## Hobo

### **Yagimido - about goals [trashed]**

"So, what do you want?" Yagi asked. "Like, going forward, I mean. Your uh, goals. Since you set up this place, you must have had a plan. I was wondering what you wanted."

Midoriya's head snapped up. The movement was so sudden that it caught the attention of the rest of them. And so shocked, Midoriya's filter turned off and he blurted out.

"You care?"

The blond stared back, looking as shocked as Midoriya felt.

"Ah, excuse me," he said, moving one hand to cover his mouth. His mind immediately lapsed into theories. Why would Yagi ask that? Was he bored? Was he-no, no, he cut those thoughts off. The blond gave him his quirk-the quirk that made him Number One, of course he wanted to know what Midoriya wanted to do.

"Yes," Yagi suddenly spoke up, "I do care. I care about what you think, and I care about the future that you envision." He gave a happy smile, "If at all possible, I would like to see that future with you."

Midoriya, who grew up chasing that dazzling light, felt like his heart and brain switched spots for just a second.

As a result, even though he knew that it was just a pipedream and that there was no reason for him to think otherwise, he felt his heart swell and he dreamed because having a quirk was a dream and being relied on was a dream but here he was-

"It's none of your concern."

Yagi flinched. Blue eyes wide, he stared at Midoriya.

"I... I see," he said.

Midoriya clenched his jaw shut, his gums starting to ache from how hard he was grinding his teeth together.

"I-" he tried. He really wanted to try. He didn't want Yagi to think that he passed down his quirk to something like him.

"Midoriya-shounen," Yagi said slowly, cautiously, "It's alright. You don't have to say anything you don't want to."

Midoriya flinched back because no, that's not it. He wanted to explain it. He wanted to say it. He-more than anything else in the world- wanted to at least explain to Yagi what he wanted.

"And that also means that, if you want to say it one day, I will listen then too."

"I..." he tried to find the words. He tried to find the words to accurately describe the storm Yagi put into his head. "I don't understand," he said. "I don't... I tried. I-"

"There's nothing wrong with that," Yagi said. "I am in no rush. I was curious so I asked."

Midoriya, who looked physically ill, wrapped his arms around his torso as he took a step back. Slowly, Yagi began to realize that he must have dropped a heavy load onto the young man, and brought both of his hands up in a placading gesture.

"T-Truly, I meant no ill will, I-"

And Midoriya, acting less like the child he looked like and more like a seasoned fighter, pulled his act together. His expression sealed shut and he looked down.

"Time," he said, "Please. I-I need-"

"It's alright. There's nothing wrong with that."

"I... I need, I need to-"

"Shounen," Yagi said, "That's fine. That's okay."

"I-I'm sorry-"

"Nothing to apologize for. I am sorry for burdening you so suddenly-"

"No, you haven't. You haven't done anything wrong because it's me," Midoriya said, "It's-I can't-I just-"

He took a step back, taking a shaking breath, before he turned tail and ran.

And Yagi truly and deeply hoped that one day, Midoriya wouldn't run in the face of understanding and kindness.

-

[idk if i want this. i want pieces of it but i don't want this whole mess ]

Now, while Yagi was nowhere the Strong Symbol of Peace that All Might was, but he wasn't worthless. And, to his shame, was in much better condition now than he was before the world ended. With a gun (and wasn't that a doozy) strapped to his thigh, a rifle across his back, he took a walk with some of the others. A post-dinner walk, where they walked around the outside of the school grounds. It was a small thing, but the weight of weapons made it feel like there was noose around his neck.

If he ever got used to the sight of a child with a gun, he wondered if that would be the mark the true end of Heroics.

When, suddenly, Midoriya came running down the street. They watched as he sprinted until he got to Yagi, and once he did, he tried to stop immediately, resulting in him falling and crashing against the asphalt. With a new asphalt burn running from his shoulder to his elbow, he jerked his head up to the man.

"E-eh? Uh, Midoriya, you're bleeding quite a lot-"

He reached out, but hesitated. Previous experience told him that Midoriya didn't like being touched, but the kid was panting hard, bleeding, struggling to get stabilize on his feet-of course Yagi would reached out to try and support him.

"Free," the kid rasped out, grabbing his hand.

The blond blinked again.

"Pardon?"

Midoriya lifted his eyes, eyes a vibrant green as he looked at Yagi.

"I want- I want to be free," he said.

Yagi stared, eyed wide as the words slowly sunk in.

"...I see."

He lifted his other hand up, stained with blood and the skin by his knuckles purple, "I will use your quirk for my selfish desires."

Ah, that's why he came.

He figured, given the way that they lived, that Midoriya was a diligent person. He was responsible to a frightening degree, and they had all selfishly used him as a guidepost to ground their entire life on. with every passing day, Yagi felt more and more certain about this.

"I can... return it," he said, pointedly staring at his healing chest.

Indeed, he would be able to handle it much better. Indeed, he would be able to stand up and everyone here would be able to breathe a sigh of relief because the Symbol of Peace, All Might, was here.

But his story ended with society.

### **Break like Tissue Paper**

If he wasn't careful, he felt like his heart would break apart in their gentle touch like tissue paper in water. More than any monster, any loss, any injury, this scared him. How can someone, after watching the world fall apart and their hopes torn asunders, still offer their kindness? He wanted that kind of strength. If he could, he wondered if this irrational fear of the gentle wouldn't feel so suffocating anymore.

### **Fighting Back**

"...It's okay," Deku explained. "You can do whatever you want with me. I won't fight it." Because, for a long time now, Deku knew that he didn't deserve to be happy. If at all possible, if he could provide relief and comfort to another, he understood that he needed to do that.

### **A different future**

"It's fine," Deku said, "Using me as an example of what not to do... I think that's reasonable." Tsukauchi's expression scrunched up. "If I could be forgotten, I think that would be for the best."

"You... do you really think that?"

Deku closed his eyes, and took a deep breath. When he opened them again, the determined light had been brought up. "At the end of this, I want it all to go away like a bad dream. I'll take all of it."

"...That doesn't sound like a solution."

"A temporary fix until we have something more stable," Deku explained.

Respectfully, and as gently as possible, Tsukauchi disagreed. "We still have some time to figure out what that will be."

-

"Just you," Deku said, placing his hand on Enji's back. "Only you can't forget me."

"...In all your thoughts and theories, why is your conclusion that you will leave before me?"

Deku arched an eyebrow at him. "Because you're stronger than me," he said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Enji frowned back. He didn't want to be the stronger one anymore.

"Please, let this be my selfish wish."

## Ship

### [harem] - end

Deku’s face flushed as the words sank in.

“What?”

“I love you,” Twice repeated, “Like. Homosexually.”

Deku stared at Twice, mouth agape.

“I’m not… I know I’m not really uh… handsome and stuff but you, I… I still really like you. And I swear I’ll do my best to make you happy so-”

And while Deku was still trying to process this, Aizawa came running in, capture tape already out.

Oh, Deku thought, someone who was smart and good at explaining things. He could trust Aizawa.

“Damn you, Twice! We swore that we wouldn’t say anything until we were certain he was of age!”

“I can’t help it! He’s so damn cute! // You’re just jealous that you don’t have the balls to confess!”

Deku stared at Aizawa, the way the older man couldn’t quite meet his eyes, and had a thousand questions flurry through his head. What did come out, however, was a quiet and pathetic, “Confess?”

Aizawa bared his teeth, as if he was trying to smile and failed. “I was hoping for better circumstances, but yes. I would… I would like the opportunity to demonstrate how far my feelings for you go.”

As it turned out, Deku could not trust Aizawa either. He wanted an explanation, not an addition to the current situation at hand.

“I uhm… I need some time.”

The black-haired man nodded back. “I don’t blame you. Take as much time as you need.”

Deku nodded back numbly, and Aizawa took a long breath through his nose. He didn’t look like someone who just confessed. Of course, Deku wouldn’t know anything about that. A little further back, Twice whined loudly.

“It’s okay if you don’t love me back,” Twice said aloud, “You can do whatever you want with me. // But I won’t forgive you if you do nothing!”

And Deku, the strong leader who defined confidence and bravery with every swing he’s done and every fight he jumped into, took a halting step back. Both Aizawa and Twice, who had spent their fair share following him into battle, were thrown off by his action. Green eyes darted from Aizawa to Twice and then back again.

“...I… I need time,” he repeated.

“Yeah, take as much time as you want!” Twice called out before immediately contradicting himself, “// But I wanna know if I need to die now…”

Deku flinched and Aizawa swatted at Twice’s head.

“Deku, it’s not-”

Deku lifted his hand up to stop him from speaking. He took a shaky breath and left the scene.

“Shit.”

-

“Heard that you got confessed to,” Hawks said, landing next to him with a wide grin on his face.

Deku paused while cleaning his gun. He took a deep breath through his nose.

“Aw, don’t be like that,” the blond said. Eyes warm like the spring sun, he stood in front of Deku, “Unless… is it because it’s burdensome? To deal with the affection of someone you don’t want it from, at least. You can just reject them.”

The young man gnawed on his lip.

“...Or,” Hawks moved to crouch down in front of him, reaching forward to gently cup Deku’s face in his hand, he waited for Deku’s gaze to match his before he kept speaking. “Or you could choose me instead. We can break up when you find someone you do love,” he said.

But the look in his eyes made Deku feel like he was flying into the sun. He pulled his face out of his hand.

“That’s not fair to you.”

“I’ll have you know that I’m a wonderful catch,” the blond scoffed back. Looking back at Deku, his expression softened considerably, “and who knows? If you don’t love someone right now, maybe I can be that person for you.”

“Do I seem like that kind of person?” Deku asked, “that I would just… use you like that?”

“I was hoping you would be,” Hawks replied in earnest. His hands hung limply in front of him, his knuckles touching the ground. “I know you’re not that kind of person. But it’s what I want.”

He stood up, understanding that he had overstayed his welcome, and if he stayed any longer, he might do something he regrets.

“I don’t want a future without you,” he explained boldly, so that Deku knew what his number one priority was. “More than anything else, I don’t want to be without you. It would make me happier if you and I could be closer, but really, I can keep living as long as I get to see you every day. So Deku, you should choose what will make you happy.”

Hawks grinned back, boyish and charming like he stepped off a billboard advertisement.

“Well, I’m going to take a lap before lunch,” and he flew off, leaving Deku to deal with the growing number of problems.

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“...If I had known that my feelings would be a burden to you, I would have never told you.”

Deku frowned. That sounded like a terrible way to live.

At the same time, what was he going to do with all of their feelings?

### Shigaraki

What was frustrating was how endearing he found the guy that he didn’t even know the name of. He doesn’t know what color his eyes are, or how his skin would look. He doesn’t even know what his voice sounds like, but Shiragkai had this fucking < dream > and it haunts him with greater frequency with every passing day.

Helmet, in his fucking helmet and all, would be panting hard underneath him, evident not in the sound of his breathing but because of how hard his chest would heave every breath. They would be on a bed, with his fire hydrant laying on the ground away from them with his bat and everything, but he was still fully clothed.

Shigaraki had his thin wrists pinned down on either side of his head. He would also be panting, and he could imagine with excruciating detail how slowly he would unclasp the helmet at the bottom of Helmet’s chin and tear off the thing.

And he would wake up right then and there. Unsatisfied. Unhappy. And ashamed that he would be so taken by someone he wasn’t even sure was a person.

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Helmet, Deku, is so radically different from his expectations that Shiragkai doesn’t have any fantasies for about three days. It would have been easier if he was ugly and deformed like Dabi or something, or a drop-dead beauty like he heard some of the younger kids swooning about. But no, nothing is easy with Helmet.

Deku is such a plain and normal guy that Shigaraki thinks he could forget his face between one blink and another. After waiting for so long, to see his plain mug under that helmet was so underwhelming.

And yet, his dreams are haunted by green.

They’re no longer in a dream but a field of some sort. There’s a little smile on his face as his scarred hands came up to cup Shigaraki’s face, and Shigaraki kissed him like he needed it. When he pulled back, he couldn’t see anything but those green eyes.

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“Oh, Deku,” Shigaraki said when he saw the young man crouching by the end of the hallway, “What are you doing?”

His pace quickened just the slightest bit to minimize the time that they were apart even if it was just by a second, and was rewarded when Deku saw him and moved closer. As soon as he was close enough, Shigaraki had an arm around his shoulders and tucked him close.

“You’re cold,” he complained, “Were you just outside?”

Deku nodded his head, that blasphemous helmet rubbing against Shigaraki’s shirt before small hands came up to pull at it. Holding his helmet in his hands, green eyes peered up at him.

“I-I’m back,” he said.

Something inside of Shigaraki twisted, like a muscle that’s never been used.

He pulled Deku against his chest, turning to give him a proper one-armed hug. He pressed his face against curls, and wondered how time felt so long without him and so short when they were together.

“Yeah, yeah,” he said.

“You’re not going to welcome me?” his muffled voice came against his chest.

The words swelled inside of his throat, lodging there painfully and he coughed it out.

“Welcome back,” he murmured.

One of Deku’s thin arms, powerful enough to kill monsters with a swing, wrapped around Shigaraki’s waist, the other one still holding his helmet.

Even though he didn’t want to, he pulled back.

“C’mon, let’s get something to eat.”

It was too early to be dinner, but too late to be lunch. Of course, when Deku wasn’t here, Shigaraki lost count of time and his perception was blurry. But he knew Deku, and Deku wasn’t the type to eat until he had to.

“I’m hungry. Eat with me.”

