiled ground. Someone who could come charging in, and knock a young adult down with a hit to the knees before plundering his head into nothing, was not someone to be taken lightly.

Ojiro hesitated. He lingered. He wondered.

“W-wait!” he called out. “Are you… are you alone?”

The person (a child? Maybe someone his age?) in the helmet turned to him. Although he was much smaller than him, his presence was magnanimous. Well, he supposed anyone who stood next to the body they killed would feel like that. Purely scientifically speaking, the human brain kicks up into high-gear in moments like this to take in as much information as it could before making a decision.

His leg still ached. His chest heaved. He was still trying to process the last two hours.

For some strange reason, an older memory suddenly resurfaced.

It was an old saying he heard his teacher say, once, a long time ago when he first voiced that he wanted to be a hero. It was after someone caught him when he was falling from a tree (to his defense, it was a tree that he always climbed before, and this was the one and only time he ever fell out of a tree).

He was told that kids can’t be heroes.

In front of him, the man in the helmet didn’t say anything. He killed another man, saved Ojiro’s life, and left a backpack with supplies to his feet. Caked in blood, armed with a dented metal bat, with corpses on all sides of him, Ojiro met a hero for the first time since the world ended.

The hero in the helmet looked dazzling.

“Did you… did you just save me?”

### **LOV**

Against all expectations, they would all make a full recovery and decide to make a home in some of the apartments on the second floor that Deku put them in the first night they came in.

so like the LOV didn’t even know each other until they were rounded up, roughed up, and tossed out

they were ‘released’ and ended up finding each other. About ~20 of them were exiled, and these were ones that Deku managed to salvage

### Iguchi Shuichi

Iguchi, Iguchi Shuichi, was going to die. He had a thousand regrets, and even though he felt like he had nothing to live for, didn’t want to die. He really wanted to try living first.

And then, he and a bunch of people that he has never met before, were suddenly tossed and abandoned by one of the only remaining survivor groups. They called themselves the ‘Liberation Front’ and they hated anything that didn’t follow them.

They were starved for a few days, beaten up a little, and then tossed out to die. As it turns out, there were Walkers in the area. They must have locked into their weakness, and they were going to die a gruesome death being eaten alive.

After everything, he didn’t think that he would die like this. He didn’t want to die like this. Fuck, he didn't want to die at all.

And then, a man in a helmet came swinging. Armed with a baseball bat, a fire hydrant strapped to his thigh, and a black helmet, he came swinging. He was small, but it was clearly a strength as he gave powerful swings and moved like he was water.

Then, as though that wasn’t enough, he had tirelessly came to offer them aid.

Not once did he say anything. He didn’t ask for names or wounds. He didn’t ask about where they came from or why they were here. He just passed him some water, got him some pain relievers (good god, he hadn’t even seen a bottle of pills in so long), and slowly but surely took each and every single one of them to another place.

The man in the helmet beckoned him to go with him. In his pain medicated-daze, he blindly followed. If this man were to kill him or lead them to a fate worse than death, he thinks that he’d just accept it.

When society was up and running, and he so desperately wanted to be saved, no one came for him. Now that the world had ended and he had hit a point where he could accept his own death, he’s saved.

They climb up the stairs to the apartment, and Iguchi didn’t even realize that he was so small until he used himself as a crutch under his arm. He marveled at the strength and stamina this guy must have, since he went back and forth between carrying bodies for however far away this place, after dispatching every single Walker so that they could have a smooth walk home.

He takes them into one of the apartment complexes. The door swings shut behind them, and he settles Iguchi down into a chair while he takes the young girl on his shoulder to one of the rooms in the back.

It was a modest three bedroom apartment. He can see that the blond man with the scar on his face was on the couch in the living room, and assumed that everyone else must be in the bedrooms.

The young man came back out, and rummaged through the kitchen area. Due to the opening in the walls, Iguchi could just barely see the man rummaging around. After a moment, he just walked out.

Iguchi’s eyelids felt heavier and heavier as he waited, but didn’t want to sleep. He wanted to see more, he wanted to see what this man would do.

He fell asleep anyways.

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When he woke up, he realized that the man was still rushing around the apartment. He hissed loudly, feeling pain lace up and down his side, and almost immediately, there was someone next to him.

That’s when he realized that he had been moved from the chair he was sitting on to a futon in the main living room. While he had no doubt that the young man had moved him, he was more shocked that he didn’t even stir.

Iguchi was near certain that it was still the same man, because he was still wearing that bright yellow sweater, but instead of a helmet, he was wearing a full face mask. It looked like a balaclava, and a pair of yellow goggles across his eyes. It looked like he was ready to go skiing.

Was… someone sick? Was he wearing it because he thought someone was sick? Then what about him? Was he safe? Or was he the one sick? He didn’t know, but there was something being pushed into his hands. He looked down, water and a granola bar.

Well, he didn’t need to be told twice, and the thought of food made his stomach lurch. Without further ado, he ripped open the plastic and chomped down. It was gone embarrassingly fast, and left him nowhere near sated.

Remembering himself, he looked back up, but the man was gone. He peered over, got up on unsteady legs, and unable to feel any strength, fell right back down.

It couldn’t be… was he… nursing them all back to health?

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The young man came back out, this time with a bowl and a spoon. He set it down and Iguchi was salivating at his mouth.

It was rice porridge. It looked simple and plain. The sight of it brought back memories he thought he sealed away and he all but snatched it out of the young man’s hands. He slurped and gobbled it all down. When he finished, he greedily licked the plate.

This would be the first warm dish he had in weeks. It was delicious.

Before he knew it, he was crying. The bowl sat on his lap, as tears came dribbling down his face. He choked and cried as the warmth of the dish filled his stomach and stretched to every part of his body.

He was alive.

“...I apologize for that display,” he said quietly. Once he had calmed down, he remembered that he wasn’t alone and the thought that someone watched that embarrassing display of lack of self control had him blushing. “I … It was delicious,” he said.

To which the young man gave him another bottle of water, some pain medication in a napkin, got up with the clean bowl and used spoon and walked away. Iguchi took the medication, drank the water, wondered who this man was, why he decided to help them, and right when the man came back asked.

“...Who are you? I… I don’t mean to sound ungrateful or anything, but I would like to know your name so I could properly thank you. Are you… are you alone here?”

His head turned to him, and he nodded, but didn’t say anything else. Iguchi thought back to the wild way he fought, and began to wonder if perhaps he couldn’t speak. He disappeared back into the rooms and came back out with a blanket. He opened it up, and laid it over the lizard-man. When Iguchi spluttered at the thought that, at this age and day, he would be getting tucked in by someone who didn’t even come up to his chest, the fight in him died at the familiarity in the contact.

He, warm and full, felt comfort and closed his eyes to sleep.

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The next time he woke up, he felt much better. Of course, everything that hurt still did, but he had the energy to get up to his feet. He stood up and stretched a little. Assessing the damage, he thought that he really lucked out.

### **Dabi -**

Dabi woke up and there was an unexplainable tension that rippled in the air. The only thing that people knew about Dabi was what they saw. They saw the patchwork of scars and reeled backwards because he looked like shouldn’t be alive.

Which. Wasn’t wrong. And, honestly, there were Walkers out there who looked more human than Dabi.

And so, seeing his face come out of the room, they had jumped to grab a weapon, scrambling to their feet and Dabi scowled back in annoyance.

He couldn’t even pull his fire out. Like many others, he stopped being able to use his quirk.

So, who was the crazy dumbass that saved him? He had to give him a piece of his mind.

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The man that saved Dabi, if Dabi could even call him that, barely came up to his chest. If he stood on a box in platform shoes, it might not strain Dabi’s neck to look at him. Annoying didn’t even begin to describe how this made him feel.

This meddling bastard was the single reason why he was still alive.

A life without the ability to take revenge was unfilling. A life where he couldn’t just ruin shit for people was straight up boring. And unfilled and bored out of his mind, Dabi truly and honestly believed that dying was the better option.

And this bastard ruined that for him.

This bastard went even as far as to make sure that all the annoying shitheads that he was with was also alive. Annoying didn’t even begin to describe how he felt.

### **Atsuhiro Sako - Compress**

He didn't have an arm.

Waking up, he thinks that it could have been a dream, but the reality wasn’t so kind. He didn’t have an arm, and he was still alive.

But then, he thought to himself, what kind of crazy, sick fuck would keep his armless self alive?

The crazy, sick fuck is a small man with a helmet seemingly permamently glued onto his head. He (probably a he? Seems to be flat-chested enough) looked much larger when he stood over all the fallen bodies, but seeing him next to Iguchi, he thinks that he’s very small.

He’s a good head or so taller than Iguchi, so he’s certain that he would just tower over the crazy man that brought him here. Still, Iguchi has only repeated to him (and everyone else) over and over again that the helmet-freak had carried every single one of them here.

Looking at him, from where he was, almost two stories above from where the young man was walking into the compound, Iguchi eagerly walking with him, with a bit of a limp.

What… was he supposed to do?

### **Bubaigawara Jin - awaken**

### **Rice - Magne**

The first thing Magne smelled when she woke up was rice. It was such a wonderful and nostalgic smell that she felt the tears run from her eyes. She took a heaving breath and then when pain laced all up and down her body, realized that she was alive.

She was alive and she could smell rice.

She shot up. She was clearly in someone’s room, as evident from the obscure band posters on the walls, bookshelves lined with manga, and a small computer at a desk. It was something she hadn’t seen in such a long time, that for a moment, she thought she was back in time.

But that was impossible. The pain proved that.

She could vividly remember what it was like to be back-stabbed. She remembered that feeling when they casted her out with a bunch of other people. She remembered and right when the anger threatened to boil over, she saw that there was bottled water on the desk.

Well, finders keepers.

She greedily drank it, and just barely managed to stop herself halfway. Just in case.

More importantly, rice.

She got up, mindful of her injuries, and wondered who took care of her? And if they took care of her, what happened to the others that were with her? Surely, no one would just take in a bunch of injured pieces of trash like them right? Right when they were thrown out by someone else, no less.

Thinking back to how badly that Shigaraki-boy was tousled, she can’t imagine why anyone would waste precious resources like medicine on him.

She opened the door, and was face-to-face with one of the masked men she was tossed out with.

“Oh, good morning!” he cheered, waving a hand, “You want some rice?! This thing is wicked! I can’t believe that we got rice here! Here, go ahead and help yourself! // But I’ll kill you if you try to steal from me!”

“...What?”

Aside from the man who speaks with two different voices, Magne was in a state of shock. But, even if this was just a dream or she was dead, she decided to take it at face value.

“Thanks for the food,” she said, more out of habit than anything.

“You should tell the Helmet guy when he comes back! Apparently, he’s the one that brought us back and patched us all up.”

If she didn’t have confirmation before, she had it now. There was no way this was real.

The rice was as delicious as she remembered. Her eyes watered as the warmth filled her up. This was a good way to die.

### **Himiko Toga -**

### **Other Tenant Ojiro**

“Oh, h-hello,” a young man greeted them.

“...There was another person here?!” Iguchi gasped.

“I uh… Yes?” He straightened, looking from the lizard to the okama to the blond to the other blond and then back, “Good evening, my name is Ojiro Masahiro-”

“Oh, then do you know?” Toga surged forward, “Nee, nee, you know what Helmet looks like underneath that helmet of his?”

### **Rental Office**

There is a room that was propped open on the first floor by a block of piece of drywall. It’s marked as the Rental Office, but the plaque is faded, and barely hanging onto the door. There were dents along the wooden door, chipped paint here and there, and no doorknob-as though it was broken off.

Looking at the bat that Helmet was never seen without, they could get a good idea on what had transpired.

As it was, the rental room was packed to the brim with paper. There were three maps of the area, one more residential, one of the prefecture, and one of Japan as a whole. Japan’s map had the smallest amount of wallspace, and the residential area was packed with thumbtacks of notes and yarn trailing to other parts of the room. String lined across the room, suspending other notes in the air, and it looked like such a masterpiece that they never bothered to actually walk in.

But Helmet, who dropped his backpack off at the ground, headed into his room for a few hours to get rid of all his bloodstained material and goods, can spend hours writing in there. He makes notes for his notes, pinning them up, replacing old ones, marking up the map.

With the world as it was, Twice was certain that stationary and pens must be one of the resources that they had plenty of.

If the wall wasn’t covered in notes, there were bookshelves packed with notebooks. Places on the ground were stacked up with notebooks by a few feet. They way they were haphazardly station, it felt as though removing one thing would make the entire structure come crumbling down. Spiral notebooks, composition notebooks, were stacked around the corner of the room and there was another one on top of the office desk at the center of the room.

Looking at it, they knew that Helmet has been here for quite some time.

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However, these days, Helmet is never seen without his helmet. He kept it on at all times, giving Twice the feeling that the man was suffocating himself. He wears gloves underneath his gloves, and the second pair is always taped down to his sleeve. As far as any of them are concerned, this guy is an alien, with blue skin, and they would just never know.

The part of Iguchi that was always mocked for looking different from other, ‘regular’ humans, wondered if he was saved by someone who was so different he was the same as him. But the rest of him couldn’t get over the fact that he didn’t trust them.

Or at least, he assumed that it was a trust thing, because he couldn’t think of any other reason. He wouldn’t know, and even if he asked, it wasn’t like he would get a response. Was he silent because he couldn’t speak? Was he silent because he didn’t want to scare them?

What could he look like, who could he be, that it would be potentially more scary than the monsters that dwelled outside? In a morbid kind of way, Iguchi wanted to know.

But, he doesn’t know. And after everything that has happened so far, he wasn’t sure if he wanted to know. Was ignorance bliss?

He didn’t even know that this place existed until this man came and pulled his ass out of danger. Living without knowing about this place was harsh, and now, he just felt antsy with how peaceful this area was.

### **Dabi & fire**

Helmet carried matches and lighters with him. Dabi didn’t even realize it until he saw how hard it was for him to light it. Given his thick gloves, Dabi was shocked that he didn’t take them off to get this done. Maybe he was just an idiot, it would explain why he saved them all.

One match broken, one match snapped apart, one match that blew out, three matches that fell to the ground, one match that didn’t lit even after eight tries…

It looked like a waste. They were going to be out here for hours, at the rate that Helmet was going at. It was a waste of time, especially for Helmet, who looked like he was always working on the next thing.

They weren’t made out of time, after all.

