Redemption Runs Black

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Summary

Chuuya saves Atsushi from a cage and trains him to be his protege along with Akutagawa. Obstacles arise in which jealousy forms between Soukoku and Shin Soukoku.

OR

An indulgent AU in which Atsushi joins the Port Mafia instead of the ADA and Chuuya spoils Atsushi. Akutagawa and Dazai get jealous as they watch Chuuya dote on Atsushi. Just a big pamper fest between the two as they grow.

Notes

Hello! ^_^ This work was influenced by a Tumblr post by @sinenceq. You can find it via the link below!

Link: https://sinenceq.tumblr.com/post/170761017704/chuuatsu
Chuuya’s P.O.V.

Chuuya was on his way to a mission early. Unable to sleep, he downed a glass of wine before leaving his house at 10:11 pm. He wasn’t supposed to meet for the mission until eleven thirty, so he figured he would grab some tea, maybe a snack on his way. His coat billowed in the wind as he swayed his hips, humming the tune of one of his favorite songs.

He had received the file yesterday before he met up with his subordinate to discuss the details. There was a rouge weretiger around Yokohama and there was a bounty on its head: a seven-billion-yen bounty. The file stated the tiger was vicious, had attacked an orphanage, and possibly civilians although there was no evidence and sources had informed them that the tiger was lurking around one of the mafia storehouses.

They were bringing a small group consisting of Akutagawa, Higuchi, Tachihara, and himself. Chuuya was merely backup incase things went south. He would camp out on the ceiling of the warehouse, cloaking himself in shadow as to not give himself away. Akutagawa, and Higuchi would enter the warehouse, providing a distraction for the weretiger as Tachihara would stand outside and wait for the signal to enter.

With his tea in hand, he made it to the alley above the storehouse where the others would gather. As he sauntered in, he found Tachihara leaning against the brick wall. Smiling, Chuuya nodded his head in greeting before hovering over the crates stacked up, not wanting to dirty his clothes.

Not long after, Akutagawa and Higuchi strolled in. Chuuya almost laughed at the stance Higuchi was sporting – both of her guns in her hands as she rounded the corner to cover her superior. Akutagawa had given up trying to stop her, figuring it best if she just carried out what she wanted to do. He didn’t have time to argue with her.

Looking up, grey eyes met blue and Chuuya smiled down at his subordinate. “Akutagawa-kun, you look good today, as usual.” His voice was singing with multiple octaves, enjoying the blush the raven had on his face as he tried to desperately hide it in his hand as a coughing fit hit him. “Did you take your meds?” His voice turned more serious, but still airy. With a nod from Akutagawa, he turned his head away and nodded to everyone who was joined.

“It looks like we all made it, who’s ready for our next raise?” Tachihara’s voice sounded in the alley as he straightened up and walked to where Akutagawa was at the entrance. Swiping a hand in front of him, he waited for Akutagawa and Higuchi to walk ahead as he threw a final smile to Chuuya.
As soon as the other redhead had left, Chuuya jumped lightly from the crates onto the top of the building. Walking across, he jumped between the spaces of each building before finally jumping onto the storehouse. Nimbly, he dropped through the window at the top, his hands catching the edge as he swung himself over to the wooden beam at his left. From his perch, he could see everything unfold.

Akutagawa and Higuchi walked in, his coat twisting around, intimidating most in the room who knew who he was.

What was out of place, however, was the silver haired boy in a cage in the center of the room and the workers forming a semi-circle behind it. Anger immediately spiked in Chuuya at the treatment of the boy, but he kept himself hidden.

“Is this the weretiger?” Akutagawa’s gravelly voice filled the room and most of the workers winced at the voice.

“Yes,” A rather deep voice answered, not too intimidated by the Rashomon-user. A smile worked it’s way on Akutagawa's mouth at the confidence the man let out in his voice. Within the next second, a tendril of Rashomon had darted out and knocked the man into the far wall, his unconscious body falling to the ground.

Akutagawa stepped up to the cage, taking in the boy that didn’t look much older than him. Taking off the latch, the door swung open and the workers jerked back with yelps and tension spread like fire in the room.

But the boy merely stayed in the cage trembling. His legs were brought up to his chest and his head buried in his arms. Higuchi stepped up to the cage, kneeling down in front of the boy. Words were said that Chuuya couldn’t pick up but the boy only shook more. Looking back to Akutagawa, she stood up and backed away. Tachihara had decided to step inside the building, sensing no danger.

Chuuya would have to talk to him later about leaving his post.

But he couldn’t deny that he didn’t sense danger either. With narrowed eyes, he continued watching on. The workers remained in place, some even trembling. Changing tactics, Chuuya sunk himself to the floor behind one of the trembling workers. With a knife to his neck, he leaned into the worker’s ear and asked, “What happened?”
Without turning, the man clenched his eyes as he answered, “The boy came in, asking where he was. A few of the workers took defensive measures and pulled out their guns as they aimed for the boy. B-But then it-it turned into a tiger. We were trying to fend it off before it passed out. We don’t know why but someone brought out a cage and we quickly pushed it into the cage. Not too long ago, the tiger changed into a boy.” And with that, Chuuya withdrew his knife and jumped back up into the beams before the worker could tell who it was.

So, the tiger came out during danger, is it a defensive power? What would make the tiger pass out? Exhaustion, maybe. Starvation would probably be the better answer, the boy looked malnourished. He had woke up somewhere nearby, not knowing where he was. What would possess someone to walk into a place they don’t know to ask what part of the city they’re in?

Thinking never answered his problems. He could see the strain in Akutagawa’s face as he tried to coax the tiger out of the cage. Chuuya noticed the telltale sign of his patience dying out when the coat lurched back.

Chuuya darted.

Standing before his subordinate, he glared down into grey eyes. Although the raven had inches on him, Chuuya didn’t need height to intimidate others. Akutagawa backed down with a few steps back, Higuchi following.

Turning back, Chuuya knelt down in front of the boy. The skin was pasty, the silver hair clearly not dyed. Slowly, Chuuya brought his hand to lay on the boy’s arm. The gesture scared the boy and the cage jerked as he moved back. His arms had moved in the process and now Chuuya could see his face. But it wasn’t the boy’s face that drew his attention, it was the eyes.

They were purple and gold, the colors mingling as tears fell down his face, catching on the bony cheeks and jawline. Despite the malnourishment, the boy was beautiful. He was wearing a tan sweatshirt and black pants that looked like they had seen better days. Fear was prominent on his face as his eyes glowed in anxiety.

Tilting his head, Chuuya held up his hands in mock surrender, showing he had no weapons in his hands. The eyes, however, were smarter and darted down to Chuuya’s hip were two daggers were reflecting off the storehouse lights. The redhead smiled at the observant tiger. Those bright eyes narrowed as more fear seeped through them.
“What is your name, boy?” Chuuya asked, his voice soft and gentle. To assume a less threatening position, he sat on the ground, bringing his knees up to him. The tiger eased substantially. His eyes released the fear for caution, his hands loosening their grips on his forearms.

“Atsushi,” The tiger’s voice was soft, almost inaudible. Chuuya nodded, his smile returning ten-fold. The tiger’s eyes widened at the sight and he seemed to lose all worry looking into Chuuya’s eyes.

“Atsushi.” Chuuya gave the name a whirl, liking the way it rolled off his tongue. “We have to leave now, but I would like to take you with me. I could show you around Yokohama,” Atsushi’s eyes widened at the invitation before narrowing again in suspicion.

“Why take me?” The voice was darker, very cautious. Chuuya liked that. The kid had good instincts.

“Because you don’t have anywhere else to go, do you?” Chuuya had pieced it together when he noticed the terror in the boy’s frame, the knowledge of where he was nowhere to be found.

The tiger’s eyes widened before he clenched his teeth and hung his head in his arms. Lifting up, Chuuya ran his fingers through the tiger’s hair. “Atsushi.”

The tiger jumped at the gesture and the name, jerking his head up to meet bright blue ones, their faces much too close. His eyes were vulnerable and Chuuya could read him like a book. With a smile, Chuuya tilted his head. “Let’s get you out of this cage, shall we?”

Atsushi offered no restraint as Chuuya used his gravity to lift Atsushi and place the tiger into his arms. Immediately, silver hair covered his face as he turned into Chuuya’s chest, tears still falling. Closing his eyes momentarily, Chuuya lifted them and began walking. With a wave over his shoulder, he passed the others and left the storehouse. Once they were back in the alley, Chuuya stayed at the entrance while everyone else went inside.

All eyes were on Chuuya. But Chuuya’s eyes were on the body in his arms. Without looking up, he informed the group, “I’m going to go eat,” And with that, he turned and walked out back towards the city.

Chuuya carried the tiger in his arms the entire walk to his house. Throwing the door open, he walked back to his spare bedroom. Setting the tiger on the chair, he walked into the closet and threw out a pair of boxers, sweatpants, and a white T-shirt. After he sat the clothes on the bed, he turned back to the tiger. “You’ll be fine in here. There’s the bathroom,” A finger pointed to the door beside Atsushi,
“And there is a shower as well as a bathtub. Take your time, I’ll have supper ready once you’re out.” And with that, Chuuya smiled and left the room, pulling the door closed behind him.

The kitchen was on the other side of the house, through the living room. Opening up cabinets, he pulled down pasta noodles, sauces, spices, and shrimp from the freezer. He smiled as he heard the shower turn on and he set to work with the food.

Three glasses of wine and a prepared meal later, Atsushi padded through the house trying to find the source of shrimp. Coming across the kitchen, he held his hands in front of him nervously. Chuuya smiled from the counter he was leaning heavily against.

“Did you enjoy your bath?” Chuuya pushed the tiger’s plate to the end of the counter, walking (a bit unsteadily) from the counter to the fridge for a bottle of water.

Atsushi walked up behind Chuuya and gently took the offered bottle. “It felt wonderful, thank you.” And for the first time that night, Atsushi smiled. And damn, if Chuuya hadn’t seen this kid’s eyes light up before.

Chuuya answered with a smile of his own before walking back to the counter and jumping up onto it, his legs swinging as he began to eat. The kitchen was quiet for a bit as they ate, the tiger greedily swallowing the mountain of food before him. Concerned, Chuuya pulled the plate back from Atsushi. “You’re going to get sick if you keep eating that fast. Drink some water,” Chuuya’s voice was a bit demanding but more concerned than anything. The tiger did as told, only a bit upset that his food was taken.

“What will happen to me?” Atsushi’s voice was quiet, and if Chuuya didn’t know any better, he would’ve guessed that he hadn’t meant to say that out loud. Sighing, Chuuya took another bite of his food before answering.

“Give me until tomorrow, I’ll have your living arrangements worked out. But,” Chuuya’s voice began to grow darker. “I would like to train you in how to control your gift in exchange.”

He could sense the unease coming off of the tiger, the confusion. “I wouldn’t mind that,” Chuuya could sense more the tiger wanted to say, so he kept silent. “But, I think there’s something else you’re wanting from me.”

Chuuya could’ve applauded the tiger for his deductive abilities. Yes, this boy could perhaps even
challenge Akutagawa with some training. Maybe he could convince Mori to keep the tiger instead of handing him over. Chuuya smiled to himself at that idea, to have two very strong proteges? It would be glorious. Looking up at the tiger, however, he already felt the need to protect the kid.

“There might be something else down the line, but we have to hone your ability first.” And with that, Chuuya plopped off the counter, sliding the rest of the tiger’s food to him as he left. “The room you were in is yours for now. The internet information is over next to the TV in your room.” With a wave of his hand, he continued walking.

“Wait!” Chuuya spun at Atsushi’s word, a question in his eyes. The tiger looked down to his feet before meeting the blue eyes again. Chuuya could’ve died at the innocence this kid had. “What is your name?” And that time Chuuya did laugh. A doubling over, mouth splitting laugh that worried the tiger. Straightening up, he shook his head as he wiped the tears from his eyes.