“Alright,” Deku agreed easily, a shine in his eyes that was reserved just for Shigaraki.

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### Sakamata

Let it be known that they can never trust anyone again.

Whoever used the video player last left their fucking porno in the player, and the unholy sound that left Takeyama and Yamada rang throughout the complex. They scrambled to get the moaning mess turned off and purged from the system.

Both of them were blushing hard, and Eri tilted her head in confusion.

Sakamata, who was coming in with the snacks, was grateful that he was not at the center of this. All he needed to do was stay where he was in the hallway and no one would know.

“...No movie night?” Eri asked, a little disappointed.

“O-One second,” Yamada said, spluttering hard as he tried to overcome his discomfort and embarrassment. Who the fuck left their goddamn porno in the communal video player? “L-Let’s just forget about that, okay?”

“It’s just sex,” Kouta innocent voice piped up.

Sakamata choked, but no one could hear it over the yelp Yamada gave.

“Sex?” Eri replied back, turning to the young boy, “What’s that?”

Aizawa opened his mouth, clearly uncomfortable with the fact that he was here at all, but Kouta beat him to it.

“It’s what you do to own people,” he explained, his voice childishly innocent.

“Oh! Like debtors!”

The two nodded, having reached an understanding. They remained ignorant to the adults around them.

Sakamata actually walked in then, his eyes wide as he met Aizawa’s and then focused back on Kouta.

“Yeah,” Kouta said, like there was nothing wrong with it, “Muscular said it’s a good way to put people in their place.”

“I had an uncle like that,” Eri said, “But Chisaki-jiisan killed him. I heard Setsuno-san talk about it.”

The young boy nodded, “Muscular said it’s more fun if they fight back, and that’s why he liked Izu-nii and heroes so much.”

“Oh, is that why Deku-nii doesn’t like people touching him?” Eri asked, tilting her head to the side a little before she brightened up again. “Well that’s okay! Because I’m here and I won’t let anyone own him again!”

Kouta frowned at that, “What can you do? You can’t even control your quirk.”

“Nuh-uh!”

“Uh-huh!”

There was some barking heard, and the kids jumped up to their feet. Movie night forgotten, they rushed out to where the clean-up crew were probably returning from.

“Deku’s back!”

The four remaining adults took a long, long moment between them.

“...What just happened?” the blond asked.

“Oh,” Takeyama said, her heart breaking.

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Often, Sakamata wondered what he could do to help.

As someone who was ready to die to avoid a life of isolation, being brought to a place where there were children who were laughing and playing on the daily was his salvation. He swore up and down that he would do anything to protect this place.

He would do anything for Helmet for saving him and giving him a purpose again.

And yet, Deku returned a little more battered after every battle. And as the only person who is confirmed to be immune to the disease, it made him the prime unit to go out and fight however he pleases. While they need to be careful of everything, he’s the only one that could live free among them.

Still, in order for their maximum comfort, he made several sacrifices.

He thought that they’ve come a long way, since Deku doesn’t leave alone anymore and he speaks a little bit more every day. He trusted them a little bit more, every day, and it’s very rewarding.

They’re in the hot baths together. Another sign that Deku trusted them, if only because Sakamata had only seen him without his usual gear and bat was when he was too injured. It meant a lot to him that Deku trusted him.

The next thing better than having company was being trusted by said company.

And right when Sakamata felt satisfied, Deku entered the bathing area. He gives this small smile, sketches a little bow, and gives this sigh as he sumberes himself into the hot water. He goes until his chin hit the water, and tipped his head back. Sakamata’s eyes trail the scars and the small bumps that appear on him right until it goes underwater and he forced his eyes away.

He’s within arm distance, and Sakamata’s sole purpose of being here is to make sure he doesn’t pass out in the water, and that his wounds don’t split open, and he doesn’t otherwise get himself killed. Or if he does, get him out and to Hawks ASAP. And of course, as always, to act as the first line of defense in the case of an emergency and something entered their territory.

He knew this, repeated it in his head, and still, his eyes lingered.

Unlike most of them, Deku is one of the only ones that still has scars. From what he understands of Chisaki’s quirk, all of the scars are remains of all the times he’s been hit by something outside of this world. And on anyone else, he would be dead and converted into something that wouldn’t ever be considered human.

“...Sakamata-san?” Deku asked quietly, catching his attention.

God, even his name felt like it was being purified when he said it. The heat must be getting to him. If he’s not careful, he was going to do something stupid.

“Yes?” he asked, much more throaty than he intended to. He coughed into his hand, clearing his throat and tried again, “Yes, Deku?”

“....I don’t think… I said this before,” he said, speaking so quietly that Sakamata strained a little to hear him, “...Thank you.”

“For what?”

“...I’m… lucky that you came here...” green eyes flitted up from the water’s surface to his face and then back down. There was a dark blush on his face, it stretched all the way down through his neck and Sakamata wondered if the baths were supposed to make him feel so hot. “Thank you for choosing to stay.”

Sakamata felt something loosen in his heart. Physical desires faded for a full moment, clearing his head and he adjusted himself to move in front of Deku instead.

“Deku,” he said quietly, “I… I am the one that should be saying that. I am so, so incredibly lucky that you found me that day.”

The young man blinked, his face turning a shade darker, his hands came up to cover his face. Without thinking about it, Sakamata reached up to grab them, and forced them back down into the water.

They were here, alone, just the two of them. There was nothing between them but the steam and the water. And he knew that Deku, who doesn’t scream when something tries to bite a chunk of his leg off, wouldn’t scream. He is suddenly reminded of all of it.

“And… should you ask it of me,” he said, creeping much closer than he knows is appropriate. He placed both his hands on the other side of Deku, effectively closing him in, as he leaned in to rub his snout against the young man’s cheek, “I would… give you all that I am.”

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Deku stared at the building, squinting at it. He turned back, “I’ll take the bottom floor,” he announced. Just as quickly, he turned to the former Pro-Hero, “Kugo, come with me.”

Sakamata, if he was surprised, didn’t show it. Instead, he nodded.

“Lead the way.”

The others otherwise broke up into groups, as they always did, and Sakamata kept pace with the young man next to him.

-

Sakamata's hand could cover the entirety of Deku's lower back. He leaned down and kissed between his shoulder blades. Deku jolted, a sharp keen coming out of him and reverberating down to his hand.

"Easy," he murmured.

### Aizawa

"I wonder," Aizawa said quietly, "What I need to do for you to see me in a more favorable light."

Deku peered up at him, an uncertain smile on his face as he replied back very shyly, "What makes you so certain that I do not already like you?"

A beat of pause stretched between them, as Aizawa waited to wake up from this dream and Deku began to wonder if he had been arrogant. Perhaps this was playful flirting after all. He leaned back, ready to run far away from this moment.

Aizawa's hand, long and lanky and warm, wrapped around his arm and kept him close.

"It would seem that I don't have much patience," he said. He leaned in, pressing his lips to Deku in a heated manner. Eyes bloodshot and jaw clenching, he pulled back like it was yanking a leash to keep a rapid animal at bay. "Truly? Do you mean that? I won't be able to let go of you if you agree."

Deku leaned in to kiss him, in hopes that it was answer enough.

Aizawa's hands gripped his shoulder, just shy of painful, and Deku used it as his anchor.

-

Holding him down, Aizawa didn’t think the world could be so small. But splayed out underneath him like this, he can’t stop the slightest bits of awe in his heart.

“...Aizawa...san?”

“What?” he asked, a frown on his face.

“...Is it… unbearable?”

“Unbearable?” he parroted, arching an eyebrow. “Is that how this feels for you?”

Deku extended his hand to his face, and Aizawa pressed his cheek against his palm.

“What… should I do?” he asked.

“Nothing, you’ve done enough.”

“Eh?”

“Just let me know if something hurts.”

### Dabi

Dabi kissed him slowly, and paused only when Deku’s hands came up to his chest.

“...What are you thinking about?” Dabi asked, his voice low and soft as he moved from his lips to his ear. The young man shivered at the sensation, and Dabi pulled away so that he couldn’t feel his growing smile. “What’s on your mind?”

“I… It feels good,” Deku said quietly, a pretty pink splashed across his cheeks. “Is that okay?”

The older man narrowed his eyes, licking his lips as he eyed the younger man.

“Hm? Of course, why wouldn’t it be?”

“Is… Is it okay that I’m…” Deku hesitated, “That I feel good?”

For the moment, Dabi thought that it must be awful to care about other people. He can’t imagine it. Looking at Deku, and the mess some of the other so-called ‘heroes’ around the base, he doesn’t want to ever find out. This whole guilt thing was out of proportion. He kissed Deku again, harder this time, as though he could replace all those useless feelings that Deku has with just his lips and passion.

“Then think about me,” he said, nibbling his lips playfully. “Just think about me. It’s not about deserving it, it’s about accepting my feelings for you.”

He wasn’t above begging. But, like always, Deku took one long stare at him and nodded before giving himself up in his entirety.

Was it okay that Dabi did this? Was it okay that Dabi was happy? He didn’t know. He didn’t want to question it. Those questions led to dangerous thoughts, and the last thing he wanted was to develop a conscious now that society had collapsed. He just wanted the things that he had while he still had them. In his experience, good things don’t last, that’s part of their charm.

So as Deku’s trembling hands pull him closer by his shirt, Dabi dove in eagerly. Until this rots and burns away into nothing in his hands, he’ll take and savor every last part of it.

-

“I think we should… keep our distance.”

Dabi didn’t make any outwardly changes, swallowing his food and taking a drink of his hot tea. Then, he looked at Deku. Even if he ‘expected’ this to end, that didn’t mean it wouldn’t cut him like a knife when it happened.

“Why?” he asked, voice even.

Deku, who hasn’t been able to look at his face longer than a few seconds at a time, kept his mouth shut and his eyes on the ground. Blue eyes took his features in carefully, and he took another bite of his fried rice. Next to him, he noted how Deku hadn’t even touched his food yet.

Were they going to break up? Were they seriously going to break up? No, Dabi wouldn’t let him go without a fight. If someone had put this idea into his head, he needed to burn all of that away. He finally had something nice to call his own, and he wasn’t going to let this go for anything.

If, perchance, Deku was the one who wanted to leave him, then fine. He’ll swallow his feelings and he’ll pretend that he’s fine with it. If this was something he wanted, then Dabi will respect it, because this is the one person he would do that for.

Besides, all he had to do was make him fall in love with him again. He could be more useful. And even if Deku may never love him again, he could make it so that he can’t live without him. He can do that. He’ll find a way.

“...I keep thinking about you.”

That… that was not how break-up conversations went. Well, Dabi supposed that he hasn’t really been through many himself.

Dabi furrowed his brows in his confusion, and broke his composure.

“What?”

“And whenever we are with other people I keep looking at your…” he looked cautiously at Dabi’s face, his face flushing, but when he licked his lips, Dabi understood.

Oh, he understood.

“Oh?” he leaned in, grinning wider when he saw how the blush bloomed across Deku’s features. “At my what?”

“Your…” he hesitated, and covered his face in his embarrassment, “But I don’t want to treat you like that.”

He was too cute. How could Dabi ever go back to life without him?

Still, this was clearly bothering him, and no matter how much this was stroking his pride, he wasn’t going to push any more like this. He backed off, resting his head on his fist as he stared at his stuttering lover. His heart fluttered in his chest, the damn traitor, and he wondered if Deku’s did the same.

“I don’t mind, you know,” he admitted. “I don’t mind being used by you. It’s okay.”

The look on Deku’s face told him it was anything but ‘okay.’ It was times like this that made the entire situation surreal for Dabi. Here was someone who saw him for who he was (a scumbag), but wanted him. He wanted him as he was. Someone, in a world where people were scavenging for an option to keep going, and they were surrounded by powerful and better people, still wanted him more.

“No,” Deku said, shaking his head. “I don’t want that. I want you.”

Dabi didn’t really consider himself to be some naive maiden, who believed in the power of True Love™ or anything, but Deku drove a hard bargain. Just a look and Dabi truly believed that he was invincible.

“...Then, why do you want a break?” he asked, the words coming out heavier in his mouth than he thought they would. Once he said it aloud, he realized how awful the thought was.

Deku’s face flushed back, “I keep thinking about it,” he said, slowly bringing his eyes up to meet Dabi’s. His voice dropped down to a whisper. “... Chizome yelled at me for not paying attention.”

...Who? Dabi didn’t know who that was, before he realized that it really didn’t matter. Someone yelled at him for not focusing, and no matter how much he wanted to burn the bastard for saying that, he understood where he was coming from. If Deku stopped focusing, he was going to die. Actually, he was probably going to die, given how recklessly he runs into battle as it was, but to not focus on top of that would just exacerbate the situation.

“Do you think that, if we stop meeting up for a bit, you would suddenly find your focus again?” he asked.

Deku hesitated, and Dabi smiled.

“Well, we can give it a shot, if you want,” he continued instead, leaning backwards. “I’ll be a little lonely, but I don’t want to tie you down-”

“Really?”

Well, yes. But Dabi didn’t really want to admit for real. It’s okay as a joke, and it was okay if it was to tease him. When he looked at those bright green eyes, however, he found himself hesitating to lie. Unable to voice his emotions aloud, he settled for nodding instead.

If he said it again, it would be from his heart. It would immortalize his vulnerability.

“Then, I’ll figure something else out,” Deku said immediately, surprising him.

“Huh?”

“I don’t want you to feel like that,” he said, gripping his hands into tight fists on the table. “So I’ll figure something else out.”