And suddenly, as though to mock him and all his efforts to just live, his fire returned to him. It was a small crackle before an uncomfortable and familiar sensation came over him. He nearly choked in his surprise, shocked and a little disgusted, as reality settled in his head. Feeling as though he finally broke through the surface of the water after being underwater for too long, he took a heaving breath in.

What the fuck, he thought to himself. This made no sense.

It couldn’t be.

As it turned out, the reason why he couldn’t use his quirk was a pathetic reason.

[ he didn’t have a reason to use it before helmet needed one ]

### **ID & Corpses**

Dabi lifted his hand up, a fire igniting from his elbows to the tip of his fingers as he readied to fire. Right when he was going to swallow three corpses into an inferno that’ll burn until there is nothing left, Helmet stood in front of him.

Swallowing his surprise, he barely managed to snuff his flames before he fired it out.

“You-get out of the way,” he hissed out, partly surprised that he didn’t just go ahead and incinerate the person who stood in the way. “Do you want to get burned?”

The smaller man faced him for another moment before he turned on his heel and went to take out each Walker with a mighty swing each. Behind them, Toga and Twice finally caught up to them (slowpokes) as Helmet finished with the three.

Just when Dabi was thinking that Helmet was some adrenaline-junkie that liked the fight, his savior proved him wrong. They watched with disgust as the man that saved them kneeled down next to the corpses and began fishing through their pockets to pull out… their wallets?

Dabi, who was normally calm and unbothered by everything the world was and stood for, felt his temper flare. “Are you stupid?” he growled out, “There’s no point in shit like that. You seriously wanted to…”

His voice trailed off as Helmet pulled out a card out of most of the wallets before dropping the wallet back down onto the corpse’s chest.

“...Are you collecting their IDs?” Twice asked, peering at the way he pocketed the identification into one of his side pockets. “...Why? // Well, why not?”

Helmet didn’t answer them. Well, concerning the fact that he never took off his helmet in their company, and has yet to speak or communicate with them outside of handing them supplies, it wasn’t a great shock. The way Helmet was cramming the IDs into his pockets looked uncomfortable, and it wasn’t like he was going to answer them no matter what they did so they quietly stood there and tried to think of a reason why he was like this.

When Helmet was done, he straightened himself out and began his trek to their destination, a convenience store. Toga and Twice cheered loudly when they got to the destination, and before they could go in, Helmet lifted his bat in front of them. They stopped, confused, and he dropped the tip of his bat and walked in. They gave each other a look.

Do they follow?

They peered in curiosity and the unmistakable sound of his bat making contact with something and it rupturing resounded. Coming back to the broken window of the convenience store, the young man was dragging a Walker with a concaved head behind him. He looked at them and then motioned for the store.

“...Oh! Were you checking if it was safe for us to go in?” Toga chimed, snapping her fingers.

Helmet turned to face them, and gave a curt nod. It was the closest thing they had to getting any kind of communication out of him. Maybe they should have gone with yes/no questions this whole time?

“So… We can go in now, right? What should we get? // I hate the decor here!”

Helmet turned away from them, as though no one was talking to him.

“Ah, do you want dibs on anything? // I won’t let you have anything!” Twice’s loud voice fell to deaf ears. After a moment, he and Toga were making their way in.

Helmet didn’t respond, scuffing something off his shoe and then inspecting his bat. Afterwards he looked down the street and started to leave.

“Then, where are you going?” Dabi called out. The man kept walking.

He gritted his teeth, torn between running after the man and raiding the convenience store.

“Shit.”

The man kept walking, and as fast as he left, there were several thudding sounds. Dabi abandoned the two in the store and ran after the last man, eyes widening when he realized that Helmet was taking out other Walkers in the area. He finished with blundering one’s head when he realized that Dabi was behind him. He lifted his arm to do a shoo-ing gesture with his hand before he put the bat down and rifled through the corpse's pockets.

Dabi hasn’t been shooed in fucking years. The amount of disgruntled rage in his heart was snuffed at the shock of being shooed away, before it surged back twice as strong.

But whatever, if the man didn’t want his fucking help, what the fuck ever. He returned to the convenience store, looking for anything of use. He was careful to keep away from the two blonds, more comfortable being alone.

He was more comfortable being alone, yet he didn’t like the idea of letting Helmet go.

-

There wasn’t really much to take from this store. It was clear that it was a place where there wasn’t much left at all.

“...What are you doing?”

Twice walked over to where Mdidorya was tearing open some of the pet food in the pet food aisle. He watched as the young man placed it on the ground, and tore it all the way open. He opened some of the canned pet food and dumped it onto some of the plastic pet food containers on the side and left them out.

And well, Twice supposed that everyone does crazy shit to keep themselves sane. In a world like this, he supposes that this is just one of Helmet’s many quips.

-

The day came to a close before midday. The walk served as a reminder that they were grossly out of practice moving around for long periods of time, and their body ached at the brisk pace they had. It was tiring and exhausting, but it also felt really good.

### **Change of Heart -**

“But I’m tired,” Toga sighed, stomping her feet a little, “Ne, we already have all of our supplies, right? Do we really need to stay out any longer?”

Iguchi really didn’t want to agree with her, but yeah, he was fucking exhausted. Getting up before dawn was not something any of them were used to, but in order to stay by Helmet’s side, it was a sacrifice he was willing to make. And well, they had been surviving all this time for a reason, and even though their time with the Liberation was brief and awful, they did learn a thing or two from them.

It was just a little past mid-afternoon. Their pace was slow because Helmet goes off to bash in the head of every single Walker they come across. When they tried to stop to go into a house for supplies, he kept walking, so they abandoned the thought. While they were certain that they could find their way back to the Apartment Complex, the idea that they would be left behind without a second of hesitation was something that left a foul taste in their mouth. After an hour or two of really irritatingly following around a guy who had no intentions of communicating anything to them, they came to one conclusion.

This guy doesn’t want them.

Which made absolutely no fucking sense, because why else would you help someone if not to use them? Why give them food, medicine, and share your shelter with them? They all told him their quirks by now, some of them several times, and that they want to be helpful, and that they don’t mind being used, but he didn’t even bother with a note.

They knew that he writes, because they have often seen him in the main rental room, scribbling this and that onto a map, making measurements and taking notes on a small planner attached to a lanyard that he keeps around his neck, under his shirt. From what they can see, he wrote pretty simply, and it’s notes jotting down how many Walkers he took out here and how much supplies he took from there. He has a detailed weather report, among other things as well. Nothing in the rental room was kept from them. Actually, nothing on base was kept from them.

They knew that his hearing works, because he’s the first one to go out swinging when he hears shuffling, even over Twice’s voice. He looked at the person who is speaking or at least faces them sometimes, and when they had complained or mentioned something, would do something thoughtful for them.

Like finding a mask for Compress and Twice, among other clothes. Or getting Toga a new jacket. Or leaving packs of water for them outside of their designated sleeping quarter as soon as they even thought they were running out.

So like, what the fuck?

But perhaps Helmet was more tired than they thought, because he nodded and began to lead them back to the apartment complex.

Just. What?

With how bull-headedly he seemed to keep going, it felt like he wasn’t going to stop until there was no daylight. The thought of this guy, keeling over at some side of the road, brought an uncomfortable feeling inside of them, and Twice doubled in.

“Yeah!” he said, cheering back, “I’m sure Compress is giving Magne-nee a hand,” he giggled at the image, and Toga cheered back, “so we should be back for dinner instead of keeping them waiting! // The food will be shit.”

It wasn’t something they never thought someone could say and mean.

Dabi, however, remained silent as he hung around the back, his eyes never leaving Helmet’s figure. And Helmet led them back.

“...I thought you would do this.”

Helmet didn’t even flinch, but Dabi’s certain that if he could hear a Walker shuffling two streets away, there was no way he didn’t hear his footsteps against the broken asphalt as he approached.

“I figured it out today for certain. This is the second time we went out, but the bodies were cleared out from last night,” he explained, unusually chatty as he stepped forward.

His hands remained comfortable in his pocket, in the jeans that he pulled out from the mountain of clothing that Helmet brought them, and tried to stand as casually as he could. While he doubted that anything could unhinge a guy who can clean out an entire piece of territory of Walkers alone, probably since the world ended, he didn’t want to come off as threatening.

He just… He just wanted to help, okay? He wanted to repay back the favor of saving his life because Dabi wanted to get rid of this awful feeling in his chest. He did not owe people.

And Helmet here was making it very hard for him to pay this back.

“You’re going back out to burn all those bodies, right?” he said, stepping forward. He pulled his hand out and called his fire into his hand. It burned even brighter, since there was no other light here, and he wondered how Helmet could wear such dark shades even as night fell. “My quirk is cremation,” he explained quickly, closing his hand and extinguishing the fire. “I’ll take care of it for you.”

Helmet turned away from him and walked outside, a flashlight in his hand, and Dabi blindly followed him. Even though he was carrying the light, so to speak, he didn’t think that he was lighting the way or leading it at all.

Normally, people would walk slower when they can’t see and there’s uneven ground. However, Helmet moved with the same purpose and speed that he did in the morning. Dabi stumbled twice, cursing himself as he caught himself before he tumbled to the ground.

Okay, so he might be a little tired. He didn’t realize how lazy he had gotten while he was gorging himself out on food and healing up, but surely he wouldn’t be stumbling this badly just because he couldn’t see the ground and was a little tired, right?

Helmet paused, turning to stare at him, before he gave him the flashlight. Then, he turned around and walked at a slower pace.

Dabi hasn’t felt this embarrassed or ashamed since he was six and living with his family. It was even more mortifying because Helmet didn’t treat him like he was invalid, and he wasn’t condescending. He just handed him the flashlight and went back on his way like it meant nothing to him that Dabi was probably slowing him down. Like Dabi was nothing.

He didn’t like the feeling.

They passed three bodies, and Dabi frowned.

“...Don’t you want me to ignite them?” he asked.

As always, there was no answer. He sighed deeply through his nose, wondering how a quiet person could be so annoying. But, once they passed a junction where there was nothing, Helmet turned around and pointed at the wall.

“...You want me to burn that?” he asked. He could do it.

The man shook his head. He pointed again and Dabi walked over to it. He looked at the wall, inspecting it with the flashlight and turned back around. The young man had put his backpack down and set it on the ground opposite of him.

...What?

He opened the bag and pulled out another bag out of it. He pulled out his bat, and abandoned his bright yellow backpack. He passed the small bag in his hand to the taller man.

Dabi opened it, confused, and froze when he saw a bottle of water and three granola bars.

He, thinking that they would only be out to burn shit and come back, didn’t even bother with a backpack or snacks or water or anything. ...How long was this man planning on being out here?

“...Isn’t this yours?” he asked back. “Don’t you need this more than me?”

Helmet turned around and walked away. Dabi stared back in surprise, but when he tried to follow, the smaller man turned around and lifted his hand up for him to stop. He did. Helmet pointed at the wall he pointed at earlier. Dabi gritted his teeth.

“I’m not tired,” he said, “I can keep going.”

To think, after all this time, someone would dare to try and fucking coddle him-

But when something shuffled, Helmet turned around with his bat and Dabi took a step back on reflex.

For him, that was the simple and undeniable proof of their difference. Helmet didn’t hesitate to surge forward to engage while Dabi hesitated and he won in a single swing. He took a moment to kneel down and rustle through the pockets of the dead one. As always, he pulled out the wallet and looked through it for an ID card.

The ID card was pocketed into one of his side pouches underneath the fire hydrant at his thigh, before he grabbed the body of the Walker and picked it up.

Uh, what?

He turned over and then placed it at the center of the crosswalk a little further down.

And Dabi watched as he started to jog off and drag back every single corpse into a single location. Once the number exceeded 32, he took a step back and pulled out a tank of gasoline from the side. Dabi didn’t even realize when he had brought it out, did he bring it out when he was getting one of the bodies?

If Dabi didn’t believe it before, he definitely believed it now.

This guy had insane stamina. While it made sense, given what Iguchi said, about carrying them all back, one by one, up a flight of stairs and into an apartment unit, he never truly believed it. Watching this guy move, never once faltering in his steps and never slowing down despite what he was carrying, he believes it.

This guy has been out since the crack of dawn to collect this and that for them. He brings it back and then heads back out when he thinks he needs more. He doesn’t hesitate with his swings and never leaves a Walker remaining. The stench of rotting corpses clearly doesn’t bother him.

He gritted his teeth, bore the brunt of the godawful stench, and stepped forward.

“I got it from here.”

The resulting roar of blue fire consumed all the corpses. Within minutes, there was nothing but ash left. He turned to stare at Helmet, who was holding the fire-hydrant at the ready. He snorted back. The bodies were gone because he burned them all away. He collected their ID and gets rid of everything else, and by morning light, there would be nothing but ash and scorch marks left.

“My name is Dabi,” he called out, “While I’m here, you’ll never have to worry about fire again.”

He doesn’t know why he said that, or if Helmet understood the meaning behind his words. Perhaps Dabi was infected after all. Perhaps he was infected with something much worse than the disease that runs through their streets.

Perhaps, this masked man had infected him with the disease <loneliness> and now, he’ll never be able to leave again lest the symptoms run wild through his veins and make him lose his mind.

Regardless, Dabi wasn’t someone who broke his promises. He had a debt to repay, after all. Once he paid this back, he’ll go back to doing something else. He’ll go back to living free and about. He doesn't know what that means but he’ll do it.

After he gets rid of this stupid feeling of being indebted to someone who does not want him.

### **Dabi & Mido - Kitchen**

While the other guy, Shi-something, was still out with a fever and tucked into the bedroom, Helmet frequented the apartment complex.

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Dabi leaned against the doorframe as a guy in a motorcycle helmet stood in front of the (their? Could they make claims to something that he let them in on?) stove, boiling the packets of soup inside of it. With how much steam is rising, he’s surprised that he seems to see so well even though the vizor of the helmet was fogged up.

“...Hey,” he said. “...It’s enough, right? You know that none of us are infected, right?”

He took a step closer.

“...So why don’t you show us who you really are?”

His hand reached for Helmet’s helmet, and the smaller man slapped his hand away. He scowled.

“C’mon, don’t be so stingy,” he growled out. “Why? Is it because you don’t trust us? Then, why did you save us?” his voice started to climb in volume, in a rare moment for Dabi to lose his composure. “Did you think that I’d be grateful just because you saved me? Hah! Joke’s on you, I’m not that kind of man. You understand? If you’re looking for gratitude, you won’t get it from me! I didn’t ask you to save me!”