“My name? Chuuya. Nakahara Chuuya.” And with that, he turned back around.

“Thank you, for everything Chuuya-san.” The tiger’s voice was more confident this time and it put a smile on his face. This kid would be his subordinate. He would make sure of that.

“Just Chuuya, please.” Without another word, he ascended the stairs to his room, leaving Atsushi to his vices.

-----The Next Day-----

Chuuya walked into headquarters to give the report about the mission last night. What was different about this mission report than the others? The weretiger was walking beside him. Chuuya smiled up to the nervous tiger and the younger responded with an anxious one of his own.

“Remember, just follow my lead and you’ll be fine.” Chuuya’s voice was gentle against the intimidating atmosphere and he could feel the tiger step closer to him. Looking sideways at Atsushi, he admired his fashion handiwork. He had put Atsushi in a white dress shirt tucked into black pants, his tie hanging loosely from the collar of the dress shirt with a dark purple coat lined in silver draped over the boy’s shoulders. After receiving a nod in acknowledgement, Chuuya walked ahead, allowing the timid teenager to walk behind him.

Walking up to Mori’s door, he gave their names to the guards and the door opened.
“Elise-chan!” Chuuya cringed inwardly at his boss’s whiny tone. There was only one person who could make him use that octave. And she was standing in front of Mori, her hands on her hips. Her blonde hair swayed around her as she stuck her tongue out at the boss.

Upon hearing the door open, she turned around and a smile lit her face as she noticed Chuuya. “Chuuya~!” She ran to the door to propel herself into the redhead’s arms and he smiled at her. “When are we going shopping again?” Her eyes were bright at the idea before they caught sight of the kid in front of her. With narrowed eyes, she poked Atsushi’s arm.

Immediately, the tiger jerked back confused and instantly wary. Purple-gold eyes met blue in desperation. At Chuuya’s soft smile, Atsushi grew less tense and took in the girl in Chuuya’s arms. “Hello,” Atsushi greeted her, his hands folded together in front of him as his eyes didn’t quite meet Elise’s.

Her eyes widened when she caught view of the entirety of Atsushi’s eyes. A gasp escaped her mouth and Chuuya gave a soft laugh. “You’ll like him,” Chuuya said into her blonde curls before he sat her down. Giving Atsushi an encouraging smile, he left the timid tiger to walk across the room and stand before Mori’s desk.

Red eyes gleamed behind the desk as he watched Atsushi and Elise. Although the boss’s attention was turned away from Chuuya, he knew Mori’s ears were trained on his words. “When we arrived, the workers had already caught the tiger in a cage. They said he had came in unarmed to inquire about his whereabouts, when the tiger activated after guns were raised to him. They fended him off for a while until the tiger passed out. His name is Atsushi.” Chuuya’s voice was devoid of emotion, knowing any form of attachment in the Port Mafia was leverage against you. A smile had split Mori’s face and Chuuya turned to see what had caused it.

Elise was pulling on Atsushi’s sleeve as he was trying to sit down in front of her. The tiger smiled at her, his limbs showing no signs of tension. He looked happy. Turning back to Mori, he chose his next words very carefully.

“I would like to train him. His gift could be very valuable in the near future,” Chuuya sighed inwardly when his tone didn’t waver. He turned his face to Atsushi and Elise, noticing that, although the tiger’s knees were brought up to his chest in protection, he was smiling softly at Elise as she began talking about her and Chuuya’s shopping trips. Blue eyes did widen, however, when Elise invited the tiger to go with them.

“Chuuya-kun,” Mori’s voice was soft, a tinge of curiosity seeping out of his voice. Blue eyes turned to face his boss, the red eyes still trained on Elise and Atsushi. “Find a house for him, training begins
this evening. I want to see what becomes of him.”

“Chuuya hid his surprise, the conversation much easier than he had assumed it would be. He knew his boss had something up his sleeve, knew information he didn’t know.

Not pressing the issue, he turned back to the other side of the room where Elise was moving Atsushi’s hair, trying to see if he had any roots that suggested the falseness of his hair color. The tiger had wide eyes, confusion and worry seeping in as he tried to move from under the prying fingers. Immediately, Elise turned to Mori as if silent communication had passed between the two and she took two steps back with a smile to the tiger.

The action told Chuuya two things: Mori cared for Atsushi, sure he was genuinely curious about the weretiger but he didn’t want the kid to feel overwhelmed. Secondly, he knew Chuuya would draw this connection, hence the behavior occurring in front of Chuuya’s eyes. Mori wanted Chuuya to know he cared for the weretiger’s being. In doing so, Mori knew Chuuya would gather that Mori wanted Atsushi in the Port Mafia, but no guarantees were in place for the next week.

Meaning, their training was cut out for them.

“You may go now, Chuuya-kun.” Mori’s eyes never left the scene in front of him, but his ears never left Chuuya and Chuuya knew it. Bowing, he leisurely made his way to the door as to not show his excitement. Both pairs of eyes rose to meet his, the faces smiling up at the mafia executive.

“We must go house hunting, Atsushi-kun,” Chuuya relayed. Purple-gold eyes widened before he understood they needed to leave. Standing, he turned to the mafia boss, a slight tremble in his legs at the intimidating figure but nonetheless, he bowed deeply before straightening and smiling down to Elise. Atsushi turned his attention to Chuuya and they made their way out.

He could see the tremble continue through the tiger’s body long after they left the boss’s office. Chuuya didn’t question him about it until they were in his car, the tinted windows providing the protection he knew Atsushi would want. As soon as their doors were shut, Atsushi buried his head in his hands, allowing his body to shake.

Chuuya gave him a few moments before sinking his fingers into the silver locks. “You did wonderful, Atsushi-kun,” Atsushi leaned up into the fingers for a moment, soaking up the praise before pulling away, his hands falling to his lap.
“Was it enough?” His voice shook. Chuuya’s eyes softened.

“It was plenty. You’ll have a place to live for a week for now. Boss will want to see how your training is pursuing after a week has passed before deciding. But you did very well, Atsushi.” Chuuya’s voice was soft in the silent car and Atsushi sighed, his body lessening its tension.

“I’m glad,” His voice was quiet and Chuuya took that as the moment to drive them home. Music played softly but no one was listening to it.

When they pulled up to Chuuya’s house, Atsushi was the first out and he could see the boy was as taunt as a coil ready to spring. Shaking his head, he got out of the car and walked around to the tiger. Grabbing the shaking hand, he pulled them into the house, leading Atsushi to the kitchen where he placed him on the chair behind the counter. Turning back, he set a bottle of red wine out on the counter, knowing how hard it was the first time he had to stand in front of Mori under the all-knowing gaze.

Taking down two wine glasses, he sat one in front of Atsushi before jumping nimbly onto the counter next to Atsushi. Opening the bottle, he poured half a glass for the tiger before doing the same to his cup. He smiled as he watched Atsushi eye the liquid with warried curiosity. Slender fingers slid the glass closer to the kid before Atsushi finally picked it up. His eyes found Chuuya’s and the redhead merely smiled as he gave a mock toast in the air before taking a sip out of it.

With another one of Atsushi’s damned soft smiles, Chuuya watched as the tiger tried the wine, wincing at the strong alcoholic taste before setting it down on the counter. Setting his glass down next to Atsushi’s, he jumped back down. He didn’t know if he would ever open the sweetest brand he collected for the reason that it was so sweet, but he figured now is better than never. Swaying his hips, he walked down to his wine cellar, satisfied with the ’89 and walked back up to join the tiger.

Upon walking closer, he noticed Atsushi had downed his glass of wine, his teeth biting into his bottom lip. Chuuya laughed softly as he shook his head. This kid was going to be more like him than he thought.

“No need for you to torture yourself over a wine you don’t like,” Chuuya stated as he sauntered over with the new bottle. Uncorking it, he sat it on the counter before rinsing Atsushi’s glass. Pouring half a glass of this, he slid it over to the younger. At the same warried curiosity, Chuuya put his hand on his hip, the other still holding the bottle of wine. “It’s a sweeter wine. Don’t question my ability to match a person to their wine incarnate.” Chuuya’s tone took on a mock whine.

But what happened next had Chuuya’s hand slip from his hip as he almost dropped the wine bottle in
his hand.

_Atushi laughed._

It wasn’t loud, but it was enough to shock Chuuya speechless. Opening his eyes, the tiger blushed at Chuuya’s position, looking down at the counter as he quickly picked up the wine glass and tried the liquid. His eyes popped open, the irises focused on the glass in his hand as he quickly drank the rest.

That unfroze Chuuya.

Setting the bottle back on the counter, he quickly took the glass from Atsushi. “Careful! You sip it, not gulp it!” Carefully placing the glass next to Atsushi’s wine, he turned his attention back to the shocked weretiger. Softening his tone, he smiled. “First lesson in wine tasting: take small sips over a period of time lasting longer than five minutes.” Chuuya could feel his face grow red at the heated blush that began to cover Atsushi’s cheeks. _Damn this kid was going to be a serious lightweight._ Shaking his head, he smiled again as he corked the bottle back and set it in the fridge, the glass placed in the sink. Picking up his glass, he motioned Atsushi to join him as he went into the living room.

“What movies do you like, Atsushi-kun?” Chuuya threw a glance over his shoulder from the television, smiling as he saw the tiger curling up into the leather armchair next to the couch. Settling on his newest TV show, he picked up the blanket from the basket next to the couch to throw it over Atsushi. Grateful eyes rose to his and he smiled before turning back to the couch. Tucking his legs up to his chest, he continued sipping his wine as the show and afternoon progressed.

They deserved a break today before beginning training.

After about a half hour, he heard soft snores from the chair and Chuuya smiled behind his wine glass. Settling against the cushions, he set a timer on his phone for ninety minutes before setting his glass down to join in a nap as well.

-----Five Days Later-----

They were in one of the training rooms Port Mafia had bought out. Atsushi was in mesh shorts and a loose white T-shirt, Chuuya in similar attire but with half of his hair pulled back from his face in a mess of a bun or ponytail (he didn’t know nor did he care).
Atsushi’s training had progressed well. After finding a house with a garage, Atsushi was driven enough to turn the garage into a makeshift workout room. The once malnourished tiger was eating healthier, his body mass growing enough to allow them to finally experiment with his gift. Sitting on the bleachers, Chuuya handed Atsushi a bottle of water.

“I’m sorry, Chuuya,” Atsushi was showered with worry, unable to section off bits of his power. Chuuya had almost ran out of ideas to help Atsushi lend strength from his tiger. Shaking his head, Chuuya ruffled Atsushi’s hair.

“It’s not your fault that the techniques don’t work for you. Each person is different. We just have to figure out what yours is.” Standing up, he held his hand out to Atsushi. Taking the offered hand, Atsushi refused to meet Chuuya’s eyes.

He knew what his subordinate was thinking. Grabbing the tiger’s head in his hands, he narrowed his eyes as he took all of Atsushi’s attention. “It’s not your fault, Atsushi-kun. You’re no burden on me either. You’re challenging me as a proper teacher and mentor, you know? You’re helping me grow, Atsushi.” And with that, Chuuya spun around and walked to the mats, hearing footsteps rush after him to catch up the distance.

Turning back to the tiger, he pointed to the mat before him and Atsushi sat dutifully. “Close your eyes.” Once the order was obeyed, Chuuya used his gravity to lift him up off the ground, easing the weight off his feet. “Take deep, calming breaths, exhaling on three as you relax.” Atsushi followed through with the order, his hands loosening their tight grips on each other. Chuuya waited until his shoulders slumped in relaxation and his thighs met the floor, all tension gone from him. Softly, Chuuya continued, “There are some who can communicate, per say, with their gifts. Your gift is to transform into a tiger. Try to find him. Listen for its steps, for its huff of breath, for its soft growl. Listen for your tiger. Nod when you find it.” Atsushi’s body remained relaxed for a few more moments before he tensed up immediately.