That foreign feeling came over Dabi again, and before he knew what he was doing, he pulled Deku’s mask off his face. The mask rested against his neck, and when he turned his head, kissed him. The angle was slightly off, since Dabi reacted to the surge of emotion coiling around his heart, and he quickly amended it. A scarred hand grabbed the bottom of his face, forcing his mouth to accomodate for his.

“Great,” he said, panting hard against his lips when he finally managed to pull away, “I don’t want to be without this any longer than I have to.”

He wanted to sound cool, mysterious, and aggressive. But from the gentle, gentle, gentle gaze that Deku gave him, he knew that he had been read right through. Deku’s hand grabbed his shirt, tugging him closer to kiss him again. He kissed with enthusiasm, if a little more sloppy. Their teeth clacked painfully, and Dabi cradled the back of Deku’s head with his hand to get a better angle and kiss him deeper.

“Yeah,” Deku said, pulling away as he panted, lips shining with their saliva.

Dabi looked terribly amused, which was a strange thing to see since his eyes were so dark as he took in Deku’s expression.

“But to m-make sure,” Deku said quietly, his eyes focused on Dabi’s lips, “maybe one more time?”

The man laughed back, a loud sound that became progressively quieter as his arms wrapped around Deku’s waist. He pulled him closer, practically dragging Deku into his lap as he did just that.

There was no way he could ever refuse him. The thought didn’t even occur to him.

The thought that he would leave Deku didn’t occur to him. He knew that, if he left Deku, it would be because he was dead and gone and there would be nothing left of him. And so, the only thing that Dabi, the walking incarnation of cremation, feared would be that he would be alone with his flames again.

And he’ll do his best to avoid that future at all costs.

-

It was rare for Deku to show up in front of him with his helmet still on. Since the whole… everything, really, Deku usually took off his helmet when he was on base, away from the Outside. It was a sign that he’s leaving it to the others. It’s a symbol that he’s on break. He’s trusting them -all of them- to keep him and the place he protected safe enough for him to relax.

(Of course he never said it, but they were free to think what they wanted, right?)

So, for Deku to keep his helmet on that meant one of three things. One, he’s only here for a moment and he’s heading back out. Two, there is another threat coming.

The first two would have started a lot more of a commotion from outside. Dabi, who wasn’t a part of the standby or emergency teams today, was still on the first two floors and ready to run at the first moment’s notice. He heard them come in, the loud commotion, but since no alarms were rung and there wasn’t a panicked run, he thought that it was all fine.

So it had to be Option Three.

He walked up to Deku, making sure to use his larger frame to block him from view of anyone else that could be looking at them.

“...Let me see,” he said quietly, and when Deku jutted his chin up, lifted his hand to unclasp and took the helmet off of him, as slowly and gently as he could. From the relieved sigh, he did a good job.

Option Three: Deku had kept his helmet on because he couldn’t take it off himself.

Deku shook his head, as though to shake the pain off. His matted curls were telling of how hot and sweaty he had to have gotten. A stray drop of sweat ran from his temple to his mask. With his helmet off, he had a clear view of how pale his face had gotten, and how tired he looked.

“...This is easier with someone,” he said, almost in awe, annd Dabi wanted to hit him.

“Yeah?” he asked, voice even like this didn’t mean anything to him. Somehow, this kid read right through him, as he peered up at him. He tucked Deku’s helmet under his arm and extended his unoccupied hand to him. “Hand,” he said.

When Deku didn’t even twitch, leaving his hands hanging by his side, he felt his heart drop. He couldn’t even lift it. The small, sheepish smile that Deku shot him confirmed it for him.

“Why didn’t you go straight to Chisaki?” he asked, swallowing down his urge to strangle this boy. Or kiss him. At this point, it might lead to the same conclusion anyways.

“I wanted to see you first,” he said.

Dabi is certain that the only person that he hated more than Deku was himself. The person who tossed all his feelings and emotions in a jar and shook it all up was definitely awful, but the person who allowed Deku to toss him up like a salad was undoubtedly himself. He squished the feeling that he was soaring back down, and while he was trying to regain control over himself, Deku kept going.

“...I’m back,” Deku said.

Heart heavy with an emotion he never thought he could feel, he nodded back. He knew that Deku didn’t like being touched when he was covered in blood, but he really just wanted to hold him right now. He wanted to kiss his brow and his smile. He wanted to go sit in that car with lunch, Deku’s head on his chest. He...

“Welcome back. Now let’s get that looked at.”

Dabi was happy that Deku returned to him.

-

“...That’s my shirt,” Dabi said, a smile stretching on his lips as he eyed Deku taking his sweater off.

The shirt was baggey on him, showing off his collarbone and all the gifts that Dabi left on him last night. Just the sight of it was enough for the heat to pool in his stomach. He licked his lips, as though he still had the taste of his skin on them.

Green eyes peered back at him, confusion etching between the furrows of his eyebrows. “I thought you didn’t mind.”

“Oh, I don’t,” he replied back, making his way over to him. “Exact opposite, in fact,” he purred out. He sobered up for a second before he admitted, “I didn’t think that you’d wear it.”

Deku’s gaze fell to the ground, his cheeks turning a rosy red, “...I like how you smell,” he replied back, a little shyly.

Dabi cleared his throat into his fist, trying to choke down the wave of emotions surging up in him. He reached over to cup Deku’s face and leaned in to kiss him slowly and fully. Feeling the way his lips molded against him, he met no resistance when he pushed his tongue in. His other hand came to cup the back of Deku’s head, stroking the curls and pushing for a better angle.

“Funny,” he said when they pulled away. He rubbed the tip of their noses together, “I like you too.”

Deku released a breath, his eyelids fluttering as he licked his lips. Green eyes peered up before he lifted his arms around Dabi’s middle and pulled him in. Resting his forehead against at the center of Dabi’s chest, he inhaled deeply as he felt Dabi relax into the touch.

“But I think I’d prefer you without it more…” Dabi murmured, his fingers reaching for the hem of Deku’s shirt.

-

“Well, we don’t choose who we fall in love with.”

Dabi snorted back. He turned back to Yamada, annoyed, and the blond stopped in his steps to stare back at him.

“Are you stupid?” he asked, even though it was clear he didn’t want an answer, “Even if I could choose who I fell for, it’d be the same.”

There was a long silence. The words hung in the air between them, and Dabi, as though realizing what he said aloud, covered his face with his hands. He scowled hard, face burning with embarrassment.

“Oh wow,” Toga whistled, “You’re a real romantic, huh Dabi?”

“Fuck all of you.”

But he made no effort to take his words back.

-

They were planting flowers, today. Because Deku wasn’t allowed near the fields or the apple trees anymore, and Dabi was only outside if Deku was.

Deku dug little holes and placed seeds in, while Dabi filled the holes up with his foot and watered it with Eri’s bunny-shaped watering can. Look, it was using this or using the All Might Watering Can that Deku pulled out of fucking nowhere, okay?

He looked at the top of Midoriya’s head. The sun beat down on them while icy winds blew right by them. He wasn’t wearing his helmet, and his regular coverings hung loosely against his neck like a makeshift scarf. With his head bowed like that, dedicatedly working on planting the flowers at the cusp of spring, Dabi felt an itch against his lips.

He wanted to kiss him. He patted down the dirt as gently as he could, and poured the water. Carefully, he thought to himself. He would incinerate the whole world to ash, but he wanted to water the flowers that Deku was planting.

He came to an abrupt pause when Deku did.

He placed the spade down to his side, and his other hand came to the knife on his thigh. Even though Deku and Dabi set the majority of their equipment and supplies to the side, neither were unprepared for a fight. Dabi took a step back, a hand on the walkie on his belt.

Never did he ever think that he would be the point-of-contact in any group, but here he was.

He kept silent, waiting for Deku to do something before he made his course of action. After a few moments, however, Deku relaxed and returned to digging holes then. It must not be a real issue than.

That’s good, Dabi really didn’t want anyone or anything interrupting them (especially not Hawks).

They were quiet for a few moments longer, the wind breaking their silence as it rustled the trees in the area. They were almost done with planting flowers in this stretch of the makeshift dirt path they had. With the last stretch in front of them, Deku stood up.

Dabi arched his eyebrow at him.

“Need more seeds,” the young man explained as he walked to their pile of supplies.

The taller man nodded back, and even though there was no reason to, walked all the way there to get the seeds.

“When… When we ran out of seeds,” Deku said quietly, “I thought that it would be a good thing.” he looked at the seeds in his hand, “since it would mean that I did something and saw it through.” He closed his hand and looked up at Dabi, green eyes shining at some private joke that he hasn’t shared.

“You don’t look too happy about doing a good thing,” Dabi replied back.

The young man smiled back, stretching the scars around his lips in a way that made blue eyes lock onto them.

“...If we could go a little longer, I would have spent more time with you,” he said, unknowingly sending Dabi’s heart racing. “Isn’t that selfish? When I know that there’s so much to do.”

He shook his head and turned to the sidewalk, the few feet they had left.

A scarred hand shot out to grab his gloved one.

“Me too,” he admitted in a rush of air. “I… I want to spend more time with you too.”

Deku adjusted his hold so that he could hold Dabi’s larger hand in his. He stared at it, seeping with so much fondness that Dabi could taste it on his tongue. No wait, he wanted to taste it.

He stepped forward, slanting his lips against his. Ignoring how much his back ached in protest for hunching over like this, he drowned in the feelings Deku ignited inside of him when he kissed back just as hard.

“Deku,” he whispered quietly, mouthing it against his lips and breathing it into his mouth, “I love you.”

Deku’s laugh against his lips was, by far, the most delicious thing he’s ever tasted.

It was rare for him to not be out in the field the same time as Deku, but since he was working on getting the rest of his stupid staples out of him (fuck Chisaki, by the way, but that was another story for another time), he wasn’t really cleared to go out unless it was an Absolute Emergency.

And Deku was… off.

“...I won’t know what you’re thinking if you don’t say anything,” Dabi said, passing him a water bottle.

The two leaned against the railing right outside of the Residence marked as ‘Midoriya’.

Unlike usual, however, Deku took the bottle. He didn’t open it, as always, but he just held it in his hands. Dabi stared at the apartment door, with his elbows propped onto the railing as he leaned backwards onto it. Next to him, Deku faced the outside, leaning forward on the railing as he looked at something beyond anything Dabi could see.

“...Dabi,” Deku said quietly.

“...Yes?”

“...Dabi,” he repeated himself.

“...I’m here.”

“...Dabi.”

A little annoyed that he was only saying that, he turned to face him fully. Gazing at Deku’s profile, the annoyance ebbed away as those green eyes turned to him.

“...Yes,” Dabi nodded, “I’m here.”

Deku’s hand reached for his, and despite still not answering him, Dabi allowed him to interlace their fingers together. He gave a short sigh as Deku’s small hands slowly pulled his hand up to his lips. He closed his eyes and kissed the back of his hand.

“Yes,” he agreed at last, “You are.”

Blue eyes snapped up to his face. He didn’t know what happened, but he didn’t like it. Deku should never look so relieved that someone like him was here. He should never question or wonder if Dabi would be anywhere other than his side.

Still, a lifetime spent ignoring and scoffing at other people and this fluttery feeling in his heart was no use here. Instead, he had to resort to other tactics. He leaned in to kiss against his lips.

“You are too. We’re here.”

Dabi’s one contribution to society would be the fact that he could bring that shine back to Deku’s eyes before he got lost.

-

On occasion, he thought about it.

Wouldn't Deku be happier with someone else? Wouldn't it be better to be with someone a little more emotionally stable and supportive? Dabi couldn't do that for him. He didn't even know what it meant to be 'normal'.

-

"A world without blue," Midoriya asked, edging on hysteria, "can you imagine it?" He reached up, cupping Dabi's face . "A sky without blue, an ocean without blue, summer skies without blue, I don't want that."

Dabi's hand came onto his, holding it against his face like a long-lasting ache had finally received reprise.

"You make it sound like you," want me here, "can't live without it."

"...I don't want to," live without you, "think that I can."

I love you, Dabi couldn't say.

I need you, Midoriya wished he could hear.

### Stain

"Let's end here for tonight," Stain said.

"Eh? I can keep going," Deku replied back.

Stain looked at him for a moment and then back to the ground. With a short sigh, he crossed the distance between them quickly. He leaned in a little, as though that could give them any privacy and quietly whispered.

"I don't want to exhaust you," he murmured out, just a few inches from Deku's ear. "But there are a lot of preparations to do so that your body can accommodate mine."

Their leader's face exploded into a hot flush.

"O-oh," he said.

Red eyes stared at the young man for a moment before he leaned down to kiss him on the neck. A quiet gasp escaped from Deku's lips and he turned to stare wide-eyed at the taller man.

"I can't wait," he said quietly. "Ready?"

Still red, Deku nodded, the anticipation in his eyes mirrored back.

-

A pair of blades came onto the table in front of him.

“The building was a mess,” Stain said as he took a seat in front of the young man, “We’re going to have to completely rebuild it as we head up.”

Deku nodded back, flipping to a different page on his planner and scribbled something down.

“Good work,” he said, looking up. “And welcome back.”

“Yeah, how did the parking lot go?”

The young man gave a nod, “No injuries. We cleaned it up fine. Rumi said she’ll keep an eye on the burning.”

Stain grimaced at the mention of the former rabbit-hero.

“As long as it gets done,” he said, as though to come to terms with it himself. “What did you hurt?”

Deku frowned, “I could come back early without being injured.”

The look on Stain’s face said otherwise.

“I could.”

“Did you?”

And their Base Leader, who still didn’t know how to lie, dropped his gaze.

