what is and isn't real

by necklace

Summary

"alright." it makes him feel better to say it out loud, almost, like the dust collecting on his bookshelf and coffee table has the opportunity to answer him back. reassure him, maybe, that everything is actually fine and dandy and not at all falling apart in front of his eyes.

Notes

it's been a fun week and who would i be if i didn't project onto my favorite asshole character?

See the end of the work for more notes.

there's something horrible hanging in the air when he gets home from work that day. it's nothing he can stop, barely anything he can identify, but the tension in his shoulders swells to something horrible, crushes him down like he's nothing more than a manic-depressive asshole with ptsd. dazai, belatedly, realizes that this has been a theme all day.

"alright." it makes him feel better to say it out loud, almost, like the dust collecting on his bookshelf and coffee table has the opportunity to answer him back. reassure him, maybe, that everything is actually fine and dandy and not at all falling apart in front of his eyes. "alright," he says again, then moves from the door after toeing off his shoes.

he starts with the bathroom mirror. it was getting too dirty anyway, he reasons, and grabs the cleaning products from under his sink and gets to work. at some point, he sheds his coat, his vest, his shirt, and blanks out through cleaning the toilet and bathtub. the floor gets mopped while he's at it, though by the time he forces himself to focus again everything is spotless and shiny and ready for company.
company he's not having, he thinks bitterly, then shakes out of it before it can grow into something petty. dazai doesn't want to focus on that right now, not when his consciousness is spotty enough to forget if he washed the toilet or not. he did, apparently, but he does it again just in case.

he cracks his knuckles when he's done, wiggles free of his pants, and grabs the vacuum from his hall closet before he can change his mind.

dazai's on a roll. he refuses to be slowed down tonight, refuses to be dragged to the floor with his own brain fucking up against him, and heads towards the kitchen next with intent. his vision is starting to get blurry again, he thinks, but keeps cleaning. the plates, the tabletop, the counter and cabinets and trash all get taken care of, and by the time his kitchen is finally clean enough he's sweating through most of his bandages.

"alright," dazai sighs. "alright."

he doesn't process when he sits down, not at all, he's slipping, too far away to grab and haul back before it can get bad. he's too far gone to care.

he doesn't remember when he puts the cleaning supplies away, or his clothes, or changes from his pants and bandages to sweats and a long-sleeved shirt.

when he looks back up at the clock, four and a half hours have slipped between his fingers like sand and he allows himself to feel (for exactly three seconds) blinding fear about it. he looks at the clock again and forces his shit brain to make it process this tiny sliver of information, please, please, just look at it. please, focus.

it's 6am, and he has work soon, and he really needs to stop doing this to himself.

no, no, he corrects. it needs to stop doing this to him.

"you're real," dazai whispers. he doesn't believe it. "this is real. you're real. come on, come on, we can't do this again, start counting, fuck."

he twists his head, bringing shaking fingers to his hair and tugging hard enough to disorient him for a second. good, he thinks. good. it's leaving. focus on that. utilize it. before the novelty can fade, he starts counting the things he can see, the things he can hear, touches his fingers while he does it and forces himself to remember what he's trying to do alone in his apartment at 6 fucking am. he tells himself the remote is real and picks it up, feels the buttons, then grabs the book he's been trying to read from the coffee table and lets the impending paper cut bring him back to life.

one more ragged breath in and he can move from the couch, watching his own blood pool onto his thigh where it drips from his finger. his back is aching from being sat in what he assumes is the same position for several hours, and moves to his now spotlessly cleaned bathroom to take a shower.

it's gone, it can't hurt you right now, dazai thinks. it's gone for now, and he'll just have a lot of coffee today, and maybe kunikida will let him nap on the agency couch.
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