“It’s okay, Atsushi. You’re safe. It won’t kill you.” When Chuuya noticed the tension begin to leave the other, he continued. “Talk to it. Ask it for help if it’s domineering, demand the strength if it’s waiting for you, calm it if it’s anxious. The tiger is yours, and you are the tiger’s. Understand your gift and you can understand yourself.” Chuuya instructed softly. He could see movement behind closed eyelids and he gasped softly. Tiger stripes began to slowly spread down Atsushi’s arms, legs, and cheeks. It was breathtaking.

A blue aura illuminated the tiger and white fur began to cover every limb on Atsushi, the black stripes more prominent. Chuuya almost fell to the ground at the sight. Lowering himself silently as to not disturb the picture unfolding before him, he crossed his legs as he dropped his hands to his lap. His mouth was open in awe, blue eyes shining with excitement. Leaning closer, he watched as Atsushi’s nails began to stretch out to accommodate the tiger’s long daggers. Chuuya shivered as he examined them.
He wanted to reach out and touch Atsushi’s tiger, to feel the fur under his fingers and the smooth surface of the nails.

Purple-gold eyes jerked open and Chuuya jumped but found himself entranced in the bright irises. Atsushi, however, was shocked to see his mentor this close. Leaning back, he grinned. “I suppose it worked?” Atsushi’s voice was quiet but filled with hope and Chuuya grinned like a little kid.

“I’m so glad it worked! Do you remember how you communicated with it? “ Chuuya couldn’t disguise the hope in his voice.

Atsushi smiled. “She was upset I was doubting myself,” He looked down at his hands/paws in his lap and his eyes widened. His eyes darted over to Chuuya in questioning and the redhead nodded emphatically.

“It was beautiful, Atsushi-kun!” Wonder filled his eyes as he continued to look over Atsushi. He didn’t notice the blush darkening the weretiger’s cheeks as Chuuya not-so-subtly looked over every inch of his body. Biting his lip, he jumped up from the mat, the jump much stronger than any he had pulled off beforehand and he had trouble sticking his landing. Standing back up, he immediately darted over to the weights, deciphering the new strength he now possessed.

Chuuya watched in awe, his eyes not once leaving Atsushi as he watched the drive the other had unfold before his eyes. Tomorrow would be combat, and he was going to have fun with that. A devious smile lit his face as he thought about the fight the weretiger would give him.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Hello again!! ^.^ Another chapter and another scene I enjoyed writing SO MUCH but took FOREVER to write because I wanted it PERFECT. I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chuuya’s P.O.V.

Combat training with Atsushi couldn’t have come sooner for Chuuya.

The mafia executive invited Atsushi over to his place for lunch, seeing as it was closer than Atsushi’s.

He knew the tiger could tell he was antsy, the gleam having never left his eyes since seeing Atsushi transform. Waving it off, he would take out a bottle of wine and pour a glass as he sipped it — blaming his energy for the wine even though he knew the tiger knew where the newfound energy came but allowed Chuuya to think otherwise.

At one point in the evening, Atsushi had picked up Chuuya’s glass as he attempted to pour another (he’d only had two). Shaking his head, Chuuya laughed it off, too giddy and happy to argue otherwise. Waving as he walked out the kitchen, he threw over his shoulder, “I’m going out. I’ll be back in a few hours.” His feet came up short as he saw the tiger jump in front of him. “Huh? What’s wrong, Atsushi-kun?” Chuuya’s eyes had blown wide and he cocked his head confused at the blush that overtook Atsushi’s cheeks.

Purple-gold eyes looked down before meeting Chuuya’s determinedly. “Where are you going?” His voice was strong but with an underlying note Chuuya couldn’t decipher.

His head tilted even more as the confusion continued to shock him. “Why does it matter, Atsushi-kun?” His voice was soft as he gazed into the colorful eyes before him that seemed to light up.

“Oh, um….” Atsushi’s eyes dropped before slowly dragging them back up hesitantly. Chuuya could see the tiger’s hands fold together in front of him nervously (a habit Chuuya had noticed within his first few hours with the boy). “Bars….um…the people….” Atsushi clenched his eyes as he tried to
gather his scattered thoughts. Finally giving up, he sighed as he opened his eyes slightly, downcast. “I don’t want you hurt,” His words were barely audible.

*But damn did they ring in Chuuya’s ears.*

No one had cared about Chuuya enough to stop him from going out places, from drinking too much wine. They’d only saw him when he had wrecked himself. No one came to stop it before it reached that point.

But Atsushi was.

“Why?” His eyes thrown open, confusion seeping from his body.

The tiger clenched his teeth before sighing heavily. “Senpai,” His voice was resigned. It was the only warning Atsushi gave before wrapping his arms around Chuuya, pulling the smaller to him.

Shock froze Chuuya. His timid tiger was giving him a hug.

Chuuya closed his opened mouth, blinked his now dry eyes and worked some knowledge into his limbs as he cleared the shock from his brain. Smiling, he leaned into the hug before wrapping his arms around the other.

The hug lasted all of one second, but it meant more to Chuuya than any of the hugs he had offered to anyone else.

-----The Next Afternoon-----

Atsushi’s back collided with the mat on the floor. With a back roll, he threw himself back up, eyes narrowing in concentration.

“Good,” Chuuya said before he darted across the room, his fist colliding with the younger’s stomach.
Or it would have.

If Atsushi hadn’t grabbed the wrist in his hand, taking the stunned aura for his advantage before he threw his own punch to the other’s stomach.

But Chuuya had other plans. And *much* more experience.

Lifting his leg, he blocked the arm as he gripped Atsushi’s hand for leverage, throwing his body up. His foot collided with Atsushi’s face and the tiger was slammed into the wall a few yards away from them. Chuuya smiled as he saw him bring up his arm to soften the blow to the wall, protecting his left side.

Nonetheless, the crash sounded loud through the four walls. Locking his feet in place, Chuuya watched the younger closely. Their practice was going on almost an hour and already Atsushi was growing significantly. He could predict moves, could back someone into a corner during combat, and worked well under pressure; with just those areas, he would be a force to be feared.

But those weren’t the skills that would gain him respect in the Port Mafia.

It was his determination.

The mafia executive smiled as he watched the other straighten up, rolling his shoulders back before switching to his tiger within the next moment. Strong legs dashed for Chuuya, purple-gold eyes flashing.

If it were within the first ten minutes of practice, Chuuya would’ve easily let himself get lost in those eyes. But as it was, he had bruises he would be taking out with him because of those eyes. Which is why he pointedly avoided them. Darting left, he watched at the tiger dashed by him.

Before the executive was thrown back into the far wall.

Shock kept Chuuya down longer than it should have. He threw open his eyes wide, confusion etched in every muscle of his body. But his questions were quickly answered as he saw a tail swish behind the tiger. His hands clenched around the bricks protruding from the wall, trying to contain his
But it explained it. With a chuckle, he looked up and let himself get lost in the bright eyes. “Nice!” He drawled the word out, showing his approval. Smiling, he lifted himself from the wall before stretching his limbs out. Turning back, he saw pink tinting Atsushi’s cheeks and cocked his head to the side. “What is it, Atsushi-kun?”

The tiger jerked to attention, those eyes darting up to meet Chuuya’s. The blush darkened to a red. Averting his eyes, he answered “It’s nothing, Chuuya-san.” His voice was soft, but warm. Chuuya floated over to the tiger until he was inches from the other’s face. Atsushi jumped as he noticed how close they were to each other, feeling antsy at the narrowed blue eyes.

“No. Honorific.” Chuuya reminded before floating back and heading to the entrance. Their gym bags were on the bleachers and Chuuya pulled out two water bottles, tossing one over to Atsushi. The usually aware tiger didn’t catch the bottle and it hit him on the neck. A yelp sounded from the younger before he bent down to pick up the bottle.

Chuuya watched the other with narrowed eyes. What was wrong with his tiger? No matter how hard he wracked his brain, he couldn’t connect anything.

He didn’t have long to think it over, however, as his phone began ringing. Picking it up from his bag, he answered Mori’s call.

Blue eyes widened as the information was given. His grip tightening on his phone, he scoffed before letting out a curse. A few more moments passed before the conversation ended and Chuuya threw the phone back on his bag.

“Atsushi-kun. We have to go to headquarters.” Chuuya picked up his back, toting it along his shoulder as he walked up to the changing rooms. Walking out, he noticed the tiger was already dressed and waiting for him, worrying on his bottom lip. Chuuya smiled to the other before the situation came to the forefront of his memory once again.

Groaning, he made his way to the front of the room, throwing open the doors viciously. The timid tiger followed, concerned but not questioning the redhead’s actions. He slid into the passenger seat of Chuuya’s car, fastening his seatbelt as Chuuya slammed his door shut, starting the ignition before throwing it into reverse, tires squealing as he jerked onto the road.
They were about half-way to headquarters and Chuuya had only gotten worse. Atsushi didn’t know how to respond, clenching his hands tight in his lap.

Meanwhile, Chuuya was trying to decipher what Mori’s plan was in dragging Atsushi into the situation. Aside from the bounty, he would be of no interest to other companies – unless there was more to the weretiger than mere organs on the black market. Maybe it was a prime opportunity for Atsushi to show his skills, but he couldn’t see how a meeting with him and Atsushi would be any good.

Parking along the curb of Headquarters, Chuuya opened his door with considerably less anger, shutting it just the same. He waited until Atsushi was beside him before walking into the building. Walking to the elevator, he pulled Atsushi along with him as he placed their right index fingers on the pad. The doors opened as their prints were accepted and they stepped inside.

But this ride would be different than the others. Instead of pressing floors above level five, he pressed the basement level. He leaned his head against the wall of the elevator as they descended. Chuuya jumped as a chest came up to his back, laughing nervously as he realized it was Atsushi. Leaning into the younger, he sighed. He felt arms wrap around his neck, elbows resting on his shoulders.

“You look like you need a hug,” Atsushi stated as he rested his head on his folded arms. Chuuya gave a soft chuckle before nodding. The elevator dinged its arrival, but he rested in the arms for a moment longer, gaining as much strength as he could muster, knowing this meeting would be draining. Pulling out of Atsushi’s hold, he walked out of the metal cage and down the hall. There was a set of double doors that led into the dreaded room. Chin held high, he signaled for Atsushi to stay in the hall.

He immediately noticed the concerned light in the bright eyes. Smiling, he waved off the other’s concern. “It’s fine, Atsushi-kun. This reunion’s been long awaited.” And with that, Chuuya turned and walked through the double doors.

**Atsushi’s P.O.V.**

The weretiger remained perched against the wall where Chuuya left him. He wondered who or what would have his mentor so worked up. He couldn’t shake the worry that clung to every bone in his body.

“Atsushi-chan~!” The tiger jerked his eyes up in surprise. Purple-gold eyes raked in the red dress, long blonde hair, and big eyes before him. Smiling, he knelt down in front of her.
“Hello, Elise-kun.” Atsushi greeted. The girl bounced on the tips of her feet, eyes lighting up in excitement.

“Rintarou wants to see you.” The blonde girl chirped. Atsushi kept the smile plastered on his face but could feel his insides twisting.

He knew who she was talking about. Chuuya had spoke of the man during one of their training sessions after Atsushi had broken down, the pressure building on his shoulders to make a good impression on the boss.

But now? Now he was about to choke on his insides.

Mori-san wanted to see him?

What for? It couldn’t be promising, after what Chuuya said about the man. What if he had scouter's watch their progression in training? What if he wasn’t proving himself quick enough?

Clearing his mind, he focused back on the energetic girl before him. Standing up, he adjusted his coat before accepting her offered hand.

On the way up the elevator, he could hear Elise talking but couldn’t focus on the words. When he heard her pause, he would send out a hum to encourage her onward. But no words left the weretiger. He could feel his teeth clatter together and he snapped them tensely shut.