Heart heavy, Stain’s long arms reached over the table and took Deku’s hand into his. He tugged on the hand, standing up to close the distance between them, and pressed their foreheads together.

“Welcome back,” he said quietly, eyes closed.

Deku exhaled quietly, “Yeah.”

Stain tried not to think about what he didn’t have anymore. He tried not to ponder on what nightmares they were going to face tomorrow. Willingly letting it go, he found room in his heart to feel gratitude instead.

He gave Deku a kiss, grateful.

### Hawks

“...Keigo,” Deku said, walking into the room.

Immediately, everyone clattered up to their feet, exclaiming on various things of this and that, but Hawks was already next to him. His wings opened a little, and cut Deku’s vision of the room.

“Yeah, you called?” he asked, holding his tray of what, Deku supposed, was his lunch. It was half-eaten, did he interrupt? The blond spoke up before he could even greet him. “...Are you sure you should even be up right now?”

Green eyes came up to see Hawk’s knowing smile, however, his eyes were too sharp and his back was too taut for Deku to believe that he was anything resembling relaxed.

“...There’s something I want to tell you,” he said. “It can wait though.”

The blond stared at him for a moment longer and gave an exasperated sigh. “If… you came here like this, it’s not something that I should wait on, now is it?”

Deku blinked and looked down at himself. That’s true, he’s only dressed like this when he’s injured, isn’t he? Some loose-fitting sweatpants and a blanket over his shoulders because he can’t lift his arms to get into a shirt or jacket. His body was more like a mummy, with all the wrappings decorating it, and he gave a wry smile back. Even though the older man wouldn’t be able to see it with the mask over his mouth, he couldn’t shake the feeling like Hawks understood.

“Let’s go somewhere quiet, shall we?” the former hero asked, sending a feather to send his tray back inside as he stepped out of the room.

Ignoring the rest of everyone behind him, they made their way out of the mess hall. Deku wasn’t limping or anything, but there was sweat already starting to bead on his forehead as he took every step.

“Can I carry you?” Hawks said, “Let’s go up to the roof.”

And Deku, who was about to ask something heavy of Hawks, who was prepared to lose another precious thing, nodded. It was okay to be selfish every once in a while, right?

But Hawks looked like he was given the whole world. With a wide grin that made him look like a child, he swept Deku up in an instant, but as gentle as anyone picking him up slowly would. As expected of a former hero, he’s so gentle that Deku could cry.

The rooftop was fitting. The place that they first met will be where he stopped lying to Hawks. Even if Hawks brought him up here on a whim, the gesture meant more to Deku than he knew how to convey. If he said a simple ‘thank you’, then surely, Hawks wouldn’t be able to understand the depth of that emotion.

Despite the fact that they spoke the same language, it was amazing and frustrating in equal parts to think that they couldn’t always communicate properly.

He was set down onto his feet. Once Hawks was certain he was stable, he took a step back. He eyed the young man critically, despite the easy-going smile on his face.

“Should I get you a chair?” Deku shook his head, and the blond relented, even though it was clear that he didn’t really believe him. “Okay, then, what’s up?” Hawks asked.

There was a brief silence.

The blond stared at him for a moment more before he leaned against the railing.

“...It’s fine, you know,” the blond said, closing his eyes with a smile. He looked content like that, as though everything was right in the world. “I’m all about the fastest, but that doesn’t mean I don’t know how to wait.”

The sun was starting to set, and it was the hours right before the soft lavenders and pinks stretched across the skies. The two stood there in their shared silence, enjoying their rare moment of peace.

“I love you.”

The blond froze. His eyes snapped open and he jerked his head up to stare at Deku. His jaw slackened, and his cool disposition was nowhere to be seen. Looking at him, Deku couldn’t help the insurmountable feelings crash inside of him. His heart pounded against his chest, as though determined to beat its way out of his chest and to the man in front of him, and he nodded at Hawks.

This was fine. It was okay if they never talked again. Hawks knew how to put his feelings to the side to work, and Deku didn’t care as long as the work got done. In fact, it would probably be better for both of them if Hawks lived unconcerned about him for the rest of his life.

“I just wanted you to know.”

Deku gave a polite bow to him before he started to walk away. He said what he wanted to. This wouldn’t weigh him down anymore. He-

His wrist got caught, and he stared in shock because Hawks had grabbed him. Betraying him, his heart fluttered at the contact. The blond wasn’t staring at him though, his gaze was focused on the ground.

Deku tugged at his wrist. He needed to leave before he did something unforgivable to this man. He needed to leave before he crossed the line and said something awful, like how much he wanted to hold his hand.

“How… How can you just say that… and walk away?”

Deku frowned back. He tilted his head. And figurung that Hawks was asking how he knew, he answered back honestly.

“...When I woke up, you were the first person I thought about,” Deku explained. “I wanted to make sure I got to say it since I might not wake up next time.”

“And me?” the blond didn’t miss a beat. He finally looked at him with an expression the younger man has never seen on him.

Deku stared blankly at him.

“You should…” his sentence trailed off before he started anew, “...don’t you want my answer?”

The young man hesitated. He… could live without the memory of being rejected. He knew that he was being selfish when he confessed. In fact, the idea of being in love was a selfish ideal anyways. He knew that, but he wanted to confess anyways. He was okay if this was the last selfish thing he did. Because...

“...I don’t want to burden you-”

“Because it’s the same for me, too,” Hawks said, cutting him off. He gave this helpless laugh, his other hand running through his hair, “Disgusting, right? I used to be a hero but now I can’t… I can’t imagine being alive without you. But I didn’t want to burden you either. I didn't want to chase you away but...” he said.

The hand in his hair tugged at it relentlessly, and he slowly lifted his eyes up.

He clenched his jaw tightly, looking like he was in pain, and he took a step closer to Deku. His hand was tight on his wrist, clear on his intention to never let him go. His other hand came up to cup his face, his thumb running across his cheekbone.

“I love you, too,” he said. His lips curled up to a smile, but since Deku had never seen him in love before, he didn’t know what to call that expression. “So you don’t have to cry, alright?”

Deku stared at him, feeling hot tears run down his face. The bright sunlight above them made Hawks’ blond hair look as though he was glowing. His smile stretched even wider, until he looked uncomfortable with how widely he was grinning, and for a moment, Deku thought that he had confessed to the sun.

"Don't cry," Hawks said, his eyes wet.

“I didn’t… think you’d say yes,” he tried to explain through his heaving. He was no stranger to bad news and disdain, but faced with Hawks’ gentle smile, he thought that he would break.

His feelings were for naught.

Hawks wasted no time in collecting him in his arms. He released his wrist to wrapping one arm around Deku’s waist and the other arm to wrap around his shoulders. Ducking his head so forehead nearly touched his shoulder, his wings wrapped around the two of them like he couldn't get enough. He squeezed as tightly as he would dare, not too tight to aggravate wounds but not so loose that he couldn’t verify that he wasn’t real.

Held like this, with their heartbeats aligned, Deku felt like a fool. Of course he wouldn’t break.

Hawks wouldn’t let that happen.

“I… I was prepared to bury this feeling forever,” Hawks admitted, his hot breath washing over his neck as he spoke. “Because I thought that you would sacrifice yourself if it meant my happiness. I want to stay by your side and support you.” He spoke feverishly but quietly, and Deku shivered from the sensation. With how the words poured from his lips, it must have been something he had been holding onto for a long time. And now, it felt like the words would be whispered against his skin to engrave it there.“So please, please, don’t say that you might not make it back out next time. If you're going to go, take me with you.”

Deku wrapped his arms around Hawks’s waist the best he could. It caused a little discomfort, but more from the fact that he hadn't moved around in a while than it was his previous injuries. This was the best he could do to offer his support. He couldn’t promise something as naive as “I’ll always come back” even though he really wanted to.

He leaned back when he felt Hawks’ hold loosen on him.

“I love you,” he whispered again.

Hawks smiled like he was about to break. It took his breath away, and Deku wanted to protect it. As long as he lived, as long as he breathed, as long as he could fight, he swore to himself that he would crawl his way back to this smile.

“I love you too,” Hawks said, leaning in to kiss him.

If love was a flower, then it must be the strongest flower in the world. It could, after all, withstand an apocalypse to bloom as the world rotted away.

-

“So, what would you have done if I didn’t accept?” the blond asked.

The two sat on the edge of the rooftop, close enough that their thighs were right against each other, with one of Deku’s hands in between both of Hawks’, in the blond’s lap. If he had his way, the young man would be in his lap, preferably without any clothes on, but he kept it under wraps. He didn’t want to rush this. He didn’t want to force Deku into an unforgivable situation.

And, if he was being honest with himself, this felt too good to be true.

“I don’t know,” Deku replied back, his eyes gazing at something far in the horizon. “Probably avoided you until you were okay with me. If it bothered you enough, I might have left.”

Hawks’ felt his heart drop to his stomach, but kept his expression neutral. “Eeeeh,” he drew the sound out, buying himself time to compose himself. “I’m glad I managed to confess properly. I don’t want to be anywhere you’re not.”

Really, had Deku confessed to someone that didn’t reciprocate, they would have lost him. The thought brought up more anger inside of him that he thought he was capable of.

“...Thank you,” Hawks said. “For giving me a shot. I won’t let you regret it.”

He squeezed the hand in his for good measure. Next to him, Deku’s tender gaze could melt an iceberg. Hawks had to double check to make sure he was still on the ground, since he felt weightless.

“Even if you didn’t love me back,” he said quietly, “I wanted you to know that someone loved you, Keigo.”

His name, from those lips, was a dangerous combination for Hawks’ fraying control. Those eyes, focused solely on him, was unraveling him and leaving him a vulnerable, desperate mess. He would have believed anything that Deku told him in that moment. If he had said that the sky was green, Hawks would have taken it at face-value. He had a hold over Hawks, and with the small hand in his, he knew he was content to be powerless.

“...I see,” he replied back.

Deku’s love was sweet, so sweet that he would confess his love so that someone would realize that they were loved. And it fet like, in Hawks’ hands, it would be soiled. The words that he had wanted to hear for so long, from the person who haunted his sweetest dreams, inflated him. If he were to lose his wings, and was rendered quirkless right then and there, he would still believe that he could fly.

He was almost certain now. Deku’s affections were wasted on him. But if the apocalypse had taught him anything, it was that he was an awful human being. Corrupted by his own worldly desires, and willing to sacrifice everything for his selfish ambitions, Hawks was everything people defined as a terrible person.

Still, the former hero wasn’t going to let him go for anything.

As though to seal the vow, Hawks leaned in to kiss him.

-

Nothing changed.

No, no, that’s a lie. Something was very different. As soon as Hawks and Deku separated, Deku went to retire for the day early and Hawks, too excited to do the same, joined the evening patrol group with a shit-eating grin.

And that was the last time Hawks got to see Deku’s face. It’s been almost a week since then. Has the base always been this busy? He felt like he saw Deku more when they weren’t, uh… whatever they were. They were two people who told each other that they loved the other. Were they dating? Hawks couldn’t imagine life with anyone else at this point, but it was probably too early to call it marriage.

The word, the thought, made his wings flutter before he knew what he was doing.

Someone spluttered behind him and he turned to where his wing had fluttered all over Fatgum.

“Ah, yo,” he said, giving a mock salute.

“Well, I’m glad you’re in a good mood,” Toyomitsu said with an exaggerated sigh. He couldn’t pretend to be upset for long as his grin returned and Hawks returned it in its brilliance.

A bark sounded before they could start a conversation, and the two turned to where Deku approached them with Miruko laughing loudly next to him on one side and the youngest Todoroki on the other.

“Alright! Let’s go!” Miruko said, punching her fist into her hand with a large grin.

Further behind them, with a large frown on his face, Enji eyed them critically. However, that’s not what Hawks could focus on.

Hawks could only see Deku, and wondered what kind of expression he was making underneath his helmet. Quickly, he dragged his thoughts away from something dangerous, like taking everything off of him and spreading him out over his bed, and focused on the task at hand.

Or, he tried to, but as they were making their way off the compound, Deku’s hand found his. He stared, eyes wide and mouth open in his shock, as Deku’s visor reflected the amber lights of sunset back.

“I finally got you,” he said, squeezing his hand before letting go.

Hawks never considered himself to be easy to sway, but he felt all the blood rush to his head and promptly ruined any chances he had of coherent thought at that moment.

“Wait,” he said, reaching his hand out to grab Deku’s elbow. “I…”

What was he going to do? Ask to have dinner together? Go on a walk together? Invite him to his place to spend the night?

He really didn’t think this through.

“Keigo,” Deku said, his soft voice, “Come over tonight.”

He was lucky that Deku was wearing his helmet. If he had seen that expression on his face, he wouldn’t have been able to sleep for some time afterwards.

(But, if he did, he would have incredibly sweet dreams.)

As it was, he felt an unfamiliar heat pool in his gut as he grinned back.

“That sounds great.”

-

The first night Hawks slept over, it was incredibly innocent. Hawks had moved all his belongings (the entire box) earlier in the evening, and Kouta welcomed him with a big frown.

It would bother him more if he wasn’t so taken by the sight of Deku in sweats and a jacket over his bare shoulders. His bandages were tight on his chest, and the web of scars and ugly bruises decorated the area from his collarbone to his shoulder. Needless to say, only Deku would be too injured for a shirt but not injured enough to skip patrol.

Still, it was the most civilian he had seen him. The paddings that he had were to the side, and he’s never seen him without them (not counting all the times he was in their infirmary) in such a casual setting. No weapon in sight.