His chest is heaving at the end of his rant, unused to yelling like that to begin with.

Helmet made no motion that he heard him, despite how his voice rang through the room. Normally, Dabi would have incinerated him to ash at this point, for being so damn annoying, but he knew that this mystery would gnaw at him. It wasn’t gratitude. It wasn’t that he was dependent on this stranger either.

The man suddenly turned off the stove, deeming the food done. He grabbed some plates and began to distribute the food.

Dabi, standing there like some idiot, glared at him a little more and pointedly ignored any offers to take the plate.

Except, it clearly wasn’t food for him, since Helmet left the serving spoon in the pot and there were six more bowls, neatly stacked ontop of each other. He took the seventh bowl with a small amount of soup, and left the kitchen without a break in his stride. Regardless of if Dabi was there or not, it was clear that Helmet would continue to do as always has.

It didn’t take him long to realize that he was taking it to ashen-haired kid who had yet to get up yet. Wasn’t it exhausting?

Confused and lost, Dabi realized that they might have escaped their previous hell for something far worse.

### **Cleaning -**

The one time they managed to get up before Helmet, they didn’t realize that they got up before him until he suddenly came out. A gallon of bleach in one hand and a bucket with a rag hanging out of it.

“Morning, Helmet!” Twice called out as soon as he got close, “What are you up to today…” his words trailed as the man continued to walk right past him. “That’s fine,” Twice called out. “That’s fine too.”

Not one to be easily deterred, the blond kept up with him easy.

“You know, you’re really breaking my sweet little heart by ignoring me like this. There’s only so much rejection a man can take, you know? // I’ve killed people for less.”

And then, he took a deep breath, his shoulders hunching as he wordlessly followed Helmet out and around the area. They walked down the sidewalk until they got to a street where there were blood smears, and Twice finally understood why this place was so different.

Unlike everywhere else, it was clean. There was no broken class or bloodstains or anything. After months of poor maintenance, the roads were cracked and there were some plants growing through, but that was it. Looking around, Twice was hard-pressed that the lazy residential area right here suffered from an apocalypse. It looked like from before the world went to shit, give or take a wall and excluding buildings.

Helmet stopped and he narrowly missed it. He stared as the man leaned down, poured some bleach into the bucket, and grabbed the rag to start… cleaning?

He stared, absolutely flabbergasted as Helmet began to wipe down the blood off the walls and ground of the road.

What?

“What?”

Helmet didn’t answer him. He didn’t look at him. He just sat there and kept wiping.

As it turns out, and they would learn this very quickly, Helmet does this every few days. What was he supposed to do? Help? How? With what? He needed a little more instruction. Not to brag or anything, but thinking really wasn’t his strong suit.

### **Shigaraki**

Shigaraki Tomura’s life was 9/10 tragedy and 1/10 pitiful.

He was missing two to three fingers in both his hands. With three fingers on his left hand and two fingers on his left hand, Shigaraki woke up in pain and in anger.

Why did he have to live like this? Why was this his life?

And then, those questions twisted and twisted until finally, he laid in bed for hours or an eternity and was left to wonder.

Why was he still alive?

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There were a pair of archery gloves in the bag. He stared at it and quietly fumbled with the plastic coating and pulled them on. They were a little tight, right at the base of his fingers, and a little loose by his wrist. They were otherwise snug, and the cold touch of the cloth was the warmest gesture he has ever gotten from another person.

-

Shigaraki knew how to read, but that didn't mean he liked it. He was good at reading, but it was out of necessities, more than anything.

And it had nothing to do with the fact that Helmet wrote all the time. It most definitely was not because he wanted to communicate with Helmet in any way. It really, really wasn't that. He was bored. There was nothing to do, and there wasn't much he could do while he got used to having five digits total.

Conveniently ignoring all the other books and the likes, he made his way to the Management Office of the apartment. He took a seat at one of the shitty foldable chairs and shitty plastic tables. He probably should have been more careful coming in, since he knocked over two stacks of notebooks, but to be fair, there wasn't much room for him to breath without running into something. He'd probably apologize or something if he needed to.

No, that was a lie. He almost wanted to see it. Maybe he would hear Helmet if the guy lost himself in his anger. People got angry, right? When their hard work was destroyed?

Pushing off all those thoughts, he took a seat and grabbed a notebook. It looked to be a journal of some sort. Every page was dated, and it detailed the monsters that he had encountered and where on that day.

He ran the pads of his fingers against the faded ink, as though he would be able to talk to the man who brought him here just by touching the ink.

“...What the hell am I doing?” he said quietly.

### **Rain (1)**

As soon as they thought that they knew what Helmet was going to do, and that he had a schedule to follow, it was completely trashed when the rain comes.

Majority of them had spent the day and night indoors, staying out of the rain. Catching a chill of any kind could result in death or an extremely painful experience without any medication or proper food. It wasn’t a real concern anymore since they got here, but some habits were hard to break.

The first day of sunlight, they took some time to go outside and saw that Helmet was already sprinting all around the grounds. Hefting buckets and large containers filled with water in a wagon, he looked incredibly busy.

“...Oh, he caught the rainwater,” Toga realized aloud.

“Oh, I see,” Mr Compress nodded next to her. “He’s collecting the rainwater.”

In a few hours, Helmet would (indirectly, because they are beginning to learn that Helmet only goes at his own pace) lead them to a place where there was ‘extra water’. In large containers of varying shapes and sizes, packed to the brim were cases and containers of water. The sight of it was heartening.

Helmet kept the door closed, but it was unlocked.

He trusted them. That much was clear. Right? This was a sign of trust, wasn’t it? What else would it be?

### **Dogs (1)-**

Dogs and cats, and other household pets but these two species especially, hated humans.

It was a well-known fact that the common furry friends did not like humans. They will go as far to make noise and blow the cover of survivors to nearby Walkers because of how much they hated humans. However, they were fine with Walkers. Probably because Walkers don’t try to eat them.

Or torture them. Or lock them up. Or just otherwise make their already short lives painfully awful.

There were some fucked up people in the world. And despite the fact that many just viewed the former pets as fresh meat, others took them as a way to vent their stress. While there was sure to be people who didn’t think like that, they were far in the minority, if there were any left alive.

There were a couple of theories about this, none of them have been proven true or false, but it wasn’t hard to figure it out.

Somehow, however, even though there weren’t really anyone left to raise or feed the strays, their populations sky-rocketed and remained high as time progressed on. In the gaping hole that humans have left behind, these were among the first to grow.

So hearing dogs, a pack of dogs ranging in all shapes and sizes, had them tensing in anticipation. They barked twice, nice and loud, and then fell silent. If they were running from something, they would be more barking and there would be getting louder as they got closer and then quieter as they ran away. If they were here because they had guided something here, then they would be continuously barking to lead them.

“...Are they… waiting for something?” Iguchi asked quietly.

“Whatever,” Dabi said, fire collecting at his fingertips, “I won’t give them the chance to.”

They had, since there weren’t many animals where they were from, had totally forgotten about the existence of household pets. It was a gross overestimate, and as though the universe wanted to ensure they never had anything nice, they wondered if they needed to abandon this place before it got swarmed.

But the dogs had stopped barking. They just sat at the entrance of the apartment complex instead.

Dabi had opened the door, fully intent on burning every barker into ash when something fell down. He surged forward in his shock, grabbing the railing and peering over to where Helmet had unmistakably fallen from somewhere above him. Before he could even start to panic, he realized that the man was grabbing the railings as he passed down the floor for a brief instant before he dropped down to the ground and into a roll before getting back up his feet in one fluid motion.

It was clearly a move that he had done many times before.

“Was that Helmet? Did Helmet seriously just parkour his way down over four flights?” Magne asked, coming next to him, looking up to where he had fallen from. "So, that's where he has been staying."

The staircase between the floors were uneven and some were completely broken. The thought that he was someplace almost completely inaccessible to them made them feel a little hollow.

“Damn,” Iguchi said, correctly summarizing his thoughts.

But Dabi kept his eyes on Helmet, and more importantly, where he was running to. The man was in his standard helmet, had a bat, but he didn’t have his backpack or his usual fire hydrant. The man is usually in a sweatshirt of some sort, and he knows from the one time he grabbed him, that he was wearing some form of padding underneath it.

The man is fast- like he was ready for this, and Dabi wondered if he never takes off his armor. And if that was the case, when did he rest?

The thought gnawed at him more than he thought it would.

“Should we… go after him?” Iguchi asked quietly, looking torn between jumping in or staying back.

“Wait, wait wait,” Twice said, pointing forward, “No way,” he muttered, in total and complete shock as one of the dogs came up to rub against Helmet’s leg and the young man took a step away from it.

The dog came closer and he nudged it away with his bat. The other dog ran around him once, and gave a bark. Then, it turned to start running down the street. Helmet turned towards it, and broke out into a sprint.

"Are they leading him somewhere..?"

“...What did I just see?”

Twice, who loves dogs, has always loved dogs, and will always love dogs, stood outside of the complex by the street as he waited for Helmet to return. In his hand was a water bottle, and he ran his revised speech over and over again in his speech.

Funny how the guy who doesn’t speak is the guy he's most concerned over what he says and how he says it.

He took a deep breath, jumping up and down a little as he tried to pull himself together and shake off the growing amount of anxiety snaking through his heart. He needed to calm down. It was easier said than done, of course, but let it be known that Twice didn’t try.

“Hey, there Helmet, glad to see that you’re alive and that the dogs didn’t just maul you and eat you or whatever. How’d you get the dogs to even like you? All the ones I’ve seen are dead one or ones that cause someone else to die.”

Okay, he got this.

A few hours before daylight returned, he heard footsteps. He jerked awake, not sure when he even began to fall asleep, and snapped his head to the source of the sound.

Walking towards him was Helmet. His bat was propped onto his shoulder and his footsteps even as he walked to the entrance of the complex. There were no dogs to be seen. As soon as he was close enough, Twice shot up to his feet, “Hey!” he said.

Helmet stopped where he was, several steps away from Twice.

“I … uh…” he gulped as his words failed him, his courage deserted him, and he stammered out, “Ah, uh…” And then lifted the water bottle towards the man, “Welcome back.”

The man stared at him, or he assumed he was staring at him, since his helmet was fully facing him. The single light that they had on, attached to the ceiling above the office rental room, was bright enough for them to see where they were going and nothing else.

While he was super grateful that they had light and electricity, he couldn’t help the feeling that he wanted more at times.

The man then walked right past him, making certain to take a wide berth around Twice to make sure that there was ample space between the two of them, and the blond looked at the water bottle in his hand.

He was starting to get really sick of this feeling.

### **The Helmet Incident**

A week later, he comes back. They only know this because Twice is a loud blubbering mess when he saw Helmet come back. It has nothing to do with the fact that they haven't slept well since his abrupt departure.

In his hands are, as always, plastic bags filled with more supplies. He has a new backpack this time, and they're filled with fruit-smelling shampoos and modest deodorants. Magne cries then.

They promise not to fuck with his helmet again. They promise not to pry again. The bone deep fear that came with his departure will haunt them for a long time to come.

It should be more disturbing, the fact that they had latched so hard to someone they have never heard the voice of in such a short amount of time, but all of those thoughts are washed away against the relief that he came back.

For most of them, he would be the first person to ever <come back>.

"...Lights?"

There were some battery powered fairy lights, and at least 50 ft worth of Christmas lights.

It's hard to figure out what goes on in Helmet's head on a good day. But when he brings in new, seemingly random things, it really throws them for a loop.

But what were they gonna do, stop him? With his departure so fresh in their mind, they know they can't do that. They couldn't risk it. Without meaning to, they were already too dependent on the silent man for everything, ranging from supplies to comfort.

It would have been easier if he could just tell them to leave or stay, to die or work. But they can’t even tell if he even noticed that they’re there or not some days.

### **Deer Meat**

“M-meat?”

“Holy shit, it’s real meat.”

“Oh my god, I haven’t had fresh meat in so long-”

“Then, what are you eating?” Dabi asked, cutting all of them off.

Helmet, as always, didn’t respond, but placed the huge container of raw meat on the ground in front of them. He took a step back and pointed to the something to the side, and when the others rushed outside, he motioned to a small picnic area that wasn’t there before. In fact, Spinner was out there, helping set something or another out. They must have pulled it together for them.

He had been wondering where they had been for a few hours. That tight feeling returned into Dabi’s gut, and he frowned. He couldn’t believe that he was actually regretting taking a break. What was the world coming to?

Ah, right, it ended. That’s why he was here to begin with.

### **Enter Hawks -**

Of the things that Deku has always wanted to do but never got to figure out, was string lights up. Now that he got the generator up and running, he felt brave enough to at least try it.

Standing at the rooftop with all his rain-catchers, he looked around the ridiculously gaudy display of bright Christmas lights and plugged the cords in. With only the stars above as company, he mimicked their light from the top of his apartment building. He sat there, watching the area where the glow joined the darkness above.

He had gotten into the habit of doing this since he got these lights. Every night, he could crawl up here and take a moment to gaze at the stars. At first, it was because it calmed him nerves and looking at the eternal abyss above, he felt grounded in his insignificance. It was calming. It was soothing.

Somewhere, far away, he knew that there was someone else looking at the same stars.

And then, he got the lights to work and he turned them all on. Light shined the brightest the darker it was, after all. He prays that Kaachan would see this, and it would help him find his way home.

Day three since he turned the lights on. He doesn’t like the idea of burning through all their electricity, especially since it would be unfair to the others downstairs that he stole all their electricity for something that he was doing behind their backs. So, he only turned them on for a few hours before he heads out for his next supply run. Usually, he spends this time finishing up gearing up. With the broken staircase between the third and fourth floor, he is certain that no one will come up here to bother him.

Not that the others aren't smart enough to figure a way up, but he didn't think they would. It would be too much trouble, and he didn’t think they cared that much about what he does.

Right when he turned around to turn the lights off for the day, something fluttered behind him. He whipped back around, his bat in his hands and ready to kill, when the fight drained out of him. In front of him, looking as surprised as he felt, was former Pro Hero Hawks.

He… He looked like he'd seen better days.

Deku’s certain that all of them had better days a long time ago, but looking at Hawks brought a special kind of pain to his heart. The blond’s chest was wheezing. Those gorgeous red wings that once decorated the spread of magazine covers and dominated train advertisements looked ragged and weary, barely a fraction of what they used to be, like just having them was a weight that he couldn’t sustain anymore. There were bags under his eyes, and a permanent shadow across his sunken cheeks, and his features were pale against the soft fairy lights around them.