At the ding from the metal box, Elise tugged on Atsushi’s hand. Looking down, he smiled before she led them down the hall. The guards moved aside – needing no name from them. Proudly, Elise walked in with the tiger’s hand in hers.

“I found him,” She announced as she walked them to the boss’s desk. Atsushi barely concealed his fear; he could see the ends of his hair shake but he didn’t try to stop them – if he tried, his entire façade may have fallen along with it.

As they got closer, Atsushi could make out the gleaming red eyes before anything else. The pale face was next, along with thin eyes and a malicious smile that had Atsushi teetering off the edge of his
composure. Immediately he bowed at the waist, stopping Elise from walking further. Unsure how to call the man, he remained in his bow.

He didn’t belong here. He could feel the power radiating off of Mori, and he cringed from it.

“Hello, Atsushi-kun. How are you doing?” The voice rumbled off of the walls strongly, forcing themselves on Atsushi’s skin. Straightening up, he met the boss’s eyes steadily.

“I’m doing well,” The tiger answered cautiously. He recalled the way Chuuya had told him to talk to the boss of the Port Mafia – but he couldn’t. He couldn’t keep the wariness out of his voice, he couldn’t keep his suspicions from showing.

Those red eyes shined eerily in the lit room and they set Atsushi’s teeth on edge. A clap ensued from the boss as he raised from his desk. Stepping out from behind it, he leaned against the side. Tilting his head, he gave off an uncanny aura and Atsushi wasn’t able to meet his eyes, instead looking to the chairs over Mori’s shoulder.

He noticed the smile broaden on Mori’s face as he stuck his hands in his pockets.

“I’m trusting your practices are proceeding well?” His voice had taken a softer tone and Atsushi was able to meet the man’s eyes. Did he know of their practice sessions? What was he told? Atsushi merely nodded in answer, bowing again in thanks.

“Thank you, sir. I appreciate the home I’ve had for the past week. I hope to prove myself well enough to keep it.”

Mori’s eyes widened at the bold words before a laugh escaped his lips. Turning, the boss walked over to a set of chairs and a couch, ushering Atsushi over. Warily, the tiger followed. Sitting down on a chair across from Mori, he kept his hands in his lap as Chuuya had taught him. The older looked down curiously at Atsushi before continuing his questions.

“Might I be bold enough to ask what happened before Chuuya-kun found you?” The words bounced hollowly against the walls before reaching Atsushi’s ears.

Looking down, the tiger clenched his teeth together to stop the tears pricking his eyes. He couldn’t talk about it – couldn’t even bring himself to confide in Chuuya. But this man had paid for his house,
had allowed him to walk into the Port Mafia family.

Atsushi had a family now.

And he had this man to thank for it.

Taking a deep breath, he began talking. “I was given to an orphanage by my parents. I don’t have many memories from my parents—” His voice choked and he quickly cleared it before continuing. “Except that they would lock me in a room for weeks. Looking back, I know they were trying to starve me, kill me. But it didn’t work. Then I was brought to the orphanage.” A knot had formed in his throat and he stopped talking to force it down. “I was drowned repeatedly in bathtubs or bowls of water. They would take me outside to burn me with iron pokers from the fire.” His voice began breaking on his last words, forcing him to look down at his lap, his hair covering his face as he felt two tears slide down his face.

Mori looked on silently. Noticing the other’s state, the boss decided now was the time to change tactics.

“And what about Chuuya-kun? How’s he been treating you?”

Atsushi’s eyes widened as the name reached his ears. Immediately he felt his shoulders fall, the tension leaving his arms. Mori’s eyes narrowed at the action, cataloguing it for future use.

“He’s my family.” The phrase slipped through Atsushi’s mouth and he cursed himself for it.

But Mori merely smiled at the tiger. “Then let’s keep your family, shall we?” Mori stated softly before standing up, making his way back to his desk.

Atsushi’s eyes widened at the boss’s words. Looking up, he was met with red eyes gleaming back at him. “We protect our family, yes?” The voice flitted through the room. Standing up from the chair, he bowed deeply again.

“Yes!” Atsushi’s strong voice had Mori’s eyes lighting up. Atsushi would be loyal – he would be a loyal Port Mafia dog and the boss knew it.
With a smile in his voice, he turned his attention to the papers on his desk. “Go find him, then.” And with that, Atsushi padded out of the room. Opening the door, he ran through the hallway to the elevator, his fingers tapping the buttons repeatedly. With a ding, the doors opened and the weretiger stepped inside. The doors shut and no longer was a fingerprint needed to use the elevator.

That was when everything crashed around Atsushi.

He was staying with the Port Mafia. He was staying. He was enough. Tears fell from his face and he covered them with his hands. His reprieve didn’t last long. The ding sounded and the tiger quickly wiped his face from all tears before stepping out.

And stopped in his tracks.

A redhead with an extravagant coat draped over his shoulders was standing a few paces in front of him. Chuuya caught hold of purple-gold eyes and smiled brightly. “Hello, Atsushi-kun,” The French lilt to the other’s tongue adding a marvelous sound to each syllable of the tiger’s name and he blushed crimson. The moment was quickly shattered when the older closed the distance between them. “Where did you go?” Concern was etched on Chuuya’s voice and Atsushi could do nothing else but smile.

“Aw! Chuuya~! Is that concern I hear~?” It wasn’t until then that Atsushi took notice of the (much taller) man that lingered back at the door. He had on a tan coat, a vest, white shirt, and brown pants. Bandages covered his arms and neck. Brown hair and amber eyes looked at the tiger. The intruder’s eyes widened as he noticed Atsushi before turning into the shapes of hearts.

Immediately the tiger jerked back, his spine colliding with the cold metal. In Atsushi’s periphery, he saw Chuuya flick his wrist and the door flung from its hinges to smash the brunette. “Tsk.” Chuuya sounded before Atsushi saw the redhead walk over to him. At a smile from his mentor, he relaxed and smiled back. Throwing an arm over Chuuya’s shoulders, he pressed the elevator button.

“Chuuya~! You’re so mean!” Atsushi cringed at the voice. “Aren’t you going to introduce us, chibi~?” The voice sounded much closer this time and the tiger jumped.

Chuuya turned, the brunette a mere few feet away from them. Chuuya graced a dark smile over his mouth. “Why are introductions necessary? Besides, if you wanted to know his name so bad, you should’ve cleaned your ears out earlier.” The redhead’s voice was annoyed at the least and Atsushi watched in confusion. Turning back, Chuuya turned his attention back to the elevator.
Atsushi could smell the brunette’s smell grow and he jerked when he saw brown hair in his periphery. A surprised yelp passed his lips, his eyes widening.

But the brunette merely smiled, his eyes blown wide and soft. “I’m Dazai. Dazai Osamu.”

Atsushi watched as Dazai took another step closer to the tiger, amber eyes boring into bright gold. A flash of red registered in the tiger’s eyes before he heard a loud bang as a body smacked a wall.

Turning back to the tiger, Chuuya smiled softly as he made his way over. The younger smiled back, most of the tension leaving his body. He didn’t flinch as fingers moved up to his face, brushing his hair out of his eyes. Blue eyes sunk into purple-gold.

“Are you okay? Did he touch you?” Chuuya asked, voice airy but concealing a tone Atsushi couldn’t place.

“Awe, chibi, you’re being so mean today~.” They cringed as they listened to Dazai stand up, bits of brick falling to the floor. “So, this is the weretiger?” Dazai’s voice sounded again, the annoying tinge gone and Atsushi breathed a sigh of relief. Chuuya, however, narrowed his eyes back at his ex-partner.

“Why does it matter, Dazai?” Chuuya asked and his voice seemed tired. Atsushi looked to the other with concern in his eyes.

The brunette met Chuuya’s eyes steadily. “Because there’s a bounty on his head. Don’t you want to know why?” The voice had a fake air to it, but he hadn’t bothered to conceal the extra tones he meant.

Chuuuya scoffed before turning his attention back to Atsushi. Purple eyes widened in answer, and Chuuya wrapped his arm around Atsushi’s shoulder again. “So, in other words, you want Atsushi?” Chuuya asked Dazai, but his eyes were on the tiger, appraising him. Atsushi almost melted under the gaze but could feel his cheeks heat up in a telltale blush.

Dazai smiled, his annoying tones seeping back into the room. “Chibi is smart~!” Atsushi watched Chuuya think through those words, could see him begin to form theories. In the end, the smaller shrugged.
Tugging the tiger closer, he smiled at Atsushi. “This beautiful boy? Nah, he’s not going anywhere. Isn’t that right, Atsushi-kun?” Chuuya sealed his confident words with a soft kiss to Atsushi’s cheek. The tiger jumped, his eyes glowing. As Chuuya pulled back, he turned his head away, taking solace in the hat atop Chuuya’s head. His hand flitted over his cheek where Chuuya had kissed it and he could feel the heat radiating off of his skin.

He was giddy with happiness. *Chuuya kissed me. Chuuya kissed me. Chuuya kissed me.* He knew the other could feel his excited energy and he tried to reign it in – knowing there was a possibility Chuuya hadn’t meant it in the way Atsushi wished he had.

And oh, how he wished he understood his own feelings.

“Chuuya, you don’t go around making other people’s decisions for them.” Dazai’s voice taunted.

Atsushi had enough. He needed to talk to Chuuya but in order to talk to Chuuya, he needed the other gone. Stepping up behind Chuuya, he wrapped his long arms around the smaller’s shoulders. Resting his head on one of his elbows, he made his point clear. “I’m not leaving. So, if you would be so kind as to leave…” Atsushi left the sentence open, hoping the other would get the message and leave.

Smiling, Dazai inclined his head but not before Atsushi caught the same glimmer in those brown eyes. It was a familiar glimmer but he couldn’t place it. From the aura Dazai gave, the gleaming eyes had more power than he let on. Nonetheless, Dazai turned and walked back into the chamber.

Atsushi felt his hair move as Chuuya nuzzled the head next to his. A small hum came from the smaller and he wrapped his hands around Atsushi’s joined arms, leaning into the tiger. The elevator dinged its arrival, but Atsushi didn’t want to let the other go. Reluctantly, his arms fell to his sides and he walked on the elevator first, making sure the door wouldn’t close until Chuuya made his way in.

The older pushed the button for the floor level before stepping back and leaning his back against Atsushi’s chest, a sigh leaving Chuuya’s lips. “Ah! Atsushi, I’m so tired.” Chuuya laid his head on Atsushi’s shoulder, nestling into the tiger’s neck.

Atsushi almost couldn’t breathe. He could feel his blush rise all over his skin. Smiling shyly, he wrapped his arms around Chuuya’s waist in a hug. After everything he’d been through today, he could indulge himself in this attention…right? Leaning down, he whispered into Chuuya’s ear, “Elise came after me when you left.” He paused as he waited for the words to sink in. He knew when Chuuya understood by the jerk the smaller gave and the attempt to turn in Atsushi’s hold. Tightening his arms, he kept Chuuya caged and faced away from him. “She walked me to Mori-
san’s office.” He felt the older stiffen in his hold but he kept his arms strong. Leaning down into Chuuya’s ear, he continued, “I’m staying, Chuuya. I’m staying with the Port Mafia.” He let his emotions shine in his voice, could hear the excitement. His hands began to shake as he loosened his hold on Chuuya.

Immediately the executive was facing Atsushi with both hands cupping the face before him. Atsushi could see Chuuya float taller until they were eye-to-eye. Hope and disbelief clung to his eyes and it broke Atsushi. What kind of circumstances had his mentor been in to have those emotions fight so strongly against each other in those bright blue eyes? He couldn’t hold the intense gaze before him, he didn’t know what he would do. Instead, he stiffened his arms again and pulled Chuuya closer, fitting his head on Chuuya’s shoulder. He could feel the older become rigid before relaxing.