“Keigo,” he said, breathless in his joy.

Without thinking much of it, he scooped Deku into his embrace with a loud laugh as they spun around in circles. When the young man laughed back against his ears, Hawks hoped that he could hear that sound everyday for the rest of his life.

-

Most people wear pajamas to bed. Or maybe a nightgown. Hawks was more of a t-shirt and briefs kind of man, but the recent changes to his lifestyle meant that he at least wore pants. Similarly, he kept a jacket to the side, should an emergency arise, with a small bag that contained some emergency items. It contained some water, some granola bars, a first-aid kit, his knife kit and a gun with some ammo. Just in case, of course.

It was a habit that he couldn’t shake, even now.

For a while, he thought that it was paranoia, until he realized that Deku still slept near a window. He sat down next to it, almost fully padded and suited up with his trusty bat right next to him. He had his usual knives and the likes strapped where they normally were, and his helmet was by his feet. He also had his backpack, like Hawks did, fully stoked and ready to go. He leaned against it and the wall.

“...You can’t be comfortable like that,” Hawks said.

Deku’s green eyes looked at him, confused.

“...C'mere. I swear that I won’t let anything happen to you tonight,” he said. Or any night, he wanted to add, but didn’t want to get ahead of himself. “Let’s sleep together.”

The words brought some of his more...filthier fantasies to the forefront of his mind, but the current situation dispelled any sexy feelings he had.

He wanted Deku to associate him with security.

“...Please?” he tried.

Deku hesitated, looking at the window and then back to Hawks, and the blond ached. This whole time, they were all sleeping and resting so well, while Deku stewed in the assumption that nothing had changed. For Deku, there was no difference between sleeping outside and sleeping in this apartment. Somehow, the blatant distrust that he showed through these moments made his mood go sour.

Still, Shigaraki’s words echoed in his head.

[ Why should he trust you? All you've done is rely on him. Has he ever wanted you or your help? ]

Deku was small and tough, but he crawled into the futon next to Hawks. He was kind and Hawks would shamelessly take advantage of it. He threw his arm around him, pulling him closer as one of his feathers tugged the blanket up to their chins. The padding felt awkward even under his touch, and he was grateful that Deku at least took his shoes off.

“...I love you,” the blond said. “I want you to be the last thing I see and the first thing I see everyday.”

Deku’s eyes shined at the confession, and Hawks hoped that he believed him.

-

“Ah, Deku, there you are,” Hawks said, landing right by him. His wings stretched out before folding neatly behind him, a big grin on his face.

Deku’s gaze shined as he nodded at the older man. For a quiet guy, his expression were loud. Without an ounce of shame, Hawks basked in the attention.

“What’s up? You done for the day?” the blond asked, like he didn’t know.

The young man nodded curtly, and pulled one of his hands up. He looked back up to the blond and offered his hand, watching the way the older man lit up. He could hardly believe that such a small thing could make him so visibly happy, and he treasured it.

It was strange to think that he could make someone happy.

“That’s good. No complications? No injuries?”

Deku shook his head in response, their fingers intertwining. The gloves made it a little stiff, but it was a welcomed discomfort. The blond stared at him for another moment, his sharp eyes looking for any sign of discomfort before he took it as the truth. He squeezed his hand.

The young man would have never thought that there would ever be someone that wanted to hold his hand like this. And not for the first time, Deku hoped that he could save Hawks the same way he was saved by this man.

“The route was quiet today,” Hawks told him. “We didn’t even get a straggler. I think the night team is working too hard.”

Deku nodded slowly. His mind already thinking of theories of why it might be quiet again, for the third day straight. It was a blessing in small ways, but in the grand picture of things, it wasn’t normal. He hoped that it wasn’t a symbol for a bigger-

His hand was tugged backwards and his head snapped to where the blond was staring at him. All semblance of his good mood was gone. That concern in his eyes looked so solid that he felt like it was tangible. If it was, he hoped that he could get rid of it.

“I didn’t say that to you so that you’d worry,” Hawks said. “You and I both know that there’s no way in hell that Stain is slacking off or lying. It’s rare to get some peace, so let’s enjoy it while we have it, alright?”

Deku nodded, but the doubt remained in his chest. Eyes turned downcast, he hesitated. He didn’t want to make it sound like he didn’t trust anyone, but he couldn’t help but worry-

“And if there is a problem, it’s okay. We can handle it together.”

Deku had seen that confidence ruin people. Looking up at the blond, however, he doesn’t know how to do anything else but believe.

The blond leaned in, lifting up their interlaced hands to kiss the back of Deku’s hand.

“I promise you that wherever you are, I’ll come to you,” he said, hoping that this time, Deku had heard him loud and clear, “At my signature speed,” he added, winking at him.

He gave a small smile in response, feeling his face color and his heartbeat race, and squeezed the hand holding his.

“Thank you,” he said quietly.

-

“Ah, I just meant that… Well, he’s young.”

Hawks figured that this would happen eventually. People are so eager to tear each other down, after all. As he thought that, he shook his head to banish the thought. He wasn’t a spiteful person before, but it appeared that he got uselessly defensive over this.

“And?” Enji, to everyone’s shock, spoke up. “You’re telling me that you’ll follow this man into battle but you can’t trust his decision in who he spends his private time with?” His voice was heavy like thunder, with his annoyance radiating off of him in waves.

No one could tell if the subject matter annoyed him or if he was annoyed that someone brought this to his attention. Or perhaps he was just tired. Even Hawks, who probably spent the most amount of time with him willingly, didn’t know.

“Even if you don’t approve, what does it matter? You have no value in their lives. If you understand, excuse yourself.”

“...Todoroki-san…” Hawks felt his respect for this man double.

“With that said,” he turned to Hawks, “It takes two to build a relationship. Don’t forget that the people who provide the greatest comfort can also provide the greatest pains.”

It sounded much more personal than Hawks thought, but he nodded anyways.

At the very least, most of everyone was fine with it. The people, he couldn’t help but notice, who frowned and politely disagreed, were the people that wanted Hawks to take over as a leader. He filed that knowledge in his head, just in case.

For the most part, there were only people who really cared or really didn’t.

“Whyyyyy!” Jin’s unmistakable voice wailed loudly, “But I love you, too! Is it because he’s blond! I’m blond too! // I'll kill him since I hate you!”

Hawks turned to where Deku was walking by the hallway, a desperate Twice following him all the way. Right, and them.

The other group of people that hated him were the people that have always hated him but now it was really personal. But well, they were loyal to Deku, so it didn’t bother him too much.

As strange as it was, it gave him some relief to know that Deku would be taken care of, regardless if he was here or not.

Of course, that wouldn’t be for a long, long time. He stood up and made his way over to Deku in an instant. He relished in the accusations that Twice shot at him until Deku stood in front of him. Warm at the thought that he was being protected, he lost his chance to say that he didn’t remember what Twice had said.

Being saved every once in a while was a rewarding feeling. He made sure to grin extra big when he caught Twice’s gaze.

-

Hawks sat down on the couch, tired and ready to sleep, when Deku walked into the room. Their eyes met and he gave a little smile as he scooted over. The idea was for his love to come and take a seat next to him. Or closer. He wouldn't complain.

As it was, Deku just nodded his head at him.

The flare of annoyance sparked in him, and he choked it down before he acted on it. “You’re not going to sit with me?” he asked, trying his hardest not to pout. He didn’t want to make the young man do anything he didn’t want to, or wasn’t comfortable with, but he was tired and his nerves were frayed.

The person he loved was standing right in front of him. Of course he wanted to touch him and hold him close. If he had it his way, he would kiss Deku senseless every chance he got, shower him in affection, and make a little nest of pillows and blankets in their apartment for the two of them. He wanted to fall asleep feeling his heartbeat next to his and listening to his soft breathing.

Deku stared at him for a moment longer, before he grabbed whatever it was that he came out to get and came over to the couch. He placed his rolled tool bag onto the coffee table, and opened it up. His daggers, since Hawks recognized them anywhere, glinted under the light. He sat down in front of it, on the other side of the couch.

And the distance, even though it was much shorter than when he was standing on the other side of the room, made Hawks feel lonely.

“...Really?” he asked, and maybe he was more frustrated than he thought but he thought they had made a lot of progress now, okay? He clenched his jaw, balled his fist into hands, and willed himself to forgive and forget and-

“...Can I come closer?”

He blinked at Deku, who stared back at him. Hawks suddenly felt parched under the intensity of his gaze.

“You don’t have to ask about that,” he said. There’s nothing more that would make me happy, he doesn’t say. “Just got for it,” he said instead.

From the blank look he was getting, the young man didn’t get it at all, but that’s fine. They could work on that. Last year, Hawks didn’t even know that his eyes were green. See? They were working on it.

“I can’t,” the young man said, shaking his head. He placed his hand on his heart, “You’ll hear.”

Hawks’s lips twitched, all of his previous exhaustion blown away, and covered it his mouth quickly with his hand. Deku’s eyes were sharp and observant, as he turned away in a pout.

By far, the cutest and most precious thing that Hawks has seen. Ever.

Since he already saw it, there was no point in hiding it. He dropped his hand, his grin in full force as he extended his hand towards him, “Give me your hand,” he said.

No matter how pouty he got, he didn’t hesitate to place his hand in Hawks’s, and the blond rode out that swell of pride quietly. He tugged on the hand, scooting closer until there was just a foot of space between them, and placed Deku’s hand over his chest, right where his heart thundered underneath their hands.

“Me too,” he said, a grin on his face.

It was a little embarrassing, but a little bit of embarrassment was worth it to see Deku’s eyes shine in awe. Why was he so surprised? He wanted to kiss that expression. He wanted to kiss him.

Deku’s eyes darted to him, and he nodded. He brought his hand up to his mask, the one that Hawks wasn’t holding, and tugged it down. It immediately exposed the scars webbed across his face, but the blond was threatened with the overwhelming relief that he was trusted.

“...Is this okay?”

If Hawks’s hesitance originated from the fact that Deku was always alone before this, then Deku’s hesitance originated from the fact that he’s seen how well-adjusted Hawks was to human company. The blond didn’t want to force him to do something way out of his comfort zone, and the younger man didn’t remember how to express affection anymore.

Hawks kissed his cheek, right over the webbing. Deku jolted, not as bad as he used to, but just enough to let him know that he (still) wasn’t used to it or expecting it. That was fine. They could work on that, too.

Deku showing his face like this, to Hawks, was a show of trust. Hawks, kissing his scars, was an incredible feat of loyalty.

Slowly, as though to give Deku enough time to change his mind, Hawks pressed their lips together. Their chapped lips rested against each other for just a moment, a gentle kiss for two gentle people. He pulled back, watching the way Deku’s eyelids fluttered open and those green eyes met his again.

“...One more?”

Hawks’s grin was brighter than anything. Deku was certain that their future would be bright so long as this man could smile in.

“Just one?” he teased, leaning in to do just that and more.

-

Hawks wasn’t a stranger to pain or anything, but that didn’t mean he went out looking for it. Given his speed and reaction time, it was rare to be injured at all.

Still, in an effort to wrench Ojiro out of the line of fire, he got an impressive bruise on his arm. It took up his entire upper arm, but it didn’t touch his elbow or his shoulder. He probably couldn’t lift anything heavy with this arm for a while, but his mobility hadn’t been affected. Concerning that half a building was going to fall on him, it was a good thing that the only injury that they got was his bruise. Ojiro apologized profusely, but really, Hawks was fine. In fact, with how awful Ojiro’s complexion had turned, the blond was more concerned about him.

Accidents happen, and luckily, it wasn’t fatal this time.

They got out of the rumble quickly, and as soon as Hawks stepped away from Ojiro and his apologies, he had an armful of Deku.

His heart fluttered, and he was suddenly breathless, like Deku had knocked all the air out of him. He stared down, surprised and for a brief second, thought that he did die and he was dreaming. But Deku’s arms were shaking as he placed his head on his chest, and Takami had never felt so whole before. Maybe he was a little twisted, to be so happy when Deku was so clearly worried.

“I’m fine,” he said quietly, wrapping his arms around Deku’s body. “Sorry to scare you.”

His arms trembled around him, before he pulled away. The young man looked towards Ojiro, who nodded, looking from Deku to Hawks and then back to the leader and gave a nervous laugh.

“I’m fine, Hawks-san made sure of it,” he said. “But it looked like he hit his arm pretty hard.”

Hawks’ smile twitched, Deku swerved right back to him, and even through that helmet, he could feel the worry emitting off of the young man. He couldn’t believe it. His eyes met the younger blond, who gave him a knowing smile (this little brat-). And then, he scampered off, leaving Hawks to stand awkwardly in front of Deku.

“It’s really not that bad,” Hawks said, shucking his jacket off to show him the bruise. It was big and already turning purple, but compared to some of the shit that Deku tried to hide from him, it really was nothing. “See? It’s not even lumpy.”

Deku was silent, and the blond sighed back. It was flattering to know that the younger man cared so much about him, but this felt excessive. It would also help if he just said something so Hawks had some idea on what he was thinking about.

...He wasn’t going to call off this entire trip, was he? No one was badly injured, and they just started. Surely, he wasn’t going to cancel this, right? Over this stupid bruise?

“...I won’t know what you’re thinking if you don’t say anything,” he said.

“...Be careful,” Deku said at last. “I…” he tried to say something else and he shook his head. He turned back to everyone else, “Let’s take a break and let everyone back at home know that we’re fine.”