All in all, that handsome Hero Hawks looked more dead than alive.

“I… I saw the light,” he said, voice hoarse like he had been screaming for hours. With how the world was, Deku wouldn't have been shocked if it were weeks. “I… I didn’t… All I saw was light.”

Since Deku was about to go out on a supply run, he was totally and completely geared up and ready to fight. Concerning how long he had spent putting it all together, it was something that he didn't want to stand and undo without good reason, as it was, he was really glad he had it all on. A lot of adults got weird whenever they met kids, and right now, Hawks needed to focus on himself.

So he took a deep breath, and motioned for the man to follow him. If he could fly all the way up the six stories to get to where Deku was standing on the rooftop, he had no doubts that he would be able to fly down to the first floor.

Just in case, however, Deku is certain that he could carry this man. Luckily, he’s not covered in blood and he’s not tired, so it shouldn’t be too hard. Looking over the Pro Hero, he looks beaten and battered, but not in need of extreme medical conditions.

He unplugged the light, heard wings flutter behind him, and turned it back on. He stares at Hawks, and wonders what the man had seen to look so utterly lost. While he could take a guess, it was probably better if he didn’t ask. He couldn’t. He’s certain that if he opens his mouth right now, he’ll ask for the man’s autograph. He can’t help it, okay?

So it would be better not to say anything at all.

But first, he stopped to open his backpack. His night runs became increasingly more often, especially since he wanted to spare others the sight of the undead and ghouls as he cleaned up, and he had gotten into the habit of bringing along glow-sticks for the really dark places.

At least, if he’s alone, he could take off the helmet and put on goggles and a hard hat instead, but that wasn’t an option if Dabi caught him on the way out. Even more frustrating was that infuriating smirk on the taller man’s face when he joined him. Although, it was nice to have company and he was comforted with the thought that someone was waiting for him at <home>. Other times, he really wanted to knock Dabi out and leave him behind, where he knew it would be safer.

He cracked a glow stick, and under the green light, handed it back to Hawks. He took it into his hand and stared at it with a fascination that Deku didn't know how to describe. This time, when he turned off the lights, his feathers remained quiet.

He walked down, the man barely a step behind him. He didn’t like the idea of this man following him out to another part of the city or even to the bottom floor. It broke his heart to see his wings sag and droop behind him, most of all his feathers long gone. It was easy to see that it probably took everything he had left to get up to this rooftop. The blond stumbled and teetered dangerously twice, but the second time he did it, he braced himself against the wall and slid a little. He stopped for a second, taking a slow breath, and Deku felt so stupid.

Of course he was injured. Of course he was hurt. Of course he was exhausted. He was reduced to this state, for god knows how long. And Deku, so lost in his own thoughts about the most < convenient> thing to do, had forgotten the single most important thing.

Once upon a time, he wanted to be a hero. And a hero, right now, wouldn’t be worried about what was the easiest thing to do or the simplest way to do it. Right now, a hero would do the right thing.

He stopped in the middle of the stairwell, and felt his heart break when he heard Hawks’ stuttering breath.

“...It’s alright,” the blond said, “I can keep going.”

No, he wanted to say, you can’t.

But, he decided on instead, they could.

He turned around, grateful for being so much shorter than the man and also being on a lower step than him, because it made this next part much easier. He leaned in, wrapping his arms around the man’s waist and pulled him in. The man went from surprised to panic in an instant, and his hands came up to grab his arms, but if Deku didn’t think that he was weakened before, he definitely believes it now.

He could pick up Hawks, with the man weakly protesting, up and over his shoulder and the side of his neck, trying to have him hang diagonally over his back and mostly succeeded. The older man’s breathing turned a little more even, like he was right about to fall asleep, and Deku hoped that his backpack was a comfortable weight to sleep on. Probably not, since the only thing inside of it were small bags of snacks, two water bottles, and his metal bat.

“Hah…” the man wheezed against his shoulder, “You’re… stronger than you look,” he said.

Deku turned to his side and carefully maneuvered his way down the rest of the stairs, crab walking as needed. Right when they were about to get to the bottom, he adjusted his hold so that he was carrying the man in a fireman’s carry. Much better. This was much easier to move around in. He crossed the hallway in no time at all, and made it down the next flight of stairs. He got to his apartment complex.

Well, with the desolate wreck that was the staircase from the fourth to third floor, it wasn’t like he could take Hawks down to the lower floors when even he struggles to go between floors some days.

It hurts him to do this, his heart aches at the thought of it, but to think that he was going to have the Number Two Hero in the country in his home?

Wow.

He fished for his house key, and it was ridiculously hard with his stupid gloves, but he’s eternally glad that he decided to clip it onto him. And then he hated himself for thinking that clipping it was a good idea, but whatever, he had the key, his apartment was open now, and he made his way inside.

“...This… your place?”

He didn’t bother with his shoes. Fainly, he hears his mom’s admonishing tone at that, and reflexively apologizes to her memory. He managed to get Hawks to the couch and set him down gently. He went back to place his backpack on the ground and take his shoes off.

There, mom.

He hasn’t had a guest… A person, just any body, in his apartment complex since the first time he ended up holed up here. Aside from the fact that there was no way to get up, he only got his first batch of survivors recently. None of them were in any condition to climb a flight or two to have tea with him or whatever. His hands trembled but he pushed away all of the extra thoughts as he tried to focus in on the right now.

He tore off the larger gloves, throwing them on his backpack.

First, something small. He didn't have much food in his apartment since he was rarely hungry and usually only ate when he was done with all of his cleaning and stuff, but luckily, he still had his untouched bag of rice.

Bless.

He grabbed two granola bars and handed them to Hawks with a bottle of water. The blond stared at it like he has never seen it before. Right when he started to think that he needed to open it for the man, he spoke up.

"...Are you sure?" He asked quietly.

Deku thought back to the time he got into a fight with Kacchan about how cool Hawks was, back when they were brats and he first debuted. He thought back to how people said things like "only girls like Hawks" and he felt his heart ache.

He grabbed Hawks' fingers and made them curl around the bars before turning to the bathroom. He doesn't know if anyone has used up the hot water yet, but it would be nice if he could let the man soak in his tiny tub. He turned the water on, happy that the water was warm and came back out.

He made it about two steps before he realized that the man was on his feet, halfway into the hallway. He stared at him, wide-eyed with the granola bars in his hand, though one of them was just the wrapper, and a water bottle in his other hand.

Oh no, Deku thought with sinking realization. It couldn’t be.

Was… did the Hero come looking for him?

“...S-Sorry,” Hawks said, his eyes dropping even though he managed to keep the smile on his face, “Lost myself for a moment there.”

He felt his heart break all over again. He came looking for him even though he just left the room? He took a step back and motioned for the bath.

“...Oh, you guys… have running water too, huh?” he asked quietly, “Wow…”

Deku motioned, a little more aggressively, for the bathroom.

“Ah… I guess I am a little dirty, huh?”

Deku, with a little more frantic panic, motioned and Hawks finally seemed to get the message.

“Oh! Right. I’ll go in now I guess.”

Deku pointed at him, and then pointed to the pile of laundry he had to bleach and detox his next break, tucked away in the corner of the bathroom.

“Haha… duly noted, sir,” Hawks said.

He walked into the bathroom. Deku felt his heart was going to leap out of his chest.

A Pro Hero was using his bathroom.

He took a deep breath, shaking his head to get the feelings from erupting out of him in an effort to stop himself from making him look like a fool.

He walked into his room, grabbing one of his larger shirts, a pair of unworn briefs still in their package, and sweatpants, and placed them in front of the door. It was all he had. Since Hawks was only a head or so taller than him, he hoped that it would be enough-if a little uncomfortable. But it would have to do until they could get out and get him something else to wear.

He got to make something sustainable for the man to eat. The rice won’t take too long, but he doesn’t know how long Hawks was going to take in the baths.

He… he had some canned chicken, but he didn’t think it would be appropriate to give it to the Wing-Hero Hawks. But at the same time, to only offer water and rice as a meal to a Pro Hero had him nauseous with guilt.

The man came out impossibly quick. But he looked clean. He didn’t bother with the shirt, and his eyes widened at the sight of the rice machine. Deku felt so stupid at the same time, of course he wouldn’t wear a shirt, he has fucking wings. In the meantime, his eyes traced the way his rib-cage was protruding against his skin, the way his hips cut in, how defined his muscles looked, to the point where it felt like it was deformed because of how thin the man was now.

Deku can’t just give him rice. Look at him. He needs real, good food. It’s something that Deku can’t really offer him at the moment, so he lifts the meager can of chicken instead.

The man’s eyes shine back, and he gives a laugh.

“A feast,” he says, breathlessly and almost in disbelief. “...Thank you. I… I truly,” his hand came up to pinch the bridge of his nose, “God… Thank you.”

Deku motioned for him to sit down at the kitchen table, and turned around to prepare some chicken and rice porridge. The blond all but collapsed into his seat, but since all his clothes still looked clean, Deku hoped that he wasn’t too injured.

“You’re pretty quiet, huh?” the blond asked. “I won’t… bite, so you can take off your helmet at least. It can’t be comfortable in that.”

Deku, not registering that Hawks was talking to him, took the pot and placed it on a hotplate on the table. He passed Hawks a bowl with a spoon and a serving spoon. The blond blinked at it slowly, and he could see that he was about to start salivating. Figuring that he should give him the privacy to eat at his own leisure, Deku turned away. He had other things to do.

“Oh, you don’t want… any?” The blond’s voice was light, as he looked from Deku to the bowl and then back. The man gave a wave, hoping it looked dismissing and not disrespectful.

Former Number Three was eating at his fucking breakfast table, he was about to have a stroke. Reminding himself to focus, he walked away.

He fumbled around the entryway dresser and fished out an extra key.

This… This was his mom’s key.

He scribbled a note and headed back to the kitchen. The blond had taken a few bites, but stopped eating when he came back in. Before he could say anything, though, he handed the note to the man.

“Door auto-locks.”

Deku turned to put his shoes on and get his gloves on. He taped it down with the same amount of diligence he always does, hefted his backpack on and straightened. Right when his hand touched the doorknob, he heard something behind him and he turned to where Hawks was standing right behind him.

What was he doing?

“Ah… uh… Safety in numbers and all that,” the blond said, trying to smile and failing, and Deku shook his head.

The smile finally turned into a frown, and he rubbed the back of his head.

“Well, you already helped me out a ton, so I… I want to return the favor,” he added. “I look like this, but I’m still pretty strong. I don’t know where you’re going, but the supplies… these are your supplies that I’m hogging, right? Lemme help out.”

Deku shook his head again. He pointed at the door, then at Hawks.

“I-”

He opened the door and closed it behind him. He waited a moment, and crossed his arms knowingly when Hawks opened it. The blond stared at him, sheepishly and Deku shook his head. He opened his hand and extended it out to Hawks. The former pro stared at it for a moment and then extended his hand back.

Taking the much bigger hand in his, he took his finger and wrote out on the palm, tracing familiar kanji, and the older man sighed back in defeat.

“Alright,” he said, “Next time for certain.”

Good, Deku thinks, certain that there would be no next time. He won today, and he’s hopeful that Hawks will get some much needed rest. He’ll make sure to grab some iron supplements, among many other things, for the blond.

He walked out, this time to finish his stupid supply run. He must have waited too long, since Shigaraki is also outside. He’s holding a gameboy in his hand, but he’s not focused on it. Deku is just glad that the video games he found are still getting some action.

“...I thought you already left,” he said, genuinely surprised to see him. “Oi! Twice!” he yelled out as Deku walked away.

Augh. today just wasn't his day, huh?

When he returned to his apartment building, he’s splattered in minimal blood. His backpack is full and heavy, and he hopes that Hawks isn’t an extra-large in anything.

He pushed the door to his home open, and was greeted by the warm candlelight and a quiet greeting. It’s exceedingly familiar, and he can feel his eyes water from behind the visor. If… If at all possible, he wished this moment could last forever.

The thought that he had <come home> to someone was overwhelming.

“Hey, uh welcome back,” Hawks said, raising his hand up in greeting. “I hope you don’t mind that I used the candles. But uh, I left some food so maybe we could eat together-”

Deku peeled his backpack off his shoulders. If the man was here, this would make his life much easier. He ignored everything he said, too focused on the task on hand, and flipped his backpack over so that everything would come pouring out. He motioned at the mess it was and pointed at Hawks.

“Uh… oh, is this… for me?”

Deku nodded once, and walked past him and into the bathroom to give the man some privacy.

### **Fever & Hawks**

After meticulously washing everything, he didn’t expect to step out of the bathroom in his wet and disinfectant-smelling clothes (he forgot to grab a change of clothes when he went in), to find Hawks standing right outside of the bathroom door.

“Hey!” he said, breathless. “You were uh, cleaning up, huh? I saw that you had a lot of bleach,” he said. “You want any help?”

Deku wondered if this was going to be the new normal, until the older man felt better.

He shook his head, the straps of the helmet dragging against his shirt. Thank god he decided to keep it on.

“Ah, you wear the helmet inside, too?” he noted aloud.

Deku, who knew that he wouldn’t be able to keep his mouth shut if he opened it, wisely kept it shut. He didn’t want to annoy the man, and he was scared that if he opened his mouth, the man would be burdened with his words. He didn’t want that. The man clearly went through enough shit. If he would like, Deku would just let him rest his wings here, for as long as he wanted, whenever he wanted.

He didn’t know what Hawks needed, but he would give him anything.

“So, you uh, gonna eat? Sorry for rummaging through your stuff, I-”

Deku walked by him and towards the kitchen. Food sounded great right now, but he needed to take the helmet off to do that, and he didn’t want anyone to see his face. He knew that it wasn’t very attractive right now, and he didn’t want to disturb Hawks. He stared at the neat piles in the living room.

Hawks worked quickly to separate everything into categories. Medicine, clothes, supplements, snacks, water, everything was neatly organized. He was really grateful. He hoped that Hawks found use for these.

He grabbed his bag, it was all he needed, and looked back to the apartment. He was going to miss this place, but he’ll let Hawks stay as long as he wanted to. Everything he needed, he could grab at a later time. He placed the key on the dresser. He never thought that he would need to move out like this.

“Wait, wh-where are you going?”