“I’m staying, Chuuya.” Atsushi whispered again. Turning into the other’s coat, he did what he should not have. He knew he shouldn’t do it, knew it would only have dire circumstances for him if he accepted his feelings.

The thought of never seeing Chuuya again, of never practicing, of never being pushed to do his best, of never tasting wine with his mentor again? It broke the tiger and forced him to do something he would never have done. Tightening his arms, he gave the lightest of kisses to Chuuya’s coat, a mere brush of lips against cloth. He could feel his body break, his emotions rushing out.

It was a flood. And he was drowning.

The elevator dinged as a whimper slipped through his lips. Clenching his teeth, he pulled away and led the way out of the elevator. He could feel Chuuya behind him before he saw his mentor stand before him.

Bright eyes bore down into purple-gold and Atsushi bit his lip as he looked down, unable to keep the stare of his mentor. He saw the other’s coat swipe through his vision as Chuuya turned around and began walking through Headquarters. Atsushi followed, eyes not leaving the redhead.

Getting into the car, Atsushi laid his hands in his lap, interlacing his fingers. Chuuya slid in afterwards, the engine roaring before spinning tires out of the parking spot. Atsushi clenched his eyes shut, worrying on his bottom lip. Maybe he had said something wrong? He didn’t know what would set Chuuya off in silence.

The twenty-minute car ride was silent, music playing but no one paying attention to it. As they pulled into Chuuya’s driveway, the older got out of the car, the doors not slamming. Atsushi followed worriedly, his eyes flitting over every surface he could find to avoid those eyes.
Walking over the threshold, he shut the door before continuing his walk to the kitchen. Chuuya had brought down two sets of glasses and their wines. Setting them on the counter, he poured a glass for himself before downing it in one go.

Purple-gold eyes widened immensely before running forward to take the glass from Chuuya. But the older wasn’t in a playful mood. He smacked the hand before it could reach the glass, eyes not meeting Atsushi’s. He sat the glass next to the wine bottle. “Sit down, Atsushi-kun.” The tiger hesitated before following through with the order, not used to this Chuuya.

Sliding into the chair behind the counter, he hung his head, hands folded in his lap. “Have I said something, done something wrong?” His voice was soft. In this moment, he wanted to leave, to hide somewhere. He didn’t want to be in the presence of his mentor when anger was present.

“You’ve done nothing wrong, Atsushi.” He could hear footsteps walk over to his side of the cabinet and yet he still refused to look up. He couldn’t shake the feeling that he had done something wrong. Two fingers slid under Chuuya’s chin and guided the tiger’s face to meet his. The soft blue eyes and smile loosened Atsushi and he was entranced. “The fact that the Port Mafia wants you shows how strong you are, how far you’ve progressed with your gift. You are strong, Atsushi-kun.” Chuuya’s other hand came around to slide into the silver locks, his mentor’s eyes distant. “Always remember, Atsushi, that there is more to you than your skills. Promise me?” And with that question, blue eyes met Atsushi’s.

The tiger couldn’t form words, couldn’t gather any thoughts aside from the worry he retained from the emotions swirling in Chuuya’s eyes. With a mere nod of his head, he answered Chuuya’s question.

With a nod of his own, Chuuya turned away, the heat leaving Atsushi and he didn’t know how he felt about it. Watching his mentor, Atsushi stood and wrapped his arms around Chuuya again. “You look like you need a hug,” the shy tiger said in explanation.

A small chuckle came from Chuuya as he brought his hands up to rest on Atsushi’s arms, leaning against him. A soft hum sounded through the room and Atsushi knew exactly what to do to bring the executive’s mood back. “Let’s cook something, Chuuya.” He suggested softly. “I can bring down the radio.”

The smaller slipped out of the tiger’s arms and walked over to the oven. Opening a cabinet door to the right, he displayed a radio on one shelf and two speakers on the shelf above it. His mentor threw a smile over his shoulder as he lithely jumped onto the counter. “What would my subordinate like to cook?” His voice sounded through the room happily.
Atsushi grinned at the other before sifting through the stocked cabinets; coming back with rice noodles, shrimp, an array of spices, sauces, and vegetables. He sat them on the counter beside Chuuya. His mentor smiled at the array and nodded approvingly. “I’m teaching you well.” Atsushi hummed at the praise as he grabbed the pots and pans he would need. Setting those on the stove, he pulled out a cut board and knife to lay on the cabinet next to the vegetables.

Chuuya lifted up to play the radio and in no time music filled the silence. Atsushi smiled at the other as Chuuya began swaying his body to the music. He cut the vegetables up first, knowing it would take no time to grill the shrimp and make the noodles.

Once the vegetables were done, he left them on the cut board as he started grilling the shrimp. Atsushi almost dropped the bottle of sauce for the shrimp when Chuuya began singing. Jerking his head to his mentor, Atsushi took in the closed eyes, the swaying body, and the way the notes fell from Chuuya’s lips. Atsushi tried to turn his eyes away, but he was mesmerized. He wanted to make Chuuya smile like this all the time. And he made a vow in that moment that he would.

But the moment was short lived when those eyes opened to reveal bright blue irises and Atsushi jumped, his attention jerking back to the stove. He knew he was sporting a blush Chuuya could’ve spotted miles away but it was too late now. He quickly started stirring the shrimp to avoid looking back to his mentor.

When arms settled around his waist, the tiger did look to the now empty spot on the counter down to the gloved hands settled over his stomach. He could feel his pulse hammering just under his skin and he hoped Chuuya wouldn’t hear nor feel it.

A few hours later, their meals were finished and the dishes washed. Atsushi had two glasses of wine while Chuuya had three. Without a specific place in mind, Chuuya began wondering around the house. Atsushi followed as his mentor gave a wave of his hand. Walking up steps, Chuuya led the tiger down the long hallway. They stopped at the third door on the right and Chuuya slid it open. A gasp escaped Atsushi’s mouth as he took in the marvelous room. There was a huge bed in the middle of the room, all of the wood a matching cherry. The comforter was white and silver, adding a regal look to the room while the carpet was also white. Atsushi was worried to even walk over the carpets. Chuuya had taken a couple steps in and stopped when he realized Atsushi wasn’t following. Holding out his hand, he gifted the tiger with one of his wonderful soft smiles.

Shyly, the younger took it and walked in.
The carpet was soft, the furniture smooth, and the blankets even softer. Did Chuuya like to sleep on clouds? The thought flitted through Atsushi’s mind and a small laugh ensued. He watched as the older turned quickly, the blue eyes wide and a slightly open mouth. The tiger quickly jerked his eyes down, the attention something he still wasn’t used to.

His mentor straightened up and took the two steps to come face-to-face with Atsushi. Placing two fingers under his chin, he coaxed the younger to look him in the eyes. “Atsushi-kun, you have a lovely laugh. Don’t be ashamed of it.” The smile that ensued was enough to melt Atsushi but he didn’t have much time to memorize it, as the older had leaned forward and gave the tiger another kiss to his cheek.

Atsushi felt his feet tremble and his blush rise full force within milliseconds. He jerked his gaze back to the floor, refusing to meet Chuuya’s eyes when they were this close to each other. With a twirl, Chuuya was faced to a door across from Atsushi. Opening it, the tiger stood in awe.

There were so many clothes. So many pairs of shoes, so many pieces of jewelry. Gold eyes sparked at all of the colors and styles before his eyes. The smaller had disappeared into the enormous closet, opening a drawer and pulling out something the tiger couldn’t quite make out.

But he didn’t have to wait long to find out what it was. Chuuya emerged from the closet and took one of Atsushi’s hands. Looking back down, the tiger cursed himself for his lack of self-confidence. His hands took on a slight shake as he felt Chuuya’s hands cover his before a soft fabric slid over his hands. Looking up, he saw they were fingerless leather gloves. Eyes thrown wide open, he met the blue ones in questioning.

The older merely shrugged and smiled softly up at the timid teen. “I bought them awhile back. They never looked good on me, but I figured I would keep them. I’m glad I did.” With a sigh, the executive looked back into his closet before meeting Atsushi’s eyes curiously. “I would give you a choker, however,” Atsushi’s eyes locked onto Chuuya’s hand as it slid up the other’s tie to hook a finger under the loose knot. Giving a tug, he smiled when he saw how quickly the blush returned to Atsushi’s face. “You already have this,” And with that, the older twisted back around and closed the doors.

This left Atsushi grappling for anything to distract himself. Taking this moment, he inspected his new gloves intensely. He ran his fingers over the material, loving how it wouldn’t catch on his skin.

Nodding, Chuuya walked them back downstairs. Turning on the television, he grabbed a book for himself along with his reading glasses before sitting down in an armchair. Atsushi scampered to the couch across the room, tucking his feet up under him as he curled into the arm. With a final glance up at his mentor, he bit his bottom lip to contain himself. Chuuya’s legs were up against his chest, his glasses atop his nose and the book opened and resting on his knees.
The way Chuuya could block out the sounds from a room and focus on reading a book was something the tiger wanted to learn. But at the moment, his body was warm, tension was nowhere to be found, and Chuuya was there. Smiling to himself, he ducked his head back down to the arm of the couch and found sleep in his next few breaths.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, everyone. OBVIOUSLY Dazai has a plan and won't let this be the last time he talks to Atsushi.
On another note, how about introductions with Atsushi and the rest of the Port Mafia family?? ^.^ That's next chapter, lovelies!

THANK YOU SO MUCH EVERYONE WHO LEFT KUDOS AND COMMENTS!!! IT MEANS SO MUCH TO ME!!!! AND SHOUT OUT TO THE READERS!!! THANK YOU FOR READING THIS FAR!!!!
A Worthy Subordinate

Chapter Summary

Things don't necessarily always happen the way we want...like Atsushi's first kiss.

Chapter Notes

Hello again, lovelies!! ^.^ I still haven't lost my motivation for this fic and I'm so glad!!!
^.^ Enjoy another chapter and please let me know what you think in the comments!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

A Worthy Subordinate

Atsushi’s P.O.V.

-----The Next Afternoon-----

They were in the middle of combat training when Chuuya had asked Atsushi a question he wasn’t sure how to respond to.

“Would you like to meet everyone at headquarters?” Chuuya’s voice had been soft, accepting any answer Atsushi would’ve given him. But the simple truth was, the timid tiger didn’t know.

Did everyone in the Port Mafia have the power that radiated off the boss so heavily? Did everyone have the strength Chuuya possessed? Were they accepting to new members?

His mind flashed back to the woman he had heard in the warehouse merely a week ago. Was she there too?

“Atsushi-kun,” His voice rung through the training room heavy with concern. Looking up from the floor, his eyes met Chuuya’s and he let his mentor see his indecision. Blue eyes softened and a smile was offered. “The Port Mafia will send you on missions, some that require going overseas or areas that would make even Mori-san unsettled. It would be essential to have a team at your back that you trust and also that trusts you, especially if combat will be required.”
Atsushi worked through the logic of it before nodding, his anxiety spiking a bit at what he needed to do. “When?” Atsushi’s voice was soft and hesitant but contained a strength underlying it that only Chuuya would hear.

“It’s a calm day today at headquarters, it would be best to use this to our advantage,” Chuuya stated as he walked a few more paces closer to Atsushi. He knew his hands were shaking, but he couldn’t stop them. What if they wanted him dead, too? Atsushi bit his bottom lip as the thought crossed his mind. “Atsushi-kun.”

The tiger jumped at the voice, wincing as two fingers slid under his chin. He hated looking weak in front of his mentor, but he couldn’t bring himself out of his thoughts. He felt arms wrap around his waist before red curls began tickling his ear. Gratefully, he leaned into the offered shoulder and let his mentor’s scent calm him.