And otherwise, it was like nothing had changed. Hawks would never admit it, but he felt a little sad that Deku moved on so quickly from it. It was a good quality to have, to see and assess the situation for what it was and move on without being blinded by personal feelings.

It was a little sad that Deku, who couldn’t be older than 18, was in control of his emotions enough to make these decisions like it was second-nature. It was a little lonely, because Hawks always thought that ‘loving’ someone and ‘being loved’ in return would cause a skew in habits.

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When they got back home, did their reports, got dinner, and settled into a quiet evening, Hawks figured that nothing was different today. They were going to go to sleep, and wake up tomorrow like nothing was wrong.

Of course, nothing was wrong, but Hawks thoughts returned to it no matter how many times he tried to think otherwise.

And then, Deku came.

Normally, when they slept together, on the futon in the living room, it was the most relaxed that Hawks ever saw Deku. He was normally in a thin t-shirt, and trackpants, with only one knife hanging on his belt. Even though it pained Hawks to think that Deku had to have a weapon on him even now, in comparison to when Deku was Helmet, this felt surreal.

Today, unlike other days, however, Deku sat down on his knees next to him. He took his knife off the belt and placed it next to his pillow.

Hawks, who was holding the blanket open so that Deku could climb in, blinked owlishly at him.

“...You’re not… hurt, right?” Deku asked.

The blond felt his heart warm, and he nodded, “Yep. It’s just a few bruises.”

“...Really?”

“Yep. Otherwise, I’d be chained in Natsuo’s office.”

That worked, and the curls bounced on his head when he nodded. Deku leaned forward, his hand coming up to rest against the blond’s chest.

“This… doesn't hurt right?”

“Yeah,” Hawks nodded, his pulse hastening. He licked his lips, eyes taking in Deku’s expression, the way his blush bloomed across his face, and unconsciously leaned in.

The young man took a deep breath before he pushed Hawks as gently as he could. Relaxing against the touch, Hawks found himself on his back, Deku hovering over him. The silence hung between them felt electrified, and Hawks ached to kiss him.

In a bold move, Deku swung his leg over his hips, straddling him, and Hawks’ eyebrows shot up.

“...Is this okay?”

“Yeah, this is great,” he said, breathless.

Green eyes, dark in a way that made his gut pool with heat, found his.

The young man closed his eyes, like it was something painful. He leaned forward, placing his head on his chest. He trembled above him, surprising him, but before he could say anything, Deku spoke first.

“I… I’m glad you’re here.”

Stupid, Hawks thought to himself, feeling as though he had been splashed with cold water. He’s so fucking stupid. Of course, Deku cared. Of course, Deku was shaken.

No one valued human life as much as Deku did. No one respected other people like Deku did. It was something that he always felt unworthy of, but now he just felt stupid. Of course, Deku cared.

He placed his hand on his curls.

“I’ll be here as long as you’ll have me,” Hawks said. His hand slipped behind his head, rubbing his thumb against the base of his neck. “And as long as you want me, I’ll come flying to you.” He moved his hand to cup his face, gently positioning his expression to face him.

Deku trembled harder, pushing his face against Hawks’ hand.

“...Don’t look at me like that,” he continued, “I’m still here.”

Slowly, the young man nodded. He leaned forward, placing his hands on Hawks’ chest and arm to help steady himself. It worked for about two seconds before Hawks flipped their positions. Now between Deku’s legs, looking down at him, he stared down at him with a raw hunger.

“...Can I keep going?” he asked quietly. His hands on either side of Deku’s head like a cage, he tried to keep the door open so that the young man had a choice. He can leave. They could stop.

Thin arms wrapped around his neck, pulling him down.

“I love you,” Deku mouthed against his lips. His words could barely be heard, but it echoed through Hawks, like he was hollow except for his voice.

“Yeah, I love you too,” he muttered right back.

-

A gentle kiss came onto his eyelids. Slowly, his eyes fluttered open.

The handsome features of the man above him came into view, and Deku felt his body relax.

"...Keigo."

"Mornin' dear," the blond replied a lazy grin stretching across his features. "You looked like you were having a bad dream."

A bad dream? Deku couldn't remember what he dreamed about.

"...Did I wake you? Sorry, then," Deku said.

They weren't hurting for food or supplies, but they could always use more sleep.

"I don't want to hear you apologize first thing in the morning," Hawks pouted at him. "But if you feel really bad..." his lips twisted up into a sly grin, "I can think of a few things you can do to earn my forgiveness."

Deku's lips curled up into a smile as he shook his head in exasperation. Turning to Hawks, he gave him a full kiss to his lips.

Groggy with sleep and edged with exhaustion, their lips met in a slow and unrefined kind of way. It was a mess of tongue and lips that left Deku breathless and Hawks' wings twitching.

"Breakfast," the older man said against his lips. "We should... get breakfast."

Deku's hand came up to his shirt, bunching the material in his fist before releasing it.

"And then we'll get your arm in for your check-up," the blond added.

Deku frowned back. "It's fine."

"It'll be fine if you go to your check-ups," he replied back.

He leaned in and when Deku tilted his head for another kiss, psyched him out to nibble on his nose instead. The young man leaned back with a frown, covering his face with a hand. With a bright laugh, Hawks kissed the back of his hand.

"Forgive me," he muttered quietly. His hands came up to Deku's waist, and pulled him in closer. His hands traveled around his body and cradled him close. "C'mon, let's go eat."

He pulled away from Deku slowly, like he was regretting the action as he did it. Getting up to his feet, he extended his hand out to Deku. The young man took it, and Hawks kissed a line from his ear to his neck as he stood up. Deku turned his head to face him, kissing his cheek.

"I'll take care of the blankets," the blond said against his temple.

"Hn."

With that, Deku left to totter down to the bathroom. Watching him go, Hawks sincerely hoped that he was tired and not in pain as he limped off his right leg. Just in case, he'll have to report that to Natsuo and endure the stink-eye that he gets from Deku in return. Better to be paranoid than dead.

Case and point, both of them were still nearly fully dressed, padding and all. It would be a cold day in hell (or a long unintended vacation in their infirmary) before they would ever sleep without them. Hawks sent his feathers to clean up the blankets as he grabbed the weapons.

The gun that he had strapped to the back of his pants was a familiar weight now.

Deku came out then, fresh and ready for the day as he pulled his mask up on his face. His helmet was by the door, and after all this time, Hawks still couldn't get used to seeing him without weapons.

He didn't know if it was because they were a product of their time, or because they were irrefutably broken and now they'll never be able to live peacefully. Their serenity was something that was waiting to shatter, like a glass cup sitting precariously on the edge of the table.

A hand came to his sleeve, tugging on it. Sharp eyes came up to meet Deku's soft gaze.

"...Breakfast," Deku repeated.

"Yes," Hawks nodded. "Breakfast."

Maybe he was in the wrong. Maybe this was the best hope for peace that they had right now. Come to think of it, comparing now to before, this might be more safer than the allure that society was safe. If society was truly safe, there would be no crime and no need for heroes.

"...Keigo," Deku called him our of his thought. "Right now, we're okay."

"Yes," Hawks agreed. "We are." He leaned forward to rest their foreheads together. "Alright, I'll wash up a little and we can head out."

-

Hawks opened his wings. The breeze ruffled through them. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath in. The smell of smoke, from where they were burning wood and smoking the deer they hunted. The sound of the morning training group carried between the gusts. He leaned forward onto the rails.

Peace, he thought. At the center of an ongoing apocalypse. What a bizzare feeling to sit on.

"Ey, Hawks, you sitting on a few eggs?"

"Oh, Miruko, back from patrol?"

The former rabbit hero plopped down next to him.

"You look like you're thinking about something useless again."

Ah, good old Miruko.

"Does it? I'm just enjoying the breeze."

She stared at him, her eyes sharp and searching for a brief second before she leaned backwards on the railing, propping her elbows onto it.

"Do you want to fight?"

"...What?"

She gave him a wolfish grin, "You don't want it to be too peaceful right? Let's go break some bones."

"It's good if it's peaceful," Hawks said, but he straightened out. "Don't you think so too?"

"This ain't peace if it makes you anxious," Miruoko explained. "You're just waiting for the next wave of something to go wrong, aren't we?"

The blond stared at her and then back to the horizon.

"...Well, I don't really have a rebuttle for that."

"Oii! Hawks-san! Miruko-san!"

The two peered over the edge were Hagakure's hands were waving excitedly at them.

"We're going to play handball with tennis rackets! You guys in?"

"We'll be down in a second!" Miruko said, without waiting for Hawks. She grabbed the man around the waist and hefted him up before sending him over the ledge. Without another second wasted, she jumped right after him. A few stories of building were nothing to them.

Hawks, despite his initial yelp of surprise, was laughing before the two of them hit the ground.

Peace was a fragile thing.

"C'mon birdbrain, let's go fight!"

-

Hawks was not a petty man. He wasn’t the possessive-type. And he definitely wasn’t the jealous type.

“Todoroki-san,” he called out.

Todoroki Enji slowed to a stop and turned to where Hawks greeted him with a lazy two-fingered salute.

“Yo,” he greeted the older man casually, “Nice morning, huh?”

“What do you want, Hawks.”

Enji had a way with words. Even when he asked questions, they sounded like statements. The blond always admired him for that.

“Maa, maa, Todoroki-san. I’m heading to get something to eat before patrol. I figured I’d ask if you wanted to come,” he said.

“...I’ll come,” Enji replied back. The two made off, and to Hawks surprise, the older man spoke first. “We’re heading out to the subway stations this time.”

The blond eyed him out of the corner of his vision and nodded, “Yeah, we’re planning on being there for a few days, aren’t we?”

Bit by bit, they were taking this town back. At first, it was just the residential area, but now they’ve picked it clean, they were going to scrape through the next area. At the pace they were going at, it didn’t feel like a pipe dream anymore. They weren’t just living and surviving because it took everything they had. Their hard work was paying off. They were taking it back.

“We should be prepared for something ugly,” Enji agreed.

Something in Hawks’ heart tightened. “Yeah-”

His response died in his throat.

There must be a word for it, the word to describe his feeling he felt when he saw Dabi’s arm around Deku’s shoulder. A word to describe how the world stopped when he saw Dabi’s eyes meet his gaze from across the dining room, and when he saw the grin on his face as he leaned into Deku’s space. There was, but he couldn’t think of it until a hand came to his shoulder.

“Easy, Hawks,” Enji said calmly. ‘’I can feel your bloodlust from here.”

“Bloodlust?” Hawks replied back, his smile polite on his face as Enji leaned away from him, “No, there is no bloodlust here. We are here to eat, after all.”

He took a bold step forward, smile cold as he walked on over. His steps were certain and quiet, like a hunter latching his prey. And even though very few could hear him until he walked by them, Deku turned around. His eyes took in Hawks before they brightened. His mask crinkled from how wide his smile stretched at the sight of him, and his shoulders relaxed.

“Yo,” Hawks greeted, feeling something in his heart loosen. “Busy?”

He shook his head, his curls bouncing a little.

“Great! You wanna come eat with me?” he asked.

Deku nodded, his hand coming to slip into his, like a puzzle piece fitting into the place it was made for.

“See you later, Dabi,” Deku whispered as he slipped to Hawks’ side. The older man didn’t justify him an answer, clicking his tongue as he scowled hard.

There was no shame in how Hawks preened. His grin nearly split his face, and was so large that he could see it in his reflection when he made eye-contact with Enji.

The older man, somehow, looked tired. Well, whatever, that didn’t matter to Hawks.

-

On occasion, Hawks felt at a total loss when he saw Deku.

Deku’s hand grabbed his tightly, tight enough that he winced a little, but he didn’t dare shake the grip off. Instead, he held the hand back just as tightly, hopeful that if his words didn’t reach him, his grip will.

If Deku’s grip on reality and the world loosened, that was okay. That’s why he was here. And as long as he breathed, he would always find Deku.

-

Deku looked up, meeting Hawks' eyes.

"Keigo," he said quietly, "Is there something wrong?"

"Hm?"

The blond blinked back, "Nothing comes to mind. What's up?"

A soft pink began to dust across his cheeks, splattering across uneven skin and scars in a way that made the blond feel parched.

"...I feel like you're staring at me," he said quietly, "even though we're both on watch."

Hawks' smile turned a little warmer, a little more sheepish, and a 1000% kissable in Deku's unbiased opinion.

"Sorry," he said, not sounding apologetic in the slightest, "I guess I really missed you. I'll try not to get caught next time."

Small fingers reached to take Hawks' larger ones, just for a second, their fingers twined together like the stitches in a sweater.

"That's not the problem," he said quietly. "It's distracting."

Unable to help himself, Hawks leaned down to kiss him on the cheek. He relished in the quiet gasp Deku gave at the touch.

"Sorry about that," he said quietly. He took a step back, his gaze turning warmer the darker Deku's blush became. "I'll catch you at the end of watch," and with a powerful flap of his wings, Hawks pulled away from their position. If he had stayed, he was definately not going to be attentive enough for watch. And knowing Deku, he would have been spoiled rotten.

Hands covering his face, he took a lap to burn off his excess energy.

-

The sound of wings fluttered before a curtain of red fell before Deku. A smile already began to bloom across his lips as he looked up to see Hawks.

The blond leaned in, placing a chaste kiss on his lips before rubbing their noses together. He inhaled deeply, resting their foreheads together for an extra moment before he pulled back, wings and all.

"I'm back," he said, nothing but moonlight between them.

"...Thank you for coming back," Deku said quietly. "How was it?"

Hawks opened his arms and slowly turned around, as though to show the physical evidence that he was fine and not at all injured, "Peaceful, all things considered."