His wings fluttered, and Deku frowned. Maybe he should stay longer? Until this man was ready to fly on his own again? Wouldn’t it be easier to rest alone though? He didn’t know. He’s been alone for a while, so he just assumed that everyone was used to being alone.

He lifted his bag again and then pointed at the door.

“Are you… are you leaving? If you left the key, are you leaving this place?”

He nodded.

“...Why? There’s no… It’s plenty big enough for the two of us. If anything, I should be the one leaving-”

Deku shook his head violently. The straps of his helmet slapped against each other in the movement. The sound seemed to echo between them.

“...Is it because I’m intruding? Sorry, I… I haven’t seen another survivor in a while. I didn’t mean to overstep my boundaries.”

No no no no, Deku wanted to say. He felt like Hawks was the last person to apologize. Especially to him. He shook his head.

“Then, you’ll stay?”

Deku paused, and even though it almost felt like a trap, nodded his head. He placed the bag back down on the ground, and watched Hawks’ shoulders sag.

“Haha… Thank you. Thank you.”

He didn’t think that Hawks was thanking him for the meal though.

As it turned out, he had a fever. Hawks had taken the couch, despite how hard Deku tried to push him towards his bed. And after a brief moment to fanboy (Hawks, former Pro Hero Hawks was sleeping on his couch, he was about to have an aneurysm) Deku had realized it.

Former Pro Hero Hawks was sweating on his couch. Shit, this couch was going to be a family heirloom. The man looked a little cramped on his couch, but Deku pulled out the futon. It hadn’t been aired in a while, but it was probably better than being curled up on his wings like that...

Oh wait, fever.

He moved over to hover by the blond. How could someone be halfway to starvation and flushed with a fever, but still look this handsome? Amazing. He really was a hero. A real life hero, right in front of him. Wow.

He pulled blankets for the man, more than used to this whole taking-care-of-a-stranger’s-fever situation. He ran some hot water and got a towel. Had some water and some supplements. It was a shame that he didn’t have any actual fruits and vegetables, but this would have to do. When Hawks’ fever breaks, he’ll get him some medicine and more rice porridge. He’ll have to go downstairs for some more rice, but he doesn’t think the others downstairs would care.

It’s fine. He won’t take more than for one person.

When daylight came, his fever hadn’t broken. Deku wiped his sweat meticulously. He had been looking through his old notes and writing up some more of his thoughts in another journal. This would have been fine, but since he came back in a rush yesterday too, the things he needed to do have just been piling up.

But he didn’t want anyone else up here. He didn’t want to get used to having life in his apartment complex again.

“Don’t… don’t leave me…”

And Deku, who was weak and useless, took Hawks’ hand in his and squeezed it just a little bit.

“It’s alright,” he whispered, even though the man probably couldn’t hear him. “It’s alright. I am here.”

Normally, the only time he would be able to hold a hero’s hand or even meet one in person would be in a meet n’ greet hosted by the hero’s agency or a charity event.

Normally.

The next time Hawks was coherent, he jolted into a sitting position. His wings were almost back to full health, and he felt bone-weary tired. His eyes immediately jumped to Helmet, the man who lit the lights on an apartment complex.

He sat with a journal on his lap, and gave a small wave at Hawks.

“...Was I…” he stopped himself from speaking, his voice so raspy it hurt to speak. Instantly, there was a water bottle in his hands and he took it. He took a drink, suppressing the urge to just chug it all down, and looked to the man. “Did you… nurse me?”

Helmet stood up and left. Did he say something wrong? His mind was still hazy from the effects of sickness and hunger, and he tried to tally up the right and wrong things to say. Right when he thought he could get to his feet and give chase, Helmet came back. In his hands was a modest bowl of porridge. He set it to the side, within arms’ reach of Hawks.

Humanity wasn’t dead, the former Pro Hero would think. He may not have done anything to protect his life, but he sure as hell wasn’t dead.

Hawks didn’t know anything about this guy. He didn’t know his name or what he sounded like or what he looked like or anything. If he wanted to kill him, he would have done so by now, but instead, he was still here. He didn’t know anything about the man who guided him someplace safe to recuperate and rest.

And Hawks, who was raised to be a hero, knew that this was the type of people that he was told to protect.

Day four since they met, and Hawks has returned to almost full health. This would be the closest he had gotten to a full recovery since this whole thing started.

His body was finally recovering. His spirits were torn asunder, but he was prepared to face tomorrow.

### **LOV & Hawks-**

Of course, Deku swore that Hawks wouldn’t spend any longer than he absolutely had to in his apartment. However, it was hard to even try and formulate words, but he managed to get the man out of his apartment complex.

However, the older man could be strangely obtuse, or perhaps he couldn’t tell that Deku didn’t want his presence breathing down his neck, and Deku wanted to scream. Please, he wanted to beg, please let me have my home again.

While someone was inside his complex with him, he had to be extra careful, and it was beginning to get exhausting. It was starting to get really hot in the apartment, so he really wanted to take off his helmet. He could just lock himself inside his room, but he doesn’t think that he’ll have to since Hawks wouldn't barge into his room, right? Surely, that smiley blond wouldn’t just storm into his room unannounced, right?

But locking his room also means he’ll be that much later to react to anything that could possibly happen. If something were to happen to the people outside, would he be able to live with himself?

As it was, he took a deep sigh and decided to abandon this and leave. There were plenty of empty apartments that he can make a new home in, no matter how bad he felt about it. He had personally confirmed that several of the residents will never return.

But, Hawks was clearly in a much better state than he thought, because the man followed him down and out of the apartment. Of course, Deku was happy to know that he was in good health, but didn’t he have better things to do than follow him around? Like, people to save?

“Oh, there you are Hel… Isn’t that a Pro-Hero?” Twice sounded dumb-founded.

Right, speaking of people who he thought would have left by now.

“Pro-Hero?!”

Before Deku realized what was going on, they were assembled together. Almost all the (tentative) tenants were finally face-to-face with one another. Even Shigaraki, their resident loner, was there, looking shocked and slightly out of breath at the entire ordeal.

Hah. He thought he was shocked. Deku is certain Shigaraki has no idea what real shock is. Real shock is that feeling when the Number Three Pro Hero, battered and lost, comes flying from the depths of the dark in the middle of the night while you’re taking a break on the rooftop. That’s shock.

“What the fuck?” Shigaraki said, accurately summing up how he felt right then and there.

He couldn’t get the words out. Because Deku was shy and didn’t remember how to get his vocal chords working anymore, and just wished that this whole thing would just end instead.

“...I see,” Hawks said, his eyes glazing over all of them, “Well, I guess that answers the ‘are you alone’ questions,” he said. He side-eyed the young man by his side and then looked at them, “Yo,” he greeted casually, lifting his hand to wave at them, “Nice to meet you, I flew in after I saw the lights. Glad to see other people made it out.”

“You should leave as soon as possible if you value your life, hero. You won’t enjoy our company,” Shigaraki said, eyes narrowing.

Hostile. Why were they hostile?

Deku understood why they were bitter, but he didn’t understand why it was so hostile. It didn’t seem like they knew each other from Before, but he couldn’t think of any other reason why they were so on edge. Even Bunagaiwara, who Deku thought was the easy-going and happiest of the ground, was uncharacteristically quiet as he eyed the former pro with uncertainty.

Wasn’t it supposed to be heartening to have a hero here?

“Funny,” Hawks said, narrowing his eyes despite the smile on his face, “If that was really the case, I sincerely doubt that Helmet-head here would have worked so hard to nurse me back to health.”

A shiver ran down Deku’s spine. The temperature of the area plummeted. He couldn’t deal with this.

“Hey uh, Helmet? What are you-”

They all turned to where Twice was watching Helmet jump up to sit on the ledge. They watched in mortification as he swung his legs over the edge and then just jumped. Hawks surged forward, his wings stretching out as Twice ran forward in an attempt to grab the young man, a fraction of a second too late as he slipped down.

Four feathers flew out, but the lack of practiced use really showed, and they didn’t fly as fast or as precise as they normally would have. His hand grabbed the ledge, a fraction of a second away from jumping over it to get the man who returned the stars to the skies, and stared down at the way Helmet grabbed the railing to the floor below him, temporarily stopped before jumping down to the next floor, and then landing on the ground with a roll.

A perfect landing. Bubaigarawara gave him full marks.

Two of Hawks’ feathers were on his shoulders, one was in his hand, and the last feather floated down to the ground as Hawks lost his focus. Was he… this out of practice?

“Wow, you saved people like that?” Dabi asked, snorting, “No wonder you’re all alone here.”

Shigaraki peered over the ledge, “Fucking show-off,” he muttered. “Iguchi! Don’t let him get away!”

At the bottom of the area, making his way to the Rental Office, Deku gave a nod to Iguchi, who was looking between him and the three floors above where Shigaraki and the others were, and then back to him.

“W-what?”

Needless to say, Helmet got away safely.

“Damn, I thought I hadn’t seen him in a while,” Dabi sighed, as he eyed Hawks from the corner of his eyes, “He was taking care of someone who’ll just leave him high and dry.”

“It’s okay,” Twice said, flashing a thumbs-up, “We won’t ever abandon the guy who pulled us out of the gutter. // Yeah, let’s stab him in the back!”

“So, where’s he going?” Hawks asked, pointedly ignoring their words.

He was ignored with nothing more than a knowing smirk as they walked off. He sighed, and rubbed the back of his neck, tough crowd.

Well, he wasn’t Number Three for nothing, and he was long overdue for a flight. His wings stretched open and he took flight.

### **Helmet & Hawks - (another) stalker**

Hawks watched Helmet. He moved efficiently, but his fighting was a mess. He got the job done, in a gorey and slow manner, but Hawks saw this whole thing as a good thing. If the man was perfect, it would be much harder to find a place for himself, or worse, he’d be competing with the others for scraps.

It was clear that they didn’t want him here. He really didn’t care.

However, there was a guy here who helped him. There was a need here that he could fill. There was no reason for him to leave just yet. There was no one here waiting to be saved, or even wanted help from him.

And the quieter part of Hawks, the one that missed and ached for human companionship, for someone that looked at him like a person and not an idol, didn’t want to give up.

So first, he would learn about Helmet.

First, it was clear that Helmet wanted him out of his apartment.

Hawks really, really didn’t want to be somewhere where he would be alone again, but he agreed with an easy smile. Maybe, if he explained himself, the other man would relent and let him stay.

...No, he knew that he didn’t deserve that. Swallowing his fears, he gave his trademark smile instead. Don’t be a burden, he reminded himself. Don’t be selfish. He needed to demonstrate his worth first. He spent his entire life for other people, he wasn’t about to break those habits now.

In the Rental Office, Helmet pulled out a thick piece of cardboard. On it, several keyrings, each with one key, were pinned to the board. There was a piece of masking tape over each of the keyrings, and some numbers scribbled on it.

Was Helmet offering him a room?

“Then, I’ll take the room next to yours, if that’s okay?”

Helmet didn’t twitch, and remained unmoving. Hawks took one of the keys, the one next to Hemet’s room, and carefully pocketed it. Immediately, it became one of his most precious possessions.

“Then, let’s get along, neighbor,” he said with a wide grin.

Helmet nodded back at him, or maybe he was just putting the board away. It could be either, and the blond gave a short sigh.

As expected, the apartment was dusty. It was, strangely enough, stocked with a few days worth of food, canned peaches and a pack of water. There were some books, and a couch, but it was otherwise unfurnished.

It was barren and empty and he didn’t like how well it fit him.

His smile didn’t fall, of course, but he would have rather stayed in Helmet’s disinfectant-stained apartment than here alone. The man was quiet or absent, so the blond didn’t think that he would make any noise throughout the day. It was like he was alone again. There was someone next door, who was alive, but he felt alone.

There was a knock on the door, despite the fact that he left it wide open, and he turned around to see Helmet. The small man was carrying a box and two large bags. He set them down at the doorframe, and Hawks came to join him.

“You can just come in, the door’s open,” he said.

Helmet did exactly not that, and the blond wondered if maybe he was clingy. He wasn’t clingy, was he? Was he the clingy one? No, no, he’s probably just acting like this because this was the first person that hasn't asked anything of him. Eventually, this film would break, and he would return back to normal. He just needed to get used to being with someone again.

After placing everything down, Helmet turned to leave. Hawks supposed that it was a kindness to give him all these supplies, but did he have to leave so soon? Well, he supposed that he didn’t have any tea or treats to entice him to stay, and Helmet was probably going to head out on patrol of some sort.

“Ah, thanks for these…”

Hawks’ voice trailed off as Helmet jumped off the railing. Did… Did he move like this all the time? That sounded like a waste of energy to do it every time. However, he saw the state of the staircases, and figured that this was one of his only options.

He sighed.

If Helmet thought that this was all it took to get rid of him, he had another thing coming. He threw the boxes behind him, and closed the door behind him. He didn’t bother locking it, since the only thing that mattered to him was heading out to patrol.

His wings opened behind him and he took flight, feeling like himself for the first time in a very long time.

-

Trying to figure out Helmet was surprisingly easy. He was a straight-forward guy, who moved with purpose. Once Hawks figured out what his priorities were, he knew that he'd be better able to help him reach those goals.

It helped that there was a trail of gore and bits mapping out the path he took.

-

Eventually, he went through the supplies that were brought to him. In the box, there were some more canned goods like spam, corn, and an assortment of dried fruits. This would have happily fed an entire family for a week back at his old place. There were a small handful of salt and sugar packets near the bottom, inside of a small pot. He assumed it was so that he could cook something it if he wanted to.

One of the bags contained some blankets and a futon, and the other bag had some clothes, ranging from sizes M to XXL. He snorted, and when he found a pair of scissors at the bottom of the box, wondered if he was expected to cut some holes for his wings.

He didn’t even realize how much he was smiling until he was curious on why his face hurt so much.

This meant that he was wanted here, right? If someone looked after another this much, this meant that he was wanted, didn’t it?

A few days afterwards, they were all given dried meat.

“That doesn't mean you’re special though, alright?!” Twice hissed at him, “Helmet here gives everyone some! And you gotta work for the rest!”

“Hm, you guys call him Helmet?” Hawks replied back.

As though realizing what he did, Twice covered his mouth, since he had a mask on, it was doubly strange to see.

“I can’t believe you made me sell him out like that! Gah, as expected of a hero!”

He was an easily excitable guy, Hawks thought, amused. He was glad that there were people who still had a lot of energy in a place like this.