“I’ll be with you.” Chuuya always seemed to know when he was less tense, always knew when to pull away and when to not. With a mixture of both, he looked into Atsushi’s eyes. “Let’s show them what my subordinate is made of,” An encouraging smile tilted the edges of Chuuya’s mouth and Atsushi smiled and nodded.

With that, their training was over and they picked up their bags to shower and change in the locker rooms. Respectfully, they used separate locker rooms and Atsushi was always the first out.

He used this time to calm himself. He was going to meet the Port Mafia. He began to let his mind wander about what gifts they had, what skills.

But the gifts and skills he had thought of weren’t in attendance as Chuuya walked the weretiger around the building an hour later.

The first person Chuuya introduced him to was Chuuya’s first subordinate: Akutagawa Ryuunosuke.

Atsushi’s eyes immediately narrowed at the power that seemed to roll off the other. But Chuuya merely walked over, ruffling the raven’s hair. “Did you take your meds, Ryu-u-kun?”

Akutagawa blushed and nodded before turning his attention to Atsushi. Immediately charcoal eyes clashed with the bright ones. Atsushi could feel his tiger get anxious and he tried to calm her. Hesitantly, she quieted but her limbs remained tense.
Chuuya glanced between the two of them and laughed. “Atsushi, this is Akutagawa. As I’m sure you remember?” The older’s statement turning into a question.

The tiger nodded, eyes still narrowed. “How could I forget?” Atsushi mumbled under his breath. Grey eyes flashed in anger and Atsushi almost smirked. *So he has buttons, huh?* Chuuya whistled sharply, drawing their attention.

“Boys,” Chuuya drew out the word, surprise evident in his voice. Shaking his head, he threw his arm over Atsushi’s shoulders. The tiger jumped at the gesture before relaxing. Glancing to the raven, he noticed Akutagawa’s eyes had narrowed to slits. *Oh?* Atsushi catalogued the defense for later use.

Atsushi was in the Port Mafia now, he had to earn respect around here. Thing was, he didn’t know how to gain that. What he *did* know? He didn’t have to like Akutagawa. *Just play nice.* Sighing softly, he stretched out his hand.

Akutagawa scoffed, turning around. “I will be a worthy subordinate. Try to keep up.” The words had an encouraging tone under them, but only Akutagawa could spit them out with enough venom to sting.

But Atsushi merely smiled at the other’s turned back. Chuuya turned them away, patting Akutagawa’s back as he passed.

Walking through the room, they came across a trio of kids, one he knew well.

“Chuuya~!” The voice sounded before a flash of blonde hair walked up to them. Atsushi could see the young girl’s excitement as she bounced on the balls of her feet. A grin split her face and her eyes were blown wide. Grabbing one of Chuuya’s hands and one of Atsushi’s, she drug them to the other two awaiting them.

Atsushi gasped at the vastly different looks each of them had. Elise tugged him toward the closest.

“This is Yumeno!” The child smiled and nodded in greeting.

“Hello!” His voice was a higher pitch, but he didn’t look any older than a preteen. His hair color was
split in half, the right side black while the left was white. He was also wearing a small hat, a black coat, shorts, and tan shoes with tall socks. But it wasn’t his clothes that drew Atsushi’s attention.

It was the boy’s eyes. They were both blacked out, the right one contained a yellow star while the left contained a yellow circle. They were terrifyingly beautiful. Atsushi quickly blinked his eyes, realizing he had been staring.

“Hello,” Atsushi greeted with a smile and a nod. Kneeling down, he came to eye level with the boy and he tilted his head curiously. “I’m Atsushi.”

Yumeno smiled to the tiger, his hands coming up to cup Atsushi’s face. A jump escaped the tense tiger before noticing the admiration in the younger’s eyes. “You have beautiful eyes, Atsushi-san. You must have a powerful gift.” A bright smile lit up the boy’s eyes. “I look forward to training with you!” The boy’s maturity surprised the tiger and he merely nodded in response.

But then the appearance of Yumeno got the better of him. “What is your power, Yumeno-san?” Atsushi asked, his voice hesitant.

The boy glowed at the question and the honorific, pleasing Atsushi greatly. “I have mind control!” The boy eagerly stated and Atsushi’s eyes widened immensely.

“H-How does that work?” The tiger began to grow worried and wary, afraid the boy would use him.

The boy didn’t seem to notice Atsushi’s unease and continued as if the tension wasn’t there. “I can control the minds of those I touch,” Atsushi sighed. *All I have to do is get him to like me and maybe he won’t use it on me….right?*

The tiger smiled at Yumeno. “That wouldn’t be a fair training session, would it?” Atsushi surmised. And then he was treated to a sound not many heard from the boy.

Yumeno laughed.

Atsushi vowed then and there that he would protect this boy to his last breath, that innocence needed to be treasured and protected. The tiger smiled before Elise tugged his coat to get his attention. The girl pointed to a girl behind Yumeno.
Her beauty was exquisite. She had long blue hair that hung in pigtails down her body. Her eyes were wide and a dark blue, a pin in her hair. She wore a red kimono and the tiger knew from her stance that this girl was shy. She had her hands folded in front of her and her head hung, eyes looking at Atsushi shyly.

The tiger slowly straightened, his soft eyes never leaving hers. “This is Kyouka.” Elise said, a smile evident in her voice. Atsushi smiled at the girl.

“Hello, Kyouka-san,” Atsushi greeted. The girl’s eyes widened at the honorific and she lifted her face to meet Atsushi’s. Slowly, the tiger made his way to stand in front of her, stopping a few feet away from her. “I’m Atsushi.”

Kyouka’s mouth began moving and the tiger tilted his head curiously again. Finally, her voice sounded. “Hello, Atsushi-san.” It was then that he realized she had been trying out the name, making sure she would say it right before speaking.

“Will I be able to train with you?” Atsushi asked, casting a side glance to Yumeno who giggled. But then Atsushi was gifted with a smile from Kyouka. The tiger’s smile grew and he cocked his head slightly. “What is your power, Kyouka-san?”

“I can summon a demon from my cell phone,” She answered simply. Atsushi’s eyes widened. He didn’t want to know what kind of demon she could draw. The tiger grew more curious as he worked through his thoughts.

“Are you also in control of your gift?”

Kyouka quickly nodded her head, her eyes wide. “She only answers to me.” Atsushi smiled, filled with relief. If I become her friend too, she may not kill me.

Looking around him, he saw three sets of eyes on him and he smiled to them all. They were precious in their own way and the tiger quickly grew fond of them.

Turning back, his eyes caught Chuuya’s. The executive was leaning against the wall, a very soft smile on his face and the tiger blushed under the gaze. Looking away, he waved to the three. “It was very nice meeting you all. I’m excited for training.” And with that, he turned and walked back to Chuuya.
As Chuuya walked next to Atsushi, the tiger grew very antsy. He couldn’t decipher the reason.

Until.

His limbs moved of their own accord and Atsushi found his hands cupping Chuuya’s face. Panic set into Atsushi as he knew what was going to happen and was under no control to stop it.

Blue eyes widened.

Red curls grew incrementally closer.

Atsushi’s lips met Chuuya’s in a soft kiss.

*Atsushi couldn’t breathe.*

Chuuya’s lips were soft against his and it was all he could do to not deepen the kiss the way he ached to.

To him, the kiss lasted much longer than the few seconds it was and he quickly pulled away when he felt his control given back to him. Pulling back, he saw the closed eyes of the other and his chest pinged with a want so strong it took every ounce of his strength to not just close the distance again. *His* hands shaking, he pulled them back and laced his fingers together in front of him, looking anywhere other than Chuuya’s eyes.

And then it hit him. The tiger jerked his head back, locking eyes with Yumeno. The boy had a dangerous smirk on his lips before a laugh escaped his lips. Atsushi suddenly didn’t feel as protective over the boy. Shoving his hands in his pockets, he balled them into fists. A blush had overtaken every inch of his body and he was scared to meet Chuuya’s eyes.

“I’m sorry, Chuuya-san,” Atsushi whispered to the air. He couldn’t raise his volume any louder, knowing his voice would break.
His mentor gave a soft laugh, and if Atsushi didn’t know any better he would’ve thought it was a nervous one. “It’s okay, Atsushi-kun. They’re a handful.” Atsushi sighed inwardly. His teeth chattered with the enormous burn scorching his lips.

Looking across the room, his eyes locked with charcoal grey and he groaned inwardly at the angry gaze of those grey eyes. Like he wanted that kiss to happen. But the eyes across the room held his steadily, almost as if he were reading Atsushi like an open book.

And the tiger hated it. Jerking his eyes away from Akutagawa, his eyes locked onto another redhead. Chuuya smiled in the other’s direction before walking towards the new introduction, waving Atsushi along with him. Tucking his hands behind his back, he let his coat cover their shaking as he caught up to Chuuya and walked the rest of the way to the other. His mentor stopped a few feet away from the newcomer and Atsushi’s eyes raked him in.

The man had a pale complexion, straight red hair, light brown eyes, and a piercing in each ear. He was wearing a green jacket, white shirt, jeans, and brown boots. He wasn’t eye catching compared to Chuuya and Atsushi quickly lost interest in him.

Nonetheless, Chuuya introduced them. “Tachihara, this is Atsushi. Atsushi, this is Tachihara. He is the commander of Black Lizard, the Port Mafia’s army.” Atsushi’s eyes widened. There was a…Port Mafia army? For what?! The tiger darted his eyes questioningly to his mentor before turning back to Tachihara.

The man’s eyes widened as they met Atsushi’s. Chuuya’s arm fell back over Atsushi’s shoulders, the tense limb something the tiger wasn’t used to. Unsure how to handle himself in front of everyone, he merely dropped his eyes to the ground, his blush prevalent. “Hello, Tachihara-san.”

The Black Lizard Commander tilted his head as he surveyed the duo. Deciding not to comment, he greeted Atsushi, “Hello.”

Atsushi immediately felt his skin prickle at the dismissal but didn’t act on it. He’d only befriended the children, but the adults seemed to be uncaring of the him. Maybe he wasn’t worthy of being in the Port Mafia. Especially if he couldn’t earn his place, earn respect amongst the others. Maybe he wasn’t worthy of being Chuuya’s subordinate. This was the commander of the Port Mafia’s army, if he were to be going on missions he would need this man’s trust.

His thoughts continued to swirl around his brain, continued to cage him in. Skillfully, he hid his thoughts from everyone. If he was to gain respect from them, the last thing he needed to do was cry in the middle of headquarters. Looking up, he met the light brown eyes steadily. Steeling himself, he
faked the energy in his words. “I look forward to training with you.” And with that, he held out his hand to the commander.

Widened eyes rose to meet purple-gold in curiosity. Accepting, he shook hands with Atsushi before nodding. Releasing the hand, he turned to Chuuya. “I have to prepare the troops for tonight. I’ll see you in a few hours.” Chuuya smiled and nodded in acknowledgement and the tiger took quick notice of the commander’s slight blush. Confused, the tiger watched the commander turn and walk away.

And then it hit Atsushi. Mission. See you in a few hours. He turned to his mentor, finding the blue eyes already turned to him. “Are you going on a mission tonight?” The tiger asked, concern seeping out of his body. Chuuya had refused to talk about his missions, claiming it wasn’t necessary information. But the worry remained nonetheless with the subordinate for his mentor.

Chuuya cocked his head to the side. “Yes,” He stated, a hint of confusion tinting his words. “You’ll be fine, Atsushi-kun. We will still meet tomorrow for our training session.” Atsushi looked away from the prying eyes. Of course Chuuya would think Atsushi was worried about himself. But there was no way the tiger could explain his worries to his mentor, when Chuuya was the center of them. Not to mention the tension that continued to wrap around them ever since their ‘kiss’.

“Yes,” The tiger mumbled. Atsushi pulled away from the embrace, needing space to clear his mind.