His wings folded behind him.

"We're going to have to check out that fitness place, at westside? Some of the windows are broken."

Deku nodded. "Yeah, I'll get it at dawn."

"Who are you going to take?"

"Jin's been antsy, and Rumi's stalked me to the bathroom yesterday," he said, as though it's been stuck in his thoughts. He tilted his head, "So, I'll give them priority."

"You know, if you do things like that, they're going to think that they just need to annoy you so that they get what they want," the blond said, folding his hands behind his head. "It might give them ideas."

Deku shrugged back. "I don't think it's a bad thing."

"It is," Hawks said, stopping in his steps. The young man stopped too, turning back curiously. "It's super duper bad." The blond took a step closer, taking Deku's hands into his and bringing them up to his lips. He closed his eyes as he kissed the tips of his fingers. He opened his eyes, and laughed at the cherry red blush spreading across Deku's cheeks. He leaned in to kiss him again. "Can I come too?"

Deku pulled back, biting his lip. "That's cheating."

The blond pouted back, but released him. "But if I annoy you, I'll get what I want."

"Even without annoying me I'll give you what you want."

"Yeah, I..."

Hawks' jaw slid open as the words sank in. His eyes brightened even more, as his cheeks began to color into a bright pink.

"Oh."

Deku looked at the ground, feel as though his ears were burning.

"You... let's go get dinner."

Deku took two steps before Hawks took his wrist and pulled him into the corner of the corridor. Wide green eyes followed his movements, before his back was pushed against the wall and Hawks' lips laid on his. One hand came to cup the back of Deku's head, forcing his head to change its angle in order to accomodate Hawks. His tongue forced its way in, greedily sucking on Deku's and ignoring the way their teeth clanked against each other. He pulled back for just a second, adjusting his hands to grab Deku's waist and pick him up half a foot off the ground. Pinning him back to the wall, his toes unable to brush the ground but with their hips aligned, Hawks surged back in to kiss him again.

"Ke-Keigo-"

A hand came up to grip his shirt tightly. If Deku wanted to, he would have stopped his kiss, broken Hawks' jaw and snapped his arms off. It wouldn't be hard for him, and the blond wouldn't have even tried to fight him. He pushed back, a feather coming up to rub at the bottom of Deku's earlobe just to feel him shiver right up against him.

"Keigo," he whispered out again.

Hawks' heart squeezed, and a growing desire to force himself onto him threatened to consume him. He knew that he had to stop, they had things to do and they couldn’t afford to be in anything less than their best shapes. But when he pulled back and saw Deku, saw the way he looked, flushed cheeks and glazed eyes, [Keigo] on his lips, and Hawks felt his best intentions slipping.

“There’s so much I want to do,” he murmured, “Please spoil me too. I’ll annoy you as much as possible.”

“Keigo, that’s not the-”

He was gently placed back on the ground, his breath catching when Hawks’ fingers interlaced with his.

“I love you.”

“...Do you want to come with us?”

A grin split across Hawks’ face.

“I’d be honored.”

Deku gave this exasperated sigh, fond and endeared all in one.

-

"You look cold," Hawks said instead of a greeting as he dropped down next to Deku. His wing wrapped around the smaller man, and tucked him close.

"I'm not," Deku replied quietly, as his fingers came to gently touch the feathers closest to him, "at least, not anymore."

Hawks laughed easily, scooting closer so that there was barely any space between them. He leaned his head against those curls, inhaling it deeply and was pleasantly surprised to smell shampoo for once. No blood and no bleach.

"This is new," he murmrued. He wasn't complaining though. Obviously, he didn't care what Deku smelled like so long as he returned to his arms, but the fruity smell of his shampoo brought back nostalgic memory of a time back when streetlamps weren't a luxury.

"Yeah, Ryo told me it'll help the dogs get used to the smell of other people here." His hand came up to his hair, running through his curls. "I haven't showered with shampoo in so long. I forgot how it felt."

Hawks kissed the back of his hand.

"...Keigo," Deku said quietly.

Hawks leaned over to kiss him. He sighed, his breath making smoke in the cold air as he took Deku's hand in his. Their fingers interlaced as he brought it into his lap.

"...It doesn't have to be tomorrow or next week or anything but just..." he took a deep breath, squeezing the hand in his, "Maybe someday, you can wash my hair," he said quietly. Slowly, he looked at Deku, relishing in the soft blush crossing his cheeks, "And I could wash yours."

"...Sounds good," Deku replied back. He leaned in to peck his cheek. "But you know, you sound like an old man when you say that."

"Oh ho? Well, I guess all that's left is waiting till you become an old man too."

Deku gave a soft chuckle.

"I think I can do that."

And they both laughed, even though knowing that tomorrow might not come.

### Twice

Not to brag or anything, but Twice had played around with a lot of different people. Of course, not all of them were clones, but he could safely say that he’s done a lot of stuff with a lot of people.

Not really kids though.

And someone like Deku, who came up to his chest on a healthy day, who clearly had never held hands with anyone since he was six, was pretty much a kid in his eyes. Innocent, naive, and young.

Needless to say, Twice didn’t want to fuck this up.

“Oi, Deku, you wanna get some dinner and come over?”

The young man, who kneeling next to him as the two scrubbed the worst of the bloodstains off their clothes, nodded back.

“Okay,” he said. “...Can I stay the night?”

Twice nodded back. Calm, he repeated himself. He was calm. The pounding in his chest wasn’t his heart. It was … his liver or something. Yeah.

They weren’t moving too fast, right? This was total and normal behavior for a couple to engage in. A few years ago, they could have gone for dinner and killed a man together, or maybe gone out dancing and robbed a store together-

“We do that,” Deku suddenly spoke up.

Twice tilted his head, “Huh?”

Green eyes peered up at him and he looked back down. He scrubbed at the same amount of intensity as he always did, even as he spoke. “We killed a guy together today, and we’re going to get dinner. We did that… dance, and steal frequently.”

“It’s not the same,” the blond replied immediately back, and then he tilted his head. “No, you’re right. We’re criminals! // They’re gonna hang us from the gallows!”

The tender gaze that Deku gave him was probably his worst crime yet.

-

Deku is the furthest thing from fragile. He’s almost the exact opposite, so, unfragile. He could get injured and he wasn’t indestructible, but there was something about the way that he picked himself up again and again.

It scared a lot of them, for a load of reasons. People were scared of someone who didn’t stay down, or didn’t feel pain. People were scared that he would forget his limits and perish there and then. People get scared easily, and Twice understood that.

But Deku didn’t scare him. Nothing that Deku did really did. What scared him the most was that one day, he would be alone again. It didn’t matter if Deku choose to leave him or not, he just didn’t want to be alone again. Even if they broke up (and the thought made him ache), he thought that he could still be by his side. And if Deku was gone, he had no doubt that the small collection of friends he managed to salvage at the end of the world would be long-gone as well.

He would be alone again.

That scared him.

“...Jin?”

Twice looked to where Deku was finished lacing up his shoes and duct-taping them down. The young man looked up at him from where he was sitting, his helmet in his lap. Without thinking much about it, Twice kneeled down next to him.

“...Don’t leave me,” he whispered quietly. “I don’t want to be alone.”

Deku stared at him for a long moment, his tender gaze more certain than the sun, and he leaned down to kiss the blond’s brow. Twice melted under the touch, and moved up to kiss his lips. He wanted a verbal answer, to be honest, but he would never turn this down. He...

“Then come with me.”

All the answers to life and his insecurities were so simple when Deku said them.

“Is that okay?” he asked quietly, “If I come? What if I can’t keep up and I get lost?”

“Then I’ll find you,” Deku replied back. He hesitated for a second. “Are you coming?”

Twice sat up. “Next time, wake me up too, okay?”

The smile that Deku had stretched his scars, and it might have scared someone else but it alleviated all of his worries. He rushed in to kiss him again, slipping his tongue in and sucking Deku’s tongue into his mouth. The young man gave this small whimper, and Twice swallowed it like a hungry man.

Eventually, the small hands that pushed at his chest made him pull away. They panted hard, Twice’s burning passion morphing into confusion.

“Patrol,” Deku said.

“Oh, right,” Twice nodded, getting up. He looked back at Deku. “One more kiss?”

His cheeks darkened, and Twice grinned back.

He’s a simple guy. The most important things that he noticed are the things that are directly in front of him, as he experienced. Scary things like being alone would be such, but it also made these moments much more sweeter.

It’s something he’s learned here.

-

No one would ever look at him the way that Deku did. Twice knew this. Aside from the fact that there weren’t many people left in the world, Twice didn’t know anyone who ever looked at someone else with a gaze like that.

-

You would think that there would be benefits for being the One True Love of the Leader, but no one cared. In fact, Twice would go as far to say that there was a lot of shit he had to deal with.

No one on base, not even Endeavor himself, had to deal with Dabi’s constant, constant, constant stare.

### Enji

Being around Deku was soothing.

After fighting alone for so long, fighting next to someone like they were an equal was a luxury that he never knew he was missing. This wasn’t someone he needed to guide and relay orders to. This wasn’t someone that would tell him what to do. He was trusted as much as he trusted.

It was strange, yes. It was foreign, definitely.

It was also frustrating to no end.

“If you were going to engage, then let us all know on the walkie! Clearly state where you are and wait for back-up to arrive!”

Kosode, who was trying to give Deku some much needed first-aid, flinched at the sheer volume of Enji’s voice. If the man noticed, he didn’t care. As it was, the man was literally smoking as he pointed and yelled at him.

“It’s not that fucking hard!”

The young man, as though he wasn’t being yelled at, tilted his head so that Kosode had a little more room to apply the gauze to the mess that was his shoulder and neck.

“Deku-”

“I think that’s enough yelling,” Aizawa said, boldly standing between Enji and Deku. “I could hear you yelling all the way down the street.”

“It’s fine,” Deku replied back. His voice was hoarse, and no one doubted that it had something to do with the thick purple bruises running across his neck. “Let him get it out before we go back.”

Deku was rarely one to care about how others perceive him, but the words were patronizing to someone who dedicated his entire life to protecting people. Like adding fuel to fire, Enji’s expression looked even more thunderous.

Kosode’s hands started to shake even more, but before he could apply the last bit, Deku’s hand flew up to grab him by the shoulder and shove him to the side. The other teen crumbled to the ground with a crash as Deku pulled his dagger out of his back holster. He jumped forward and in front of the fallen man, right when something began to run towards them.

It was one of the shadows that had come after them. It formed barely a foot behind where Kosode had crouched, black and inky and humanoid, but it towered over Deku. Still the young man didn’t hesitate to engage in combat. He dug his blade into the chest of the monster, and sent stumbling a few feet back.

Normally, Deku would have dived straight back in to finish the job. Right as it steadied, Aizawa rushed to finish it off when Deku’s hand snagged the back of his shirt. In a blur of gray, the shadow split from shoulder to hip.

Picking up the dagger from the ground, Stain stood. He flung his sword to the side, and the fresh blood splattered off his blade before he sheathed it. He walked up to Deku, passing his dagger to him without further fanfare.

“Spinner is taking care of the last one,” he reported.

Deku took the knife back, wiping it on the back of his glove before Stain’s hand dropped onto the top of his head.

“And I see that you made a mess of yourself again,” he said, eyes falling to the wound on his shoulder.

“It’s fine,” Deku said, pulling away from his hand as he readjusted his shirt. He pulled the padding back over his chest, but right when he reached for his backpack, Enji took it. Further back, Kosode was helped up by Aizawa.

“Let’s hurry up and finish patrol,” former Number Two said.

“Are you done yelling?”

Enji scowled back at him, but didn’t fight back.

Deku stared at him for a moment longer, before he slipped his helmet back on. Just like that, it was like he was never injured to begin with.

At another point in his life, Enji would have been a little impressed at the work ethic Deku had. The ability to push forward when injured was nothing to scoff at, but the way Deku carried himself as though he wasn’t injured at all was incredible. It didn’t hinder his ability to finish his battle. It didn’t interfere with his ability to think and fight. This was someone who knew his objective and himself very well, and acted accordingly.

However, here and now, it was clear that the young man was still accustomed to working alone. He would have, without complaint or objection, worked until there was nothing left of him. His attention to detail was extraordinary, and Enji would never doubt his judgement. This was a man made of experience, much like himself.

But still.

To rely on someone was a strange sensation, and Enji didn't know how to be protected.

-

There weren't a lot of people that made Enji feel small. Especially not someone that barely came up to his chest, and not someone who was thinner than his youngest.

But often, Enji's eyes trailed to his figure with the intention of being reminded on what he should do and how he should feel.

“What are you thinking about?”

Enji blinked. He was so used to being the person that asked him, that it caught him off guard to be asked instead.

“...It’s nothing,” he said.

Even through the visor, he could feel the judging gaze. There was another moment of silence before their walkie crackled to life.

“The third floor is clear,” Sasaki’s voice flowed through. “We’re heading back down.”

As the person with Deku, Enji answered the walkie. Even though he stood right next to him and knew that the man had a working walkie, Deku never really answered his walkie. They had long since stopped trying to make him use the walkie, and now just assigned someone to be with him. It was just easier for everyone.

“Copy,” Enji said into the walkie.

Deku, having finished adjusting the fire extinguisher on his thigh, pushed off the wall he was leaning against. It was clear that they were going to keep moving on.

“We’re moving up,” Enji reported, knowing better than to fight against Deku’s decisions. “Catch up when you can.”