### **Iguchi Shuichi: Spinner- Loyalty**

Iguchi waited over thirteen hours at the staircase for this man. While he would have normally been upset at the fact that someone had kept him waiting for so long, he didn’t have it in his heart to ever think that of this specific person. It wasn’t like they had promised on a specific time anyways. He watched as the man walked into the apartment complex area, and stood at the staircase that he was climbing up.

He was in steel-towed boots, with several pieces of duct tape accessorizing it. There was a fire-hydrant taped to his left thigh, and he carried a bulging yellow backpack that looked ready to pop open. And then, a black, full-face helmet that Iguchi associated with motorbikes covered his entire head.

His head tilted to face him.

“Thank you,” he said. Even though he had been practicing these lines in his head, had replayed this situation in his mind, over and over again, it was something completely different now that the man was standing just a few steps below him. He realized that he didn’t bow when he said it, and quickly gave one.

He truly hoped that his actions and words didn’t appear as insincere.

“Thank you so much for… for saving me and … and bringing me here. Thank you for sharing your resources and taking care of me. I can’t… I can’t even begin to imagine why you wanted to do that, but if there is anything I can do for you, please, just say the word!”

He lifted his head up.

“I… As you can see, my Quirk is Lizard! But I’m also adept at combat-fighting and stealth! I am-am I… I can be a great asset to you!” he continued on, losing his fire as the silence continued to draw on.

He gulped, wondering if perhaps he didn’t understand him. Then, all he needed to learn was how to be understood right? He wasn’t really a fan of trying or learning because of the things he associated with it, but now that the world had ended, he thinks he’s willing to put in the effort.

“Please!” he said, dropping his head as his eyes started to well up in tears.

He doesn’t think he could handle it if he was abandoned again. How could he dare to even dream of competing against Hawks? If he was abandoned again, left alone like that again… then he might as well die. But with the life that this man had given him, had patched him up, fed and clothed him, he wanted to give it all to this man.

He lived a meaningless life. Maybe, now that the world has ended, something could change.

“I-”

He stopped cold as the man began to move. He stood there, frozen in his bow, until Helmet was only a few steps away. He lifted his head up just a little bit, and realized that he was being handed something. He took the plastic bag into his arms, and stared in slack-jawed shock as the man walked right by him.

His eyes watered some more, because if actions spoke louder than words, he was fucking mute.

In the bag were vitamin supplements. It was clear that he had spent a longer time than usual out hunting for supplies, if he had brought back vitamin supplements of all shapes and sizes. He brought this for them.

If that didn’t tell him that someone wanted him -and the people he was with- to be alive, he doesn’t know what will.

“Well if you don’t like it then just leave!” Iguchi snapped back. “If you’re so unhappy and dissatisfied, then do something about it! This guy took us in, took you in, nursed us back to health when he knew nothing about us! He shares his resources with us! His medicine and his food and his water! He hasn’t asked anything of us!”

“So you’re going to throw your life away like a common dog? Just because he gave you some food, a nice place to sleep? Wag your tail when he comes by?” the man bit back and the lizard scowled.

“It’s not like that!” Iguchi snapped back, his face red with his frustration. He stared at Shigaraki for another moment before he sighed. “… I just… I want to die for something. I want to choose what to die for. I’m sick of living in fear and I’m sick of being alone! We’re all going to die anyways! So I might as well die somewhere where someone cared if I woke up tomorrow or not!”

There was a long silence following his words.

“...If that’s a fool’s way of living, that’s fine. I don’t mind dying a fool. I just want to choose that.”

“...Yeah,” Shigaraki said quietly, “You’re a fucking idiot.”

Somehow, he didn’t sound nearly as angry as before though. He walked out afterwards, and Spinner was more than surprised to see him stay.

But, even if they left, where would they go?

The following day, however, Spinner’s jaw unhinged when he came to join Helmet for the patrol.

“...Shigaraki?” he asked, mouth agape.

Shigaraki, in a comfortable-looking sweater and loose-fitting jeans, scowled back at him. He rubbed his hands over his arms.

“What’s takes you so damn long to get ready?” he asked, voice snippy.

“Uh…” he hesitated, “This is… our usual time?” he tried. He wondered what was going on. Didn’t they literally just fight about this? Like, last night, they were screaming in each other’s faces about this, weren’t they? Then what was all of this about?

“What?” Shigaraki frowned, “But he goes out when the sun goes down.”

“He does what?”

The other man scowled, “How many times does he go out a day?”

And Spinner really, really wished he knew. He wanted to know that. He wanted to know why Shigaraki was here. He wanted to know why the world ended and he was stuck here.

Red eyes narrowed at him, and Spinner frowned back. Anyways, who the fuck did he think that he was, to demand things like this from him anyways?

“Why are you here again? I thought this was the fool’s way of living?”

“...Yeah,” Shigaraki nodded, “I’m an idiot. Oh, here he comes.”

Helmet, flanked by Toga and Compress on either side, came up to where they were standing.

“W-what?” Spinner spluttered. He looked torn between reacting at Shigaraki’s words or stuttering out some embarrassing greeting to Helmet again. Eventually, he took too long to make a decision and Helmet walked right past them, like they weren’t even there.

It was amazing how the only person who came to save him was the same person who always ignored him.

Still, if he was a pushy and demanding person, he didn’t think that the others would have ended up joining his efforts.

### **Normality**

After several days of tense glaring and posturing, something resembling normal was made. For the most part, everyone was content to live on their own, doing as they pleased.

The only time anyone deviated from that unspoken rule was when they forced themselves into Helmet’s life. Unfortunately, no one was willing to sacrifice their time with Helmet, despite the fact that the man was like a brick wall when it came to conversation and company.

Still, the silent company of someone who saved you could be a comforting thing. He never said or did anything that made them think that they were doing anything wrong or right. It was as frustrating as it was liberating, and it just depended on the day.

At the end of that week, right when they thought that they had a handle on life, Helmet returned with a Pro-Hero on his back.

Eraserhead.

### **Enter Aizawa**

Deku didn't know how to describe the look on Eraserhead's face, but he was certain about one thing. He never wanted to wake up and see that expression looking back at him.

The man was slumped against the wall, looking at him like he’s seen a ghost, and from the way one of his hands tightly gripped his shoulder, understood what must have happened. Deku looked down at his bat, thinking that it was a little sad that the next survivors he met were the type to abandon a hero like that.

Or perhaps, this was a hero who had abandoned them.

He wasn’t sure what was pitiful, but then again, he supposed it didn’t matter.

All survivors were pitiful.

He turned back to the group that was meandering towards them, unevenly stepping towards them with every second. Deku took a deep breath, no matter how many times he did this, he felt that pull on his heart again. He knew this was wrong.

But there was someone behind him.

He wasn’t a hero or anything, but even he had things he wanted to protect. Bat at the ready, he figured that the least he could do was let the man behind him know that there was someone willing to fight for him.

“God fuck,” Shigaraki sighed deeply rubbing his face with his hands, “Another fucking Pro Hero?”

As a response, the young man walked right by him and walked into one of the second floor complexes, the one closest to the stairwell, with said Pro Hero slung over his shoulder as Hawks held the door open.

“Yeah,” Hawks said, a little breathless, “I can’t believe it.”

Shigaraki scowled back, but he couldn’t deny the feeling that something was changing.

### **Enter Present Mic**

Right when Yamada thought that he was okay with dying, a young man in a helmet dropped down in front of him with a baseball bat. He came like a hurricane, leaving nothing but crushed skulls in his wake, and as though he wasn’t in shock before, suddenly found himself being carried up into the sky.

He stared in abject shock as former Pro Hero Hawks gave him a wave.

“Hey there,” he said, “We’re here to help.”

He was a sight for sore eyes. However, Yamada had already resigned himself to his fate. He had ran out on the group he promised to protect because they abandoned his best friend, he had no way of finding his friend or putting him down if he had turned like he has promised to do, and he just. He didn’t deserve to live or die or anything. And on several occasions, he wished to cease existing as a whole.

Overall, he was just really, really tired.

And when he was flown to a six story apartment complex, he didn’t know what to expect. However, a bowl of warm white rice, packed four inches over the bowl edge and fried canned sausages in front of him, was not it.

Especially when Aizawa Shota’s rugged face complete with his lazy half grin and half-opened eyes came in front of him with the food.

“...Oh, I died,” Yamada suddenly realized.

Aizawa snorted back, “Good try,” he replied back. “You can’t leave me that easily. C’mon, eat up before it gets cold.”

Which was good, really good, because Yamada really, really didn’t want to be alone.

Yamada must have hesitated for a long time, because his friend nodded. “It’s all yours. They got plenty more where it came from.”

The blond gave a breathless laugh, and to think, just last week they learned that someone had been sneaking food out of their storage unit so everyone was under a strict diet. And now, they were free to eat whatever he wanted, whenever.

“So, who’s our mysterious savior?” Yamada asked, mouth full with food. “Should go give our greeting and thank them and stuff, right?”

Aizawa scowled back, but it had none of his usual sharpness.

“Swallow before you speak, idiot,” he said, mouth full of rice as he deftfully stole Yamada’s peaches.

“Hey! I was saving those!”

“Shoulda moved faster,” his friend grinned back, looking utterly unrepentant.

The blond, even though he was a little miffed, couldn’t hold onto the grudge for long. Since this whole thing started, he hadn’t really seen Aizawa this relaxed in a while.

It was good. And it also said a lot about this place, if they managed to get his friend to drop his guard, even if it was just for a moment.

### **Deer Meat**

“No, I just… thought that you would know how to gut something.”

Aizawa raised an eyebrow. What the fuck did they think he was?

“No way, Shota is a convenience-store bug!” Yamada said when he suddenly stopped laughing. Behind him, his long time friend glowered at him, and suddenly remembered of a very traumatizing event that no one else, he shrugged uselessly. “It’s not a bad thing!”

In response, the former underground hero bared his teeth.

### **Vlad King & the Other Teachers Arrive**

“Yeah, our base fell a part,” Midnight said, sighing deeply. “...At the time, we did our best to protect what we could but… As you could tell, not all of us made it.”

“Shocking,” Shigaraki replied back. “If Heroes could protect people that well, this whole thing wouldn’t have gone to shit to begin with.”

Vlad King shot up to his feet at that, frustrations bubbling over.

“You! How dare you say that? We’ve been working so hard-”

“For what, old man?! You say you worked so hard but it’s not your hard work that put food in front of you, now is it?!” the man snapped back. His lips twisted into a malicious grin, eyes glimmering in delight as he took in their defeated postures, “When it came down to it, you don’t even know the name of the guy who saved you right? All you fucking Pros are the same, you stand at the top, looking down on everyone else but in the end, you’re just as bad as us.”

“Hey, if we want to stay here and cohabitate-”

“If you can’t stand the truth then get out,” Dabi said, speaking up for the first time, “It’s annoying enough that there’s so many of you suddenly. But it’s not like any of you are even making an effort to contribute or help out.”

“That-We didn’t know how to help,” Midnight said, “And your leader, Helmet, right? He hasn’t said anything once.”

Shigaraki gave a sharp laugh at that, sounding like broken glass, “You’re heroes, and you need someone to tell you how to wipe your own asss?”

Twice clapped loudly, before turning to flip them off, “We don’t have any clue why he decided to help you out, but don’t think the rest of us want you here! / We’ll kill all of you if Helmet wants!”

It seemed that both sides of him agreed with him on that.

“Eh, but lucky you Hawks,” Toga sang back, “You finally found your flock, right?”

The easy-going smile on Hawks’ face tightened considerably at that.

The group of them shared a good laugh at that when the door suddenly opened and Helmet came walking in with a bag of rice over his shoulder. He didn’t even stop to stare at them as he walked right by them and placed the bag of rice on the table. Then, he turned around and left.

They stared at the table, a little amazed that he could carry the 50 pound bag of grains with seemingly little to no difficulty, and also a little shocked that he had come in so abruptly. It seemed that, even though they knew he could be unpredictable, they were still never prepared for what it was that he decided to do.

“Ah, wait, Helmet, please, I can help. My quirk is incredibly useful if you… you would just…”

Compress who had followed him into the room paused as he stared at all of them. He looked left to right, and when Helmet walked by him, snapped out of his trance.

“This is where all of you were?!” he asked, “Help me! Helmet’s been moving all these bags of rice and he’s absolutely awful at letting us help him!”

At that, Dabi was already on his feet and out the door, “Augh, that fucking shithead.”

Shigaraki stood up as well, scowling. He pointed at the other teachers, “You guys better learn your place.”

Which he hoped that they would hear as “get the fuck out and take all the kids with you” but instead they heard it as “pull your own goddamn weight."

### **Cementoss - Walls**

It was only obvious that, when you find a place with an abundance of resources, relatively safe, with many people and some injured, that you would try to hole yourself inside of it. It was such a natural, human response to find solace with walls, that Cementoss was shocked that they didn't have any walls around their perimeter.

So, in an effort to be helpful while simultaneously trying to provide more comfort to the crying and uncertain children, Cementoss erected a border.

It had nothing to do with the fact that he was excited to be able to use his quirk again.

He was peacefully enjoying lunch when something break and Midnight's distinct yell of "What the hell are you doing?!"

He met eyes with Snipe before they sprung into action, equipped with the strange and painfully familiar notion that they would be able to return to this lunch once the situation was cleared up.

Imagine their shock at seeing half of Cementoss walls destroyed, some disintegrated and burned away to ash, and others smashed into bits.

"W-what's going on here?!"

Yamada, accompanied by a better-looking Aizawa with his arm still in a sling, approached with their own frowns and confusion.

"That's what we want to know too," Snipe said.

"These guys just started to destroy the walls!" Midnight shouted back, gesturing to Shigaraki, Dabi and four Twice clones with sledgehammers.

"Hah? You're the ones living off of our resources!" One of the Twice clones snapped back, flipping them off. "You should be grateful we don't even ask you to pitch in to feed your fat asses!"

It was completely true. They were busy making sure that they were okay and the injured students were still safe. Concerning what they were doing, they weren't giving back at all, but were greedily consuming the resources. In addition to that, nothing was ever asked of them, but they figured that the would have been asked to chip in eventually-

"Our squad leader Helmet is the reason why any of you are here and alive at all! We would have just abandoned you where you were and come back to put you out of your misery! And this is how you repay us?"

"...Isn't having a wall necessary? For defense?" Cementoss worded carefully.

"Helmet doesn't want them," Dabi replied, his hands glowing with the fire, "No walls."