As soon as he turned around, he came face-to-face with purple and orange glasses. Jumping back, his back collided with Chuuya’s chest and the smaller gave a soft laugh. Warm hands went down to Atsushi’s hips. He knew they were meant to stabilize him, but they only burned through his clothes. Biting his bottom lip, he pulled away with a quick apology to Chuuya. Turning his attention back to the newcomer, he saw a smile on the pale face.

His hair was brown, cut straight across his forehead. His white coat moved slightly with the air around him, his green scarf a stark contrast to the pale skin. Looking down, he noticed he wore sandals and Atsushi cocked his head at the view. All in all, he didn’t look as intimidating as everyone else he had met so far.

Chuuya came out from behind Atsushi to nod in greeting.

But the newcomer was looking at Atsushi; if the tiger hadn’t known better, he would’ve guessed those eyes under the glasses were appraising him as if he were studying bones. The tiger seemed to not understand the energy that surrounded this man so he merely stood holding his hands in front of him.
“Atsushi, this is Kajii. Kajii, this is Atsushi.” The tiger didn’t take his eyes from the man in front of him.

“Hello, Atsushi-kun,” The voice was a tanner, although Atsushi gathered that the voice could possibly go lower in octaves. The man’s hands sat on his hips and he leaned down into Atsushi’s space, forcing the tiger to lean back.

“Hello, Kajii-san,” Atsushi said hesitantly, eyes roving over the other as he looked for the man’s next move.

But Kajii merely leaned back. “Chuuya-san, it seems you have a very observant subordinate.” The voice had a hint of humor and curiosity in it. Atsushi’s eyes narrowed at the tones, unsure how to handle this man.

But the tiger’s eyes darted to Chuuya’s smile out of the corner of his eyes. “Yes I do.”

The tones were numerous in his mentor’s words. Confused, yet again, he turned his eyes back to Kajii.

“Tell me, Atsushi-kun, what do you do when life gives you lemons?” Atsushi’s eyes widened at the question, having never been asked it before and especially not in the same circumstances. “You make lemon bombs.”

Kajii’s voice was hushed, almost as if he were whispering a secret. However, the smirk on his face told Atsushi different. But the tiger was still thoroughly confused. He tilted his head to the side in thought. Immediately, Kajii’s smirk dropped, his mouth slightly open.

The tiger was again confused at the man’s change in emotions. Chuuya’s arm wrapped around Atsushi’s waist, making the tiger jump in surprise before he was turned away. He could hear Chuuya say their farewells, but he was trying to figure out the other man. How could someone’s emotions change that quickly? He was also relatively easy to read for the tiger, quite energetic. After meeting a few of the other adults in Port Mafia, he had assumed it was necessary to be stoic.

But then there was Chuuya….who always mixed up everything Atsushi thought he understood.
They left headquarters not long after that to head for lunch. When they were in the car, Atsushi felt the tension of his kiss with Chuuya become almost overwhelming. He didn’t like it. He didn’t like how he felt he couldn’t have a conversation with the other, didn’t like how the air was suddenly very heavy. His hands were folded in his lap, his teeth digging into his bottom lip.

If there was a problem, Atsushi would always try to fix it immediately, not wait and avoid confrontation. But he didn’t know how to respond to Chuuya. He didn’t know if Chuuya thought the kiss meant anything, if Chuuya knew it was Yumeno’s doing, if Chuuya was even worried about the kiss.

But still, it wasn’t right for a subordinate to kiss his mentor. No, no it wasn’t. He could ruin Chuuya’s reputation, could ruin Chuuya’s status as a mentor, as an executive.

They had arrived at a restaurant. Atsushi wasn’t too familiar with this side of Yokohama. Instead of questioning the other’s choice, he got out of the car without a word. Shutting the door softly, he felt the soft leather rub against his palms and he sighed at the feeling. Looking over the side of the car, he noticed Chuuya was already looking at him with a smile.

Atsushi quickly looked down, a blush on his face. He hated this. But he knew he shouldn’t have feelings for his mentor. Biting his lip, he watched the sidewalk before him, waiting for the telltale sign of Chuuya’s coat.

When he saw it, it didn’t look anything like he had thought it would. Instead, he saw the inside of the coat, the slender legs, and the boots. Nerves set alight all over his body. Stop coming close, Chuuya. Please.

Regardless, Chuuya’s feet stopped a foot away from his. He could feel Chuuya’s body heat. No, Chuuya. Please, step back. Two fingers rested under Atsushi’s chin, adding just enough pressure to lift the tiger’s face up so their eyes met. Atsushi’s clasped hands shook under the blue gaze.

Concern was laced through the shades of blue. Atsushi wanted to look away but he wanted to drown in them.

“Atsushi-kun, what’s wrong? You’ve been off the past few days.” Atsushi willed his body to not shake. He cares, but not in the way I want him to. What are you talking about, Atsushi? You don’t even deserve this. You’ve never deserved anything.
The tiger’s eyes widened at his thoughts before jerking his face away. He didn’t want to, he really didn’t want to.

He didn’t deserve any of this and Chuuya deserved better. Chuuya deserved to have a wonderful subordinate, one that could prove himself. Chuuya deserved everything. And Atsushi was going to give him everything he had.

First step to that? Chuuya needed to remain alive, remain healthy. In order to do that? He needed to eat and drink.

Grabbing Chuuya’s wrist, Atsushi rushes them into the restaurant.

“W-woah, Atsushi. Hold on!” The tiger wasn’t listening. He pushed onward, opening the door and pulling Chuuya in with him. Noticing the “Seat Yourself” sign, Atsushi sighed in relief as he drug them the rest of the way to a booth. Letting go of Chuuya’s hand, he slid into a seat, eyes downcast.

It wasn’t long before Chuuya sat down afterwards, his eyes at once on Atsushi and did he feel the weight of that blue gaze.

“You need to eat,” Atsushi explained, his voice strong but his eyes still not meeting Chuuya’s.

It was a long moment before the executive spoke. Atsushi could feel the weight of the gaze and couldn’t meet it.

“Atsushi-kun, what’s wrong?” Chuuya’s voice was soft but knowing.

The tiger bit his lip before responding. “The kiss at headquarters, I’m sorry Chuuya-san.” Atsushi’s eyes didn’t leave the menu, feeling the blush creep up his face.

Purple-gold eyes widened at the laugh that sounded from across the table. The notes were hypnotic, dragging the tiger into them with little warning and no regret. “Atsushi, that was Yumeno’s doing.” Atsushi’s eyes met the mafia executive’s, finding nothing but humor in them.

A soft laugh rumbled from Atsushi’s chest as his body relaxed. Maybe it was only Yumeno’s doing...
yeah. Maybe that was it.

The tiger looked back to the menu, a smile on his face and his intrusive thoughts ceased. The light atmosphere returned and Atsushi allowed himself to settle into the cushions of the seat. His gold eyes rose to rake over Chuuya. The smile remained on the tiger’s mouth as he watched red curls sway around the pale skin, the blue sky downcast to the menu. Atsushi couldn’t take his eyes away from the stark contrast of red eyelashes flirting across the glowing skin.

Content, the tiger rested his hands in his lap and continued to memorize each dip and shadow that ran along the mafia executive’s face.

-----Time Skip-----

It wasn’t until later that night, that Atsushi realized it wasn’t just Yumeno’s doing. It never had been.

Chuuya had left for his mission at 10:30 pm. He hadn’t provided Atsushi the details, proclaiming it was an easy task and was nothing to worry over.

Despite the once soothing words, they didn’t help the tiger now. He had left Chuuya’s apartment at around seven, claiming he had to get home to do laundry. In honesty, he hadn’t wanted Chuuya to see him as a “clingy” or “obsessive” subordinate who couldn’t function without his mentor.

But those worries of impression left his brain as he found himself pacing his kitchen, waiting for a text to come in from Chuuya. The tiger hadn’t sent a message, but he somehow hoped his mentor would send him a message….

A frustrated growl left Atsushi’s lips, she was growing restless. He couldn’t sit nor stand still for long, his mind overworking itself and he couldn’t control it. It wasn’t until he threw himself onto his bed that he felt something tap repeatedly on the sheets – almost as if someone was tapping their finger impatiently.

Confused, the tiger looked to his right and jumped out of his skin with a yelp at the white tail that waved around. Calming down, he sat up and leaned on the headboard, the tail still twitching beside him. Covering his face with his hands, he tried to still his racing thoughts.

Groaning, he leapt out of bed and slipped into his shoes. Opening the door, he walked out of his
house. Slamming the door behind him in his rush, he let his feet take him wherever.

Some time later, he ran up the steps to the training room. The lights were on, but when he walked in he didn’t notice anyone.

Cautiously, he approached the mats. After a few more seconds passed with no other signs of life, he couldn’t keep still any longer.

He shook the tension out of his arms as he allowed her to release her pent up frustration. He could feel the black stripes cover his face, arms, and legs like war paint; the nails and elongated teeth stretching forward to help accommodate her. Then, all at once, his muscles expanded and the fur bristled up in the air – the force of the switch producing a sigh from the tiger. Immediately, he started feeling better.

But it wasn’t enough.

A half hour later, he had interacted with each punching bag, each training mannequin, and the dozens of other training pieces stashed in the room.

But it still wasn’t enough to distract himself, to work off his worries and thoughts.

He stood in the middle of the room, hands balled into fists as he bore holes into the punching bag before him.

“If I had known you would be here, I wouldn’t have come.”

The tiger bristled at the words, a growl working up his throat to stop at his lips. He didn’t need to turn to know who was behind him. Nonetheless, his legs pivoted and he faced the intruder.

The raven’s hands were shoved in his coat, the grey eyes looking on in disgust. Atsushi didn’t know what he had done to piss the other off. They’d only met twice and if anyone had a reason to be angry, it was Atsushi. The man had nearly killed him!

“Feel free to leave, Akutagawa.” Atsushi couldn’t hide his anger with the other. Forget the honorific,
the man hadn’t greeted him, either. His eyes were glowing, the eyelids narrowed.

The grey eyes widened in anger, a line forming at his mouth. “You don’t even have the decency to replace the equipment you use, you’ve created a mess.” The voice was raspy and low. Without preamble, the raven lashed out a sharp, black mass.

The tiger bristled, immediately jumping to the right. But it didn’t follow him. The mass merely deteriorated to reveal a black tendril wrapping around one of the many punching bags littering the floor. Tensing, Atsushi watched the other’s movements in search of any telltale signs of violence. Instead, Akutagawa merely placed it back where it belonged in the back room.

Thoughts raced through Atsushi’s mind. *This is clearly his gift, but how does it work? What is the extent of his strength?*

No matter the ideas coursing through the tiger, Akutagawa continued to have more black tendrils wrap around the equipment scattered through the room and meticulously placing it where it was supposed to be in the back room.

The tiger grew incrementally more and more worried about the strength the other possessed. The tendrils were numerous, completing the work within a minute. Those grey eyes rose to meet gold ones atop a beam on the ceiling.

The *power* that radiated around Akutagawa was suffocating and it worried the tiger. He couldn’t possibly match the other in battle. This man could annihilate a battlefield of men, just from what Atsushi had seen mere moments ago.

Their introduction *finally* clicked in his head.

*“I will be a worthy subordinate. Try to keep up.”*

Gold eyes widened in understanding. He knew what he had to do, but he hated it. Could there not have been anyone else to train with? Inwardly groaning, he closed his eyes. Opening them, he saw the raven was turned to leave, a scoff thrown over his shoulder. “My time here was wasted.” Past the gravelly voice, the constant indifference, and the anger that seemed to always follow the raven, Atsushi caught the tone of disappointment.
Atsushi would not earn disappointment from Chuuya’s first subordinate. Chuuya had trained him. Maybe, just maybe, Atsushi could grow as strong as Akutagawa and be a worthy subordinate.

His nails scraped the beam as he jumped, throwing himself at the other. The strength mustered into that jump would’ve been enough to put Akutagawa on his ass.

Would have been.