Right as they were about to enter the street, however, Deku stopped. The taller man walked onto the street, looking left and right before back to the young man. When his impatience peaked, and he opened his mouth to demand an answer, Deku beat him to it.

“I trust you,” Deku spoke clearly, albeit a little quiet, “If you say it’s nothing, I will believe you. If it is something, then I’ll wait for you to say something.”

The former hero felt his heart catch in his throat. He couldn’t speak around it, however, and even if he could, he wouldn’t know what to say.

Deku walked on, moving on already, and left Enji behind to decide what he wanted to do.

-

“...I thought that you looked accustomed to being alone,” Enji admitted.

Deku didn’t even look up from where he was scrubbing the blood off his bat. His knives laid out next to him, shining underneath the fluorescent light. Just earlier, they had laid out the plans to finish out the last of the road on this table. Even though Deku was seldom alone on base, it was always weird to see him next to someone.

“...Isn’t that because you can’t see yourself?”

The older man paused. It was amazing how simple the answer turned out to be.

When Deku reached for the rag across the way from him. It was further than he thought, but right before he stood up to get it, Enji grabbed it and passed it to him.

Blue eyes met his gaze, an amused gleam in his eyes that he didn’t have before. A crooked smile made its way onto his face, looking as though it wasn’t something he was used to doing.

“Yes, that makes sense, doesn’t it?”

Deku tilted his head to the side, ignorant and a little confused to what Enji was smiling so uncomfortably at.

-

“Yeah, before the world ended I was a lawyer,” the man said, staring at his cup of hot tea. “It wasn’t anything amazing, and I… I did a lot of things that I’m not proud of, but I, I think that I’ll do better this time. This time, for certain, I want to-”

A table and a half away, Deku suddenly got up to his feet. His chair clattered loudly behind him as he ran for the man.

Too shocked to do anything other than watch, the rest of the occupants nearby watched as the young man grabbed the former lawyer by the back of his collar and wrenched him out of his seat. The man went sprawling onto the ground, yelping in pain as he did so.

Deku grabbed him by the front of his shirt, dragging him up to an awkward sitting pose. His expression thunderous, he gave him one good shake.

“...Lawyer?” he asked.

The man, rightfully terrified out of his mind, couldn’t bring it in himself to lie. Actually, he couldn’t even bring himself to speak, he nodded numbly instead.

“Hey, uh, Deku, I don’t think he’s breathing.”

Deku released him then and there. The man fell backwards, nearly hyperventilating from fear more so than the grip that was on him. He had enough presence of mind to crawl up to his knees. Deku was a forgiving man, if he had a grudge against lawyers from before, maybe he could grovel.

At the same time, he knew that if Deku decided to kill him, that Deku decided that his life wasn’t worth keeping, he didn’t have any way to argue otherwise. He had no skills to offer, no quirk or experience that made his life worthwhile. His life wasn’t something worth bragging about. He’s hurt more people than helped.

At least, if Deku killed him, it would be swift and relatively painless. He wasn’t the kind of person that pawned off his decisions onto other people, no matter how willing they were. He took his comfort there.

He placed his forehead against the ground. He-

“Get up.”

In his surprise, he stared at Deku. He would have never thought that the color green could be such an angry color until this moment. On shaky limbs, he tried to get up, but it clearly wasn’t fast enough. Deku’s hand grabbed him by the front of his shirt again, and despite being so much smaller than him, hauled him to his feet.

What had previous lawyers done to him that he held this kind of rage?

He kept his mouth closed, and was nearly manhandled out the door. They stumbled out of the mess hall, and through the main corridor before he was suddenly tossed to the ground by the Rental Office. He wasn’t sure what to make of the fact that Enji was the one in the room in front of him.

...Was he angry on behalf of Enji? Somehow, that made this whole thing even stranger.

However, Enji looked just as confused as him.

“Lawyer,” Deku suddenly spoke up, pointing at the man on the ground.

The older man nodded slowly, looking from the former lawyer to Deku and then back down.

“I fail to see what this has to do with me. Do you need him extinguished?”

Coming from a former hero, the words sounded even more ominous. Here he was, not going to ask why he was to be executed, but how he would be executed. It spoke measures about the place they lived in and their relationship.

“He’s a lawyer,” Deku tried again.

Enji looked to the man on the ground again, like he had any idea why he was dragged here.

“I see.”

And then, satisfied, Deku nodded back.

“I get Rei.”

He left.

And then, as though he finally understood what was going on, his entire face lit up in both fire and blush.

“Wait, Deku…” he trailed off as the young man broke into a jog to leave. The leader of the base didn’t even look back as he rushed off.

Enji placed his hand over his eyes and dragged it down, heaving a big sigh. He looked to the man on the ground, looking exhausted.

“...I think I understand what it is that he wants,” he said. “It’s something that I mentioned briefly, but I didn’t think that he would remember. My deepest apologies for dragging you into this mess.”

“...And … what is the problem? If you don’t mind me asking, of course.”

“My wife and I would like to officially divorce.”

“...Pardon?”

\*

“Well, uh… normally, we’d do, like, weddings and stuff.”

“What part of this,” Aizawa hissed, motioning specifically at Twice, “is normal?”

-

This was bad. Enji didn’t even know how old he was, but he couldn’t be older than Natsuo. What if he was Shoto’s age?

He was the type of criminal he hated the most. The one that went after children. Children put him at the top, they were always his first priority.

And he was…

“If you think that hard, your hair is going to go whiter.”

“I don’t have that many white hairs,” Enji snapped back. And then added, slowly and cautiously, “And you’re okay with… gray hairs?”

Deku stared at him and pulled his mask down, revealing the nest of scars that stretched across his cheek and down his neck. He pulled his gloves off, the webs of scars creating small mountains on his hands, and he extended it to Enji. Without hesitating, Enji placed his cheek against that palm. He looked at Deku, and the gentle slope of his smile.

“I love you,” Deku said quietly.

Enji shivered against his hand, closing his eyes as the words wrapped around his heart.

“I love you too,” he said, punctuating his words with a kiss to the base of his wrist. “I… I am so honored and moved-”

“Then,” Deku’s hand moved off his face as he pulled off his other glove, “focus all your energy on us.”

"Us?”

Deku’s grin was bright, young, vibrant, and everything that Enji knew he didn’t deserve.

“I’ll keep us alive. You keep us living.”

Enji worked best with simple instructions.

\*

Enji kissed him like they had the luxury of time. It was hot and heavy, but slow and smooth.

-

There was no right answer. On occasion, Deku thought that he was a compilation of all the wrong answers. And it was fine back when he was alone. However that wasn't the case right now. He had people that depended on him. People that will grow up and inherit the consequences of his actions or inactions.

At the same time, he wouldn't ever pawn this off to someone else.

"Deku!"

Before he could shout out "Don't come!" Enji was already there.

As cruel and as cold as it may sound, Deku was glad that it was him. Even when his eyes narrowed and his lips twisted into a grimace, Deku felt joy when he saw him.

Probably because he was a deplorable man.

"It's done," he said, a voice so quiet they could hear the blood dripping over it.

"...How are you feeling?"

The young man blinked twice, feeling his eyes well at the thought that someone cared even though he didn't deserve it.

"It's not my blood," he said, his limbs oddly cold on this warm Spring day.

"That's not what I asked," Enji said, slowly stepping forward. His gaze remained focus on Deku, and Deku prayed that the man wouldn't think that this was his fault.

Enji's shoulders were huge, but that didn't mean that Deku wished for them to carry any more.

He inhaled deeply, the stench of gore and peace filling his nostrils. The silence rang.

"...I'll take care of this," Deku said, "You should-"

"You've been alone long enough," Enji shot him down. "C'mon, let's get this done now."

He leaned down, ready to start collecting the bodies and Deku felt hot shame flare up. His hand jerked out, placing his hand on the man's forearm. Underneath his hand, powerful muscles flexed, tensed and at the ready. Another silence fell onto them.

"...Is there something wrong?"

Yes. Everything was wrong.

"I'll do it. You... You should prepare the fire-"

"Deku, are you trying to shoulder the burden on your own?" he asked quietly.

"You shouldn't have to-"

"I shouldn't have done a lot of things."

"Then-"

"But we are beyond the point of being able to choose that."

Enji's hand came on top of his. He leaned down as he lifted the fingertips up to his lips.

"And I cannot bear the thought of leaving you alone any longer."

"...I've killed people with those hands."

The blood smeared across Enji's lips, but Deku couldn't feel it.

"And I shall send their ashes to heaven."

Deku would feel the guilt later. At the moment, he basked in this momentary piece of happiness, and pretended that he was deserving of such loyalty and kindness.

-

"I've been told that you're a pretty bad dad. And an awful husband."

Enji grimaced, but didn't refute it.

"...Isn't that perfect?" Deku asked, leaning over to kiss the top of his head.

Enji jerked, sitting up straight and looking up at Deku and his gentle expression.

"Should two awful people find each other, I'm sure everyone would say that they had it coming."

The older man turned around, looking as though he was kneeling in front of Deku, and collected small hands into his. He looked up at him and asked earnestly.

"Do you think so?"

"...I think that I'm the one that lucked out," Deku admitted. He looked down, but did not at Enji. If he did, he would know that even the sky could melt.

Enji leaned up, pressing their lips together in a gentle kiss.

"On occasion," he said quietly, as though sharing a secret between their lips, "I am thankful that the world crumbled."

Deku's eyes widened and Enji dropped his head down.

"I must be because I am a deplorable man. I am so thankful that you came to pick apples."

Enji kissed him, a gentle press between their lips.

### Toyomitsu

Deku’s hands came up to cup Toyomitsu’s face.

“I won’t break,” he said, running his thumb against the soft curve of his cheek.

“That doesn’t mean it won’t hurt,” Toyomitsu replied back, leaning into the touch anyways.

“...You’ll take care of me,” the young man said, his smile as gentle as the early morning sun. “I trust you.”

Toyomitsu often wondered how, after the world ended, someone could still look this kind. He leaned in to kiss that smile, his heart fluttering when Deku pressed back.

### Overhaul

“Kai,” the voice came from behind.

Chisaki turned around, because it was a voice that could only belong to one person. He stared, his expression softening in an instant.

“Good evening, Deku,” he greeted. “Do I get a ‘good evening’ kiss?”

His lips twitched when a bright, rosy red blush crossed Deku’s cheeks in response.

“Y-you… I-I…”

“...It’s okay if you don’t want to,” he said, feeling a little playful, as he heaved a great sigh, “But I suppose that I will be a little lonely.”

The young man covered his face with his hands, futile, since he was already in a mask himself, but the gesture was entertaining.

“I’m kidding,” Chisaki said, chuckling. “Come now, you’re heading to the Rental Office, right?”

Deku nodded, and the two immediately fell into step with each other. As soon as Deku came in correct distance, Overhaul leaned down to peak his temple. He leaned backwards, pulling his mask over his nose as he pointedly looked away.

Behind them, where Kurono was left out and forgotten, the man’s face twisted into a grimace.

-

Chisaki pulled his mask down and leaned over the man. Kissing him upside down, he straightened with a sly smile as he moved the mask back over his nose.

"Welcome back, Deku," he said.

Wide green eyes stared up at him for a moment before his cheeks started to darken. His fingers came up to his lips as he blinked at him.

"Well? I'm waiting for your response."

"I... I'm back," Deku said.

Chisaki chuckled. In a second, he walked around the couch Deku was on and sat down. He leaned against the cushions, and side-eyed Deku.

"Looks like no one was injured. Not even a skinned knee. Believe me when I say that Natsuo was escatic."

Deku nodded back, a soft sigh escaping from his lips.

"That's good."

"What about you?" he asked.

Deku looked back down. "I'm a little winded," he said.

"Take a break," Chisaki said, placing his hand on the man's head. "I'll protect what's precious to you while you rest."

"...Then, excuse me."

Deku laid down, his head in Chisaki's lap. He closed his eyes and fell promptly to sleep. Laying a hand over his eyes Chisaki wished that his quirk could have brought some sweet dreams to him.

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"Relief," Kurono suddenly spoke up.

"What was that?"

"When you saw that he returned without injury. We call that feeling relief."

“...If someone overheard us talking, they would think that I am incapable of emoting,” Chisaki said, the threat of injury edged on his voice.

“Does it? My apologies. That was not my intentions,” Kurono replied back, even though they both knew he didn’t mean it.

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“Hm,” Overhaul began, “I’ve thought about it.” He said as he took the seat next to Deku’s bed.

Deku tilted his head, and his eyes slid to the older man’s face.

His hand came out to grab the arm he recently Overhauled. His hand ran up his forearm, cupping his elbow, and he leaned in. His other hand came to Deku’s other shoulder, his hands careful not to pull on the healing wounds.

“If I got rid of your legs, you wouldn’t be able to leave. Then, I should also get rid of your arms off so you don’t fight anymore.”

He said this, while bringing up his hands to Deku’s face. He cupped his face, with an exceedingly empty expression on his face in contrast to his gentle gesture. Green eyes closed in response.

“Then, you can’t leave anymore, can you?”

Deku leaned his face into one of his hands, nuzzling into the touch and slowly opened his eyes again. His eyelashes dragged against Chisaki’s palms as he looked up at the man.

“Leave my lips so I can kiss you.”

Yellow eyes stared at him for another moment before he closed his eyes and pulled back.

“What a boring reaction,” he said, even though they both knew his hands were shaking. “If you don’t fight back, then you’re just going to invite more scum. Next time, I might give you a fate worse than death.”

Deku leaned back.

“If you leave me, you already have.”

Chisaki spun back around, eyes wide in their alarm.