"Wait, let us try and talk to him-"

"Guys what gives? C'mon, I wanna eat lunch so let's get going!" Another Twice clone called outcoming over. "Get your ass in gear! Helmet is half done with all of his!"

"We're working on it!" Dabi snapped back, turning over. "Jeez. I knew this would happen. You get a couple of heroes and suddenly, they are going to lead us all."

"That's not-"

Midnight was cut off as Twice snorted back.

"Then you wouldn't have needed help, right? Since the last place you were at still had heroes right?"

"But still…"

The words hit hard, and while they might have tried to fight it harder once upon a time, after constant failure met them at every turn and corner of their lives, their self-esteem was too tattered to make a stand on. They stood like chasitized children, with the sound of the crumbling wall surrounded them.

"...He's over there, right?" Aizawa asked, turning to leave. "Alright."

He stopped though, since the helmet-wearing man came jogging around the corner. Bat in his hand, it was clear that he was here for a fight. He looked at all of them, turning his head left to right and then placed the tip of the bat to the ground.

"No fight here, sir!" Twice said, saluting at him. "Just a bunch of old people tryna play hero!"

"Why don't you want walls?" Aizawa asked as soon as he saw him

Helmet turned his head to face the taller man and then shook his head. He turned back to leave and when the frustration boiled over, he reached out to grab the man by the wrist.

The effect was immediate. He jumped backwards to narrowly avoid a blade as Iguchi ran in from behind Helmet. Snipe brought up his guns and Midnight was ready to tear off her sleeve. The blue fire exploded across Dabi's shoulders and the tension skyrocketed.

"Don't touch him," Shigaraki said, lifting his hand up menacingly.

Suddenly, loud barking was heard and a pack of eight Shiba Inus came running from the outside of the border. They barked loudly as they ran around the group of humans and then right to Helmet. They circled him once and barked at the wall.

Helmet's hand tightened on his bat and started to run towards the ruined walls. Right before he left the border, he tapped his bat against the concrete walls and ran.

Above, Hawks descended. "Hey there's some Walkers … The dogs beat me here?!"

"... He doesn't want walls because he has strays watching the borders?" Cementoss whispered out.

"Of course he has dogs," Dabi muttered back, just as shocked as the others at the sudden appearance of dogs. He gave a sigh, "I'll go help with clean-up." He threw the group of former heroes another glance, "No walls, you ungrateful bastards."

"Man that felt good," Twice said, sighing deeply. He looked down at his hands, “but man, dogs!? Did you see them? They were so cute!” he rubbed his face, “Why can’t we take them in? They should be with us, so I could hold them! Oh my god, could you imagine puppy piles! We wouldn’t need to put the heater back to work ever again!”

Togra placed her head on the table and kicked her feet wildly under the table, “No fair,” she wailed back. “ I want to play with little puppers,” she whined loudly, “They’d be so cute splattered in blood.”

“And we’d have real meat again too,” Dabi noted.

Toga’s hands flew to her mouth as she gasped in surprise, “Dabi, that’s terrible! How could you say that?!”

“I mean, if were going to be cutting them anyways…”

Iguchi shook his head, still wondering whether or not he was lucky for surviving with them or not. Across the way was Shigaraki, who was still alone, who was always alone, yawning as he tapped away on a handheld game console as he leaned against the wall next to the door.

Right before he got to ask why he was there, the door opened and Helmet walked out with a small bag of dog food.

“...You’ve been feeding them?” Iguchi asked quietly.

Helmet nodded as he walked out with the bag of treats, and Shigaraki pushed off the wall and followed him out. The others, since it wasn’t like they had anything better to do, followed.

Leading them to seeing one of the Shiba Inus standing at where they had cleared out the walls, nothing left but large lumps of concrete and piles of dust and sand. They had noticed that it was here since earlier, but they didn’t realize what it was waiting for. Any chance that of the others, anyone, coming closer ended with it running away, but returning in a few moments.

The young man opened the bag of treats and placed it on the ground. The dog got up, barked, picked up the bag in its mouth and then sat, waiting at the man’s feet. There was a long pause, and when Helmet turned away, the dog got up to sit down in front of him. He turned gain and the dog tried again. It put the bag of treats down and barked.

The idea that the dog was waiting for a treat or food, that Helmet had somehow trained these stray dogs to patrol around and call him when Walkers were sited nearby, died away. Helmet shot them a glance before his shoulder heaved and he stuck his hand out. The dog eagerly pushed its head against the palm of his gloved hands.

“Oh,” Twice said.

Then the dog, with the bag of treats, trotted away.

“Huh,” Iguchi noted.

“...So if I warn him about an incoming attack,” Toga said slowly, “I’ll get headpats?”

Iguchi choked a little.

“No way,” Shigaraki said, “He hates touching people.”

The lizard spun to stare at him, wondering why he felt so suddenly betrayed by the normally quiet man.

### **More on Dogs**

“...They say ‘Thank you’,” Koda said quietly. He wrung his hands together, “And that if… if you needed anything or wanted some help, they would be happy to help you.”

Aizawa stared as Helmet looked from Koda to the dog in front of him. He hesitated and put his hand out, hesitantly, and the dog pressed its head against his gloved hand. It barked some more times and Koda gulped loudly.

“They uh… they also want you to know that uhm… that they can leave someone here for you.”

Helmet pulled his hand back and looked down at the dog. The dog pulled his ears down flat, staring up with wide-eyes and everyone else stared in trepidation.

“If you can look at those eyes and say you’re not going to agree…” Kaminari whispered quietly.

“...Damn, that’s heartless.”

Then, Helmet shrugged. He turned away and left.

If anyone noticed that there was more dog food and cat food in the designated pantry rooms, they squealed loudly but didn’t mention it to Helmet.

### **Garden**

“...A garden?”

Helmet sat up a little straighter at that, and everyone took note of it.

Shiozaki nodded, a smile growing on her face, “I think it’ll be great. Helmet already gave us the seeds, so we will be working on it.”

“...We?”

She turned to where Koji rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

“Yes, Koji-kun and I will like to head this. Koji said he’ll convince the cats and dogs to take care of any of the pest problems, and I’ll make sure that everything grows ripe and well.”

“...Huh,” Shigaraki nodded, “Not bad.”

### **Bleaching Station**

Of all the things he wasn’t expecting to see in the morning, Helmet shoving by the front of the apartment complex was definitely wasn’t one of them.

...Was he looking for something?

No wait, Aizawa thought as he rubbed his eyes. Better question, why was he awake? How long has he been awake?

By the time he realized what the man was doing, and had made his way over, he realized that there was something seriously wrong about the entire thing. He squinted at the man and made his way over. He didn’t make any effort to silence his steps, and made his way to the man.

It was a large square he was digging up, and looking at the ground, he could see there was an outline. It was too big to be a burial site, and it was too small and oddly placed to be another garden either.

“...Morning,” he called out to the man who never answered him.

Helmet, who didn’t have his fire extinguisher or his bats on his person but on the ground a few feet away, didn’t even pause as he kept shoveling. He was about a foot into the ground when he stopped shoveling. Could it be? Did he notice that Aizawa was talking to him?

No, actually, he started to use the back of his shovel to pat down the dirt. Did he even exist to this guy? Aizawa wasn’t sure.

“Oh! Helmet, there you are! Morning!”

He looked to where a blond came running up to him, Twice, if he remembered from the mugshots. It was seriously unnerving to share so many domestic habits with him, and the others like him.

“Ah, and Hero-kun,” he said pointing at Aizawa, “I guess, former Hero-kun.” He laughed, and Aizawa ignored the pinch in his heart at the words. Just as quickly as he came, he dismissed Aizawa and turned back to the guy who finished building a hole. “Whatcha doing, Helmet?”

Helmet stepped out of the hole and grabbed his fire extinguisher. He strapped it onto one of his thighs, using some poorly constructed mess of belts and duct tape, but it stayed on well enough. They watched as he dragged in some large pieces of concrete, the pieces that once formed a wall around the perimeter of the apartment complex. Seeing it made something pinch in Aizawa’s heart, but after watching Helmet drag the pieces to lay out in the hole, Twice jumped in.

“Got it!”

Aizawa wasn’t too sure what he ‘got’ but he helped drag some pieces of concrete back. Again, he felt useless, and the weight of his arm in the makeshift sling felt oppressive.

Eventually, the bottom and sides were lined unevenly in the bits of concrete. It was done relatively quickly, but they didn’t even know that they were done with the supposed task until Helmet got up and left.

He slung his backpack on and just left the area. It was so sudden, that Twice and Aizawa stared at his back dumbly before Twice scrambled to follow and Aizawa wished he could.

Eventually, Aizawa got to watch Helmet return and go to the area where he dug a hole and lined it with concrete. He watched with interest, and felt all the final puzzle pieces fall into place.

He was building a place for people to clean up in. A place where the remaining bleach solution and disinfect won’t run through the ground. It was placed close to where people came in through, probably to minimize how much cleaning they had to do on the main floors.

Whatever Helmet was working towards, it never failed to amaze Aizawa.

He moved to go find Ishiyama. They could do the rest from here.

### **Hawks & Helmet -**

“...Wherever you are,” Hawks said, “I’ll fly there.”

If Helmet heard him, if only Helmet could hear him, he wouldn’t know. It would be nice to think that he heard him, and it would be even nicer to think that he believed him. If not, Hawks supposed that that’s fine too.

He doesn’t have much of a repertoire anymore. He was a hawk without territory, trying to find a place to perch and something to eat. Pathetic and lonely, Hawks no longer had anything or anyone.

### **Aizawa’s Healed**

Right before the third month since he got there, Aizawa finally healed up enough that he was comfortable enough to do this.

“Alright,” he said, waking up right before dawn and camping out at the front of the compound for this moment. He stared down as Helmet made his way outside, flanked by a dog on one side and Mr. Compress on the other. “My turn tonight,” he said, even though no one was keeping track. “Let’s get along well, Helmet.”

The look of scorn on his face wasn’t aimed at Helmet, but himself, but from the way Mr. Compress tried to place his body between them, figured he came off a lot more aggressive than he meant to.

But he’s seen the way some of these bastards rip into the (especially) younger kids. Kids shouldn’t be expected to do these kinds of things right now. The fact that they’re alive is already so meaningful. They, as the functioning adults in the situation, should be taking the head of it.

And in order for Aizawa to do that, he needed to first make an indispensable position here. He needed to make his stand so that he could argue things and have people listen to him. Right now, that was his biggest concern.

He can’t waste anymore time, or resources.

Aizawa was not a weak person. He knew how to prioritize, and he knew how to stick to it. More importantly, he knew how to work with people who may not have the same priorities as him.

Even though he understood what Helmet was doing, any why he was doing it, watching someone who barely came up to his chest burn piles of bodies was nauseating.

“If you’re so tired, why don’t you head back?” Dabi said, his lips stretching into a mocking smile.

He stared for a moment longer before he returned the hostile smile with one of his own.

“You should be more careful. It almost sounds like you’re worried for my well-being,” Aizawa replied back. “That would be awful, since it looks like you can barely take care of yourself as it is.”

The heat of his stare turned into something dangerously cold, and Aizawa met it evenly with one of his own.

He didn’t take this shit when society was functioning. Like hell he would take it just because the world ended.

His capture scarves may be raggedly, and his quirk didn’t work on zombies since there were no quirks to erase, but that didn’t mean he was suddenly useless. He was almost fully healed, and there were people that he wanted to see tomorrow with.

Like hell he’d go down now.

Patrol is otherwise uneventful.

All they did was drag bodies out into the sidewalk and burn them down to ash.

Standing next to the fire, watching the former residents burn away into nothing, he felt strangely cold. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Helmet stare up at the pile, and he wondered what he was thinking about as he watched everything burn away.

“Gruesome, right?”

He looked to where Hawks landed next to him, a familiar smile, though it looked strained enough to be more like a grimace.

“...It’s to minimize infections, isn’t it?” Aizawa asked. All sorts of disease and infections sprout from the dead if left alone. “It’s not like we can bury all of them either.”

Right now, here in this area, there were more people dead than alive. To give each and every person a burial would be too taxing on them. And at least this way, no one could desecrate the dead anymore.

But still, it made him feel hollow.

### **Monster Who Looked Human, Human Who Looked Like a Monster - Shoji**

“Shit, there was one more-”

Dabi grabbed Twice by the shoulders and yanked hard. The man came crashing down onto the ground while Dabi raised his hand up to fend off the extra monster they found curled up here. His fire burned, bright blue and small at his fingertips as he tried to adjust the output since they were in an enclosed space.

His concentration broke and his fire died when a chair came flying at him. He jumped backwards and further into the room, eyes narrowed as the chair clattered right through the place he used to be. It crashed against the wall, and for a second, the only sound in the world was Twice’s pained groans.

Helmet stepped into the room, bat drawn and definitely stood in front of the monster.

...No way. Dabi’s respect for this man would plummet through the ground if it turned out that this guy made exceptions to the rules he never explicitly said. But seriously? He was going to fight them for this monster?

But Helmet dropped his bat and took his backpack off. He kneeled down in front of the monster and for a moment, just sat there. Slowly, he opened his backpack and pulled out several things, water, jerky, and a few packets of trail mixes. He pulled out a white box with a red-cross, a first-aid kit, and then stood up. He grabbed his bat and walked out of the room.

“W-What?” the monster in the corner said, proving to all of them that perhaps he wasn’t a monster. “You’re… not going to kill me?”

“...Well, he stopped us from doing it,” Dabi said, eyeing the supplies. He couldn’t believe that anyone would just give away their supplies like this. Of course, he was only alive because someone did, but that didn’t mean that he suddenly understood why anyone would do that.

He thought back to the room of supplies that Helmet left to them. At the very least, there seemed to be a constant going on. Regardless of who, or what they looked like, it was clear that Helmet was going to be giving them supplies.

“Next time,” Twice groaned, sittig up, “Just fucking say ‘don’t kill it’, okay? // I’m gonna kill all you bastards in your sleep.”

Dabi, with a deep scowl on his face, stalked out of the door and after Helmet.

Twice sat up, rubbing the back of his head as he stood up.

“So,” he turned to the Not-Monster in the corner, “If you’re coming, you need to keep up.”

“...Mezo Shoji,” he said quietly. “My name is Mezo Shoji.”

“You’re useless till you prove otherwise,” Shigaraki chimed in.

Shoji tensed at the words.

“C’mon, don’t bully him.”

Shigaraki rolled his eyes as the winged-man dropped down.

“Yo,” he said, giving a small, two-finger salute, “There’s not much, but make yourself comfortable,” he said.

“...I don’t…”

“...deserve it?” Hawks finished for him, he gave a toothy grin, “Yeah, none of us probably do. It’s why we’re still alive.”

It… wasn’t the words he expected a hero to say. Maybe something more inspiring, or something about how he needed to hold onto hope or anything other than that. Even though Hawks looked at him with a lazy grin, his eyes were sharp in a way that made Shoji feel vulnerable, like he was being seen right through.

“What you do with that life is up to you. But you know, Helmet saved you, brought you here, gave you his supplies, and all that jazz.”

The blond’s grin was just like the things he had seen on billboards and magazines, but in front of him now, Shoji wondered if he traded an easy death for something completely different.

“Food for thought.”

“If it’s work,” Aizawa said, “We have plenty of things to do without going outside with Helmet and the others.”

The seemingly emotionless man stared at Shoji for a moment longer.

“...Being alive isn’t a sin. And life isn’t about paying back debts.”

“But I… I want to be useful,” Shoji said.

“Yeah,” the man didn’t say it, but Shoji’s eyes fell to his arm that was in a sling, “I understand that feeling. But if you want to help someone, you have to help yourself first.”

“...So, what… can I do?”

“We can always use some extra hands to clean up the area.”

### **(Children)**

Then came the children. It was like they were suddenly coming out of the woodwork, but Hawks and Helmet were coming in carrying people all shapes and sizes.

It made him really uncomfortable.

Some of them were running fevers, most were injured, and all of them were just drains on their resources.

The strangest part of it all was how the others, no matter how uncomfortable they felt, didn't say anything against it.

### **Tokoyami-kun**

"I... I really wanted to be a hero," Tokoyami admitted. "but I left my mom and dad to fend off the neighborhood association by themselves, and selfishly, I survived. I just ran and ran."

Jesus fuck, Deku didn't say aloud. Why did people just unload like this on him? He didn't know what to say, where to even start. Should he tell him the things that he heard some of the heroes say around the base? That it was okay and that it was good that at least Tokoyami made it out?

Then, the first thing that Deku would say to Tokoyami would be his insincere words. He bit his tongue. He didn't want that. Then, he should first introduce himself, and then he could give his insincere advise.

The more he thought about it, the less it made sense. As a result, he didn't say anything at all.

"I don't know what to do. What I want to do. What I should do. I don't have any answers, or even how to even start getting one," Tokoyami continued. "I don't get it. What can I even do?"

Deku stared at him for another moment, but those were all questions he struggled with to. Eventually, he got an answer, but it wasn't something that he would ever recommend someone else to do. Besides, what worked for him might not work for Tokoyami. Still, what could he say? "You'll figure it out?" "Don't worry about it?" "It'll come with time?" Aside from the fact that they didn't answer the question at all, it was insulting and straight up condescending. At that point, wouldn't it be better to say nothing at all?

By the time Deku came to the conclusion that there was nothing he could say to Tokoyami, several minutes had gone by, and he had left the young man far behind. He almost felt bad, but at the same time, frowned. Why ask if he wasn't going to wait for an answer? It almost made Deku feel stupid for trying so hard to find an answer, even if he didn't have one.

Whatever.

Bat in his hand, there was only thing he was good for anyways.

### **Tokoyami - meeting Dark Shadow for the First Time in a while**

At the very least, when the world ended, it became quiet. Once the destruction calmed down (and it has calmed down entirely in these last six months), it was like the whole world was a graveyard. And Tokoyami could finally just fucking think.

Think, but he couldn't get an answer. Think, but budding questions had yet to fruit any answers. Frustrated and annoyed, he took a deep breath. Helmet continued to walk away and Tokoyami felt something boil inside of him. It wasn't fair, because it felt like Helmet had it all figured out. From saving strangers and housing them, literally cleaning the streets and base, keeping stock of supplies and everything, it felt like there was rhyme and reason in Helmet and all that he did. Looking at him, Tokoyami felt stupid for stressing so hard about the world ending when this man operatred like this was all he ever knew.

But, unlike the places he's been, and the people he was with, no one said that he had to work and no one said he should go run off and play. Where he received no instruction, he felt a suffocating amount of freedom. Like the eternal opening of the entire world and all the possibilities would smoother him out of existence because he didn't have any drive or direction.

And Tokoyami had a hard time getting out of bed and getting back out again.

Right when his feet got to the door, that sinking fear returned. How could anyone choose to go back out? There were literal monsters, big like fear and too much like they crawled out of a nightmare, but there was a chorus of dogs barking. The telltale sound of people, laughing and sounding but Tokoyami couldn't make out any words. Just the sound. The hum of life, behind his door where he couldn't see.

Today, they returned from going outside.

Okay, he thought, tomorrow. Tomorrow he'll open the door.

Tomorrow came, and he smelled blood. Worried yelling calling for first-aid and emergency help. Tokoyami could not help, and felt that rush because you see? Look? It was meaningless! There was no point in going out and fighting. There was no point because there were monsters.

Without taking a step outside, he closed the door again.

It would be several days later. Several days where the hum of sound sounded outside of his door and encroached in the apartment that he was occupying. Several days where he wanted to scream and cry because why didn't they just understand that there was nothing worth fighting for and that there was no point anyways-

A knock came on the door. His heart stopped. Frozen on the nest of blankets he made in the otherwise empty living room, Tokoyami stared at the door in shock. What could he do? What could he say? He glanced briefly outside, where moonlight trickled into the room from the flimsy blinds, and then back.

What?

Curiosity brought him to the door. What could it be? Who would knock so politely in the middle of the night like that? When he peered through the looking-hole, he didn't see anything. Even though there was nothing there, that didn't mean shit when he didn't know what anyone's quirk was. For all he knew, they were just waiting for the right timing and were going to pry him out of the apartment. For all he knew...

He opened the door.

He looked down, and found a basket of apples sitting in front of his door. His mouth immediately watered, it had been a very long time since he saw anything resembling fruits-

"Oh! Apples, I love apples!"

The voice was familiar but it was loud. Even though it was a normal tone, it was loud enough that Tokoyami's heart leapt out of his chest. He whipped around, and from a long period of habit had the words pouring out of his unused throat.

"Dark Shadow, be silent as night!"

And he stared.

He hadn't seen Dark Shadow in a literal year. The summer air, even at night, was warm.

"Aw, Fumikage don't be like that. But you should hurry up and bring those apples in before they rot!"

Tears began to outpour from Tokoyami's eyes like a leaky faucet.

Tokoyami Fumikage learned that he did not lose everything. The next step was easy like breathing. Simple in its clarity.

### **Villains v Heroes - trust**

If there were any misconceptions that Helmet wasn't attached to the villains, or anyone really, or had any expectations from the heroes as heroes, they were blown away in a single moment. It's easy to make large assumptions based on little gestures, and every little thing that Helmet did (or didn’t do) was a thousand times more dramatic and important than anyone else doing that same gesture.

"How… how can you trust them? For all we know, they're just going to betray us!"

Aizawa turned sharply to Helmet who resolutely stood between them.

"Do you know who those people are? These are some A-rank criminals."

Helmet shook his head, standing in front of Twice as though to protect him. Behind him, Twice placed both of his hands over his heart, as though to catch it should it beat right out of his chest.

“I wouldn’t betray him!” Twice snapped back, “ \\ But I’d murder him in his sleep!”

Dabi facepalmed when another voice spoke up.

“It’s fine,” Stain, the newest (and possibly strangest) member of this unofficial base spoke up. “Helmet here can do what he wants. And I’ll get rid of the ones that get in your way. Don’t worry about things like this.”

He dropped down next to Helmet, glaring down at Twice before his eyes slid over to Aizawa.

“I’ll… Stain my hands to protect your decisions,” he said as a slow grin stretched across his face. He looked down on Helmet, as though there was something that only the two of them could understand. “I will stand by you. That’s what I will do with the life that you saved.”

And after a declaration like that, it was harder for anyone to make any other argument.

“So you picked a fight with them?” Kan asked, the disbelief on his face plain as day.

“I didn’t pick a fight,” Aizawa scowled back.

“No, I’m pretty sure you made things worse,” Kayama sighed, shaking her head.

“Well, it’s not like you’re doing any better on your end,” Yamada said, coming to his friend’s defense, “At least Shota tried.”

“We shouldn’t be arguing amongst ourselves over this,” Ishiyama replied back, voice soothing the same way he always was, as though their entire situation wasn’t exploding back in their faces. Not for the first time, his presence was greatly appreciated. “We can’t change what’s done, so let’s work on what we can work on. If the complaints are that we aren’t pulling our own weight, then we can work on that. There has to be something that we can do that he will view as beneficial.”

“That doesn’t mean anything if we have to keep looking over our shoulder. At least we can defend ourselves,” Yamada said, shaking his head. “The kids deserve a childhood.”

“Well, at the very least, it seems that if Helmet will come to their aid, he’ll come to ours too,” Aizawa said.

“Shota, you going to risk these kids’ lives on that?” the blond asked quietly.

“What are you guys talking about?”

The group of former teachers looked up where Hawks flew right down next to them. His wings folded behind him, and he gave them a lazy smile.

“Something wrong?”

They gave each other a look before Aizawa bit the bullet.

“...Hawks, you’ve been here for a while, right?” he asked.

“Ah, not that much longer than you, but I guess,” he responded.

“Do you think this is a safe place, especially concerning the… other occupants here?”

The blond folded his arms over his chest, tilting his head as he thought about it. He gave a hum and then shrugged. “Does it matter?” he asked. “They’ve been here longer than me, actually,” he explained, “and from what I gathered, Helmet picked them off the street after they got chased out of their previous camp.”

“And he’s letting them stay here?” Yamada grimaced.

“I guess so,” Hawks nodded. “But if they wanted to do something, I think they would have done it by now. So like, they’re all bark and no bite.”

They looked like they wanted to disagree and the man shrugged back.

“Well, that Stain guy is pretty dangerous. But he’s not the only one that’s keeping tabs on the people here.”

His wings fluttered a little at that, and the smile on his face felt like a sweet poison. Despite the fact that they should have been comforted with the fact that a former Pro-Hero like Hawks was here, they couldn’t find it in themselves to feel that measure of security. There was something off about this man, although they didn’t know if it was because the apocalypse had unhinged him.

“Just don’t go out of your way to upset him, and you should be fine. As long as Helmet doesn’t actively try to stop you or whatever, no one will come for your life. He went out of his way to bring you guys here and take care of you, and they won’t do anything to take away from his effort.”

Yeah, no shit, Yamada wanted to say. But Hawks’ eyes had already found something, someone else, because his wings fluttered just a little bit. So, he lost his chance to say anything or even ask what the fuck that meant, before Hawks was gone.

“Hey Helmet, are you heading out? I’ll come with you.”

### **Iidas**

“Good to see you again,” Aizawa said, passing him a water bottle.

Tensei stared at the building in front of him, a laugh spilling from his lips as his eyes watered.

“Something… something survived,” he said, in awe.

His entire body trembled, and Aizawa really felt for this man. Just a few weeks ago, Aizawa was exactly where Tensei was.

“Yes,” he said quietly, “We survived.”

And it didn’t sound nearly as awful as it used to.

### **(re)enter - Stain**

Life was good and almost easy. And then he fucked up and was surrounded on all sides.

Shit.

He was running, of course he was running, and if he wasn’t running he was hiding.

### **Shigaraki & Decay**

In that moment, Shigaraki felt dread. A cold kind of feeling that made the whole world slow down for just a moment. The world fell so quiet in that moment that it felt like his heartbeat thundered across the world. He couldn’t see anything or think about anything other than a sinking realization that Helmet would not get out of this unscathed.

And he, who had used so many of Helmet’s medical supplies, knew that even if Helmet could walk off this injury, he might die when they got back. No one else could help. No one else would help. After all, the only person in the world who was willing to help a stranger was Helmet and he was the one that needed to be helped right now.

The thought, the dread, all mounted up to a single conclusion.

He ran forward, even if it was useless, even if it wouldn’t help, because he didn’t want Helmet to die. Not now. Not yet. And that meant that someone, anyone even him, had to protect Helmet.

He lifted his hand up, and his remaining two fingers touched the surface.

As it turned out, he didn’t need five fingers to activate his quirk after all. Just someone to use it for.

### **Stain v(?) LOV**

“...So you’ve done nothing?” Stain asked, voice cold and curt. “What gratitude.”

Being with people was just as hard, tedious and annoying as Stain thought it would be. Those who eyed him like a threat, those who eyed him like he was a waste of space, they were all the same to him.

Still, he wasn’t someone who left debts unpaid. That’s the only reason why he stayed.

“Please! Make me your disciple!”

Stain stared at Spinner.

“I-I find your fighting style and ability incredible! I really admire the way you carry yourself!”

The taller male stared at the lizard, hoping and praying that someone would notice that this wasn’t supposed to happen and take him away. That didn’t happen, and his prayers went unheard. All these heroes, but no one came to his rescue.

“So I was… I know it’s a little impudent to say this, but I was hoping that you could… take me in as your student! I want… I want to get stronger! I don’t want to be satisfied just watching what happens next and instead take part in it!”

Children, because only children could have eyes as bright as Spinner’s, were blinding.

Briefly, Stain thought that he had lost his mind after all.

“It won’t be easy.”

### **Mineta & Jirou - Girls Have It Easy**

“Girls have it so easy,” Mineta sighed back, “We have to work for our food and bed but you guys don’t even have to do that right? All you need to do is do some ecchi things with whoever is at the top, and everything is taken care of for you.”

Jirou flinched back, angry and ready to fight even though she knew he was right. In that sense, it was much easier to survive anywhere as a woman as long as there was a man to give herself too. She knew that. She’s seen it, over and over again.

And as someone with a useless quirk and three broken fingers, she knew that it was probably her only option.

### **Present Mic Got Stuck**

The dust settled. Slowly getting up to his feet, Deku jerked and looked wildly from left to right until his eyes landed on a wriggling figure on the ground. His shoulders tensed tightly as he realized that Yamada was waving his arms, the best he could, while the rest of his body was buried underneath the upper floor that came down.

"...Helmet? Helmet, are you-are you okay? You're okay, right? Please- please answer me!"

He should have never brought someone with him. The thought that he deserved and should be alone forever returned like a cloud in front of his eyes. It was just a thick wisp that obscured his vision.

### **s**