But a tendril had seeped out from the black coat to wrap around Atsushi’s waist before throwing the tiger across the room, the crash loud in the silent room.

Although the walls were made to be sturdy, to bypass a user’s ability in order to train, pieces of the wall crumbled around the tiger as he fell. His right arm had covered his side just before the crash, effectively breaking it. His right arm hung limply from his body as his knees and his left arm supported him as he drug himself back up, eyes bright as he scanned the room for the raven.

Shockingly, Akutagawa had remained at the same place as before. In the blink of an eye, however, the raven was standing mere feet from him. The tiger jerked back, colliding with the wall behind him. Akutagawa didn’t stop his walk to the other, his steps purposeful.

Atsushi gathered himself together to launch himself again, but remembered that move wouldn’t help him any more than it had the first time. He waited until Akutagawa shot out two tendrils, one on either side of the tiger before Atsushi bent his knees and slid forward into the raven’s space. Grey eyes widened before another tendril rose to meet the tiger. Straightening up, Atsushi leapt onto it and used the leverage to propel himself forward, his left hand rising to meet the raven’s face.

The hand was stopped as it collided with a red barrier, Akutagawa’s face remaining indifferent. In the tiger’s momentary shock, a tendril had wrapped around Atsushi’s waist once more to throw him to the left.

But the tiger was smarter this time. Aligning his feet with the wall, he used the tendril to catapult himself forward. He reveled in the surprise he found in the grey eyes, but the pride was drained from the tiger as another tendril had wrapped around his ankle, throwing him back into the wall.

The tiger was growing increasingly less positive about this training. Maybe Akutagawa is too strong for me…
“Get up, jinko! This isn’t over yet!” Anyone else wouldn’t have noticed the encouragement coming from the other, but Atsushi latched onto it and pushed himself up. Blood was pouring down his face in a steady river, but he ignored it. He ignored the ache in his broken arm, ignored the ache in his legs for being pushed this far.

*Allow me, Atsu.*

Gold eyes widened at the soft voice in his head. Relaxing into *her*, he allowed himself to be given over. Without warning, blue light enveloped him and his body switched almost immediately into *her*. He looked through *her* eyes and saw the raven’s eyes open psychotically wide.

“This is how it should be!” A frantic kind of energy enveloped Akutagawa. “Rashomon!” He gave command after command to his gift. Atsushi watched in awed terror as each phrase created a new shape from Rashomon. This man was incredibly strong.

He leaned heavily on *her* in praise, watching how *she* would dodge each tendril, would stop an oncoming one with merely *her* teeth. *She* was glorious.

Maybe he could become as strong as Akutagawa.

*Chuuya’s P.O.V.*

He watched on from atop a beam cloaked in shadow. He was in awe with the strength his subordinates possessed. He couldn’t tear his eyes from their work, how both of them would critique the other and yet push each other to do more, more, more. After half an hour, he rested his chin in his hands, watching intently. They were a perfect partnership, even that dumbass Dazai could deduce that.

The way Atsushi pushed onward, breaking through every tendril Rashomon could produce, he would be the one to take the deathly risks. But with Rashomon, Atsushi would be protected. They would be unstoppable.

And they were *his* subordinates. The executive took immense pride in that fact. He would be training both of them, would be sending them off into battle.

Chuuya had to admit that although Dazai’s mentoring was a bit on the dark side, the man gave
Akutagawa drive and discipline that would be used to train Atsushi. On the other hand, Atsushi would be the emotion-filled one to tame the anger and intimidation that came with Akutagawa.

This would be a partnership that would be feared worldwide, not just in Japan.

And the partnership was in his hands.

If the responsibility had befallen anyone else, they would’ve trembled. But Chuuya was different.

Chuuya could influence the weight of anything. The mafia executive would be lying if he said he wasn’t excited for their growth.

But he would also be lying if he said he wasn’t jealous. The way Atsushi was watching Akutagawa’s movements, the way the tiger responded fluidly with the male’s advancements. He wanted that with Atsushi.

Watching Atsushi was bittersweet, but he wanted the best for the tiger. Tears fell down his cheeks as he watched the still bodies, passed out with exhaustion. He floated down to the floor and walked over to them. With a touch to Atsushi’s hair, he placed a kiss over the tiger’s forehead before walking over to Ryuu and fixing the older’s coat. Turning back, he activated For The Tainted Sorrow and lifted his subordinates before walking out of the training room.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Chuuya. I promise there will be more P.O.V.’s from Chuuya, I just thought cute jinko should get some time.

I’m not sorry for the friendship I am creating between Aku and Atsushi.

Again, thank you for all the kudos and comments, THEY MEAN SO MUCH TO ME!!!
Three Weeks Later

Atsushi’s P.O.V.

His first mission.

He stared at the remote building he found himself at. There were four others around him, and only two he trusted. She was antsy and wouldn’t stop moving around, forcing him to bounce on the heels of his feet in nervousness. Steeling himself, he told himself there wasn’t anything to worry about. He had four people with him as back up, and two of them were amongst the strongest in the mafia.

With a shaky breath, he took a step forward and then another and then another. One by one, he could feel the others fall into step behind him. It was a simple negotiation meeting, nothing more. Still, Chuuya had warned him that negotiations with the Port Mafia did not always go according to plan, and therefore, he needed to prepare himself for the worst.

Silver hair blew as the wind arrived, providing a cooling air that the anxious tiger needed. A mere few hundred feet stood between the building and them. With another shaky breath, he stepped up to the door and opened it, the knob twisting easily as if it had been turned a thousand times before. Narrowing his eyes, he walked forward and found ten men across the room. Clenching his teeth, he opened the door wider for the others to come inside as well. Hearing the strong footsteps behind him, he began to feel a bit more confident.

The men across the room had guns pointed in their direction and the tiger automatically bristled at
them. Knowing it was his part, he tried to will his body to move. But there was no command sent to his muscles to *move*.

“Jinko, don’t waste our time.” The words were growled out, but the tiger found the encouragement he needed underlying the words. Like that, the younger stepped forward, his hands clasped together as he took stock of where each man was, where each gun was pointed, and where others might be hiding. With visible nerves, he began talking.

“We aren’t here to harm, we a-“

“How can you, one of the Port Mafia assassins say that?!” A man to Atsushi’s right sounded. The tiger bristled at the word *assassin*, but remained still.

“We are here to discuss the discovery of missing weapons,” The tiger announced, if a bit stiffly. Scoffs sounded from across the room.

“The Port Mafia doesn’t *discuss* things.”

Atsushi took another step forward, his will to change their opinions weighing out any warnings his brain might have sent. But he was quickly stopped when all of the guns in the room pointed to him.

“*Negotiations with the Port Mafia do not always go according to plan, make sure you watch your back and the team’s.*”

Chuuya’s words ran through his mind and he cursed himself for loosing attention. His eyes scanned the room for anything out of place and from this angle, he could see the men in shadows pointing their guns at those he left behind at the door.

Atsushi felt the beginnings of panic sink in. These men were going to kill his team if he wasn’t careful. Taking a step back, he held his hands up. The guns remained where they were. “Please tell your men to point their guns away from the others.”

They stayed where they were. *Okay, so this place had betrayed the Port Mafia, their wariness of them speaking for itself. So, now what?* Clenching his teeth, he looked back to his team, his eyes meeting blue first, then grey.
In the next instant, the raven’s lips moved and black spikes shot out from the floor, effectively impaling each man. Guns rang out, metal clashed with the concrete floor, and yells sounded from around the room.

The tiger’s eyes widened, his body frozen to its spot in the room. The shaking began in his hands and worked its way like venom through his body.

He couldn’t formulate a response, could barely breathe. Every inhale felt like those spikes had impaled him. Shakily, he began running to one of the men still struggling. Like clockwork, the spikes vanished and every body fell to the group, limp. The tiger’s knees gave out and he covered his face with his hands. A hand came down to his shoulder and he jerked up, his eyes meeting charcoal.

Anger was a fire raging inside him. With a growl, he stood up and punched Akutagawa. The man fell onto his back, shock evident in his eyes. “Ji-“

“No!” His body was shaking with anger, disappointment, and guilt. “It didn’t have to end like this!” The tiger leaned down to Akutagawa, his eyes blazing. “Why?!”

The raven’s eyes sparked. “If you can’t handle this, then you can’t be in the Port Mafia.” The gold eyes widened in shock and fear. But the raven didn’t stop there. Knowing the tiger was listening, he leaned up onto his elbows, his eyes almost silver with anger. “If you can’t handle this, then leave.” And with that, Akutagawa slid out from under Atsushi and stood, making his way out of the building, his coat billowing behind him.

The tiger fell to his knees, his eyes unseeing as they replayed what was before him. Tears had begun falling from his eyes, but he didn’t feel them.

Chuuya knelt in front of him. But Atsushi couldn’t feel him.

Blue eyes were dark, troubled as they met the blank gold ones. A small hand came up to cup the tiger’s cheek, unmoving as Atsushi winced. The hand slid into silver locks before a soft red light illuminated the tiger’s body.

Atsushi felt a hand wrap under his knee and could feel himself being lifted as well as his view swirling around him. He could feel his head flop back before fingers kneaded through his hair and pushed his face into the vest of the other.
At the smell of wine from Chuuya’s vest, he was able to clench his hands into Chuuya’s coat before sobs wracked his body. He bit his lip to silence them as tears continued to pool from his eyes and shakes consumed his body. He barely felt two fingers press down on the right side of his neck before everything went black.

Chuuya’s P.O.V.

He continued to run his fingers through the silver locks against his body throughout the walk to his house. Walking inside, he opened the door to the bedroom adjacent to the kitchen and laid the lean body on the bed. Pulling the comforter back, he placed Atsushi under the blankets before tucking him in. Pulling back, he found his chair across the room and drug it up a bit closer to the bed but not enough to crowd.

Pulling his knees up to his chest, he crossed his arms around them and rested his chin on the joined arms. He watched the smaller for a few moments before deciding that this wasn’t going to get his wandering mind anywhere. Sighing, he untangled his limbs and walked to the closet to change into sweatpants and a white t-shirt. He walked into the kitchen, grabbing a glass and pouring a more bitter tasting wine into it. He watched the red liquid swirl around inside before deciding to grab the bottle and take it with him. Setting his drink on the nightstand, he glanced at the tiger before walking into the sitting room to grab his book and glasses from the side table. Sliding the glasses on his face as he went, he settled himself back inside his chair. With the book resting on his knees, he held his wine in his left hand, occasionally taking sips.

He looked up when he heard stirring, noticing he had been reading for an hour. Atsushi’s body twisted in the bed sheets and the comforter began wrapping around him. A few seconds later, purple eyes were unveiled. Chuuya didn’t move from his spot, not wanting to startle the smaller. The tiger blinked a few times at him before mumbling, “Chuuya?”

The executive tilted his head, giving a hum in answer. Atsushi slowly lifted from the bed, leaning against the headboard. For a few moments, the younger merely stared ahead of him before closing his eyes, tears falling down his cheeks once more. Burying his face in his hands, he brought his knees up to his chest as he began curling in on himself.

Setting his book and glass down, he walked over to the bed, perching on the foot of the bed. “Atsushi,” His voice was soft, questioning. He ignored the thoughts in his mind, thoughts that he couldn’t console his subordinate, he had no right after the things he had done.

But right now, Atsushi needed him. And he was going to be there.
The tiger gave a small whimper in response, his sob increasing in volume. Knowing this was getting nowhere, Chuuya slid up the bed, his hands on either side of the other’s feet. “I’m going to touch you, Atsushi.” His voice was soft, warm. After giving the tiger a few seconds to understand his words, he pressed his hands to the knees before him. The body jerked under his hands, Atsushi burying his face deeper into his hands as a hiccup left his mouth. Sliding up farther, Chuuya’s knees met Atsushi’s feet and his hands moved to grip the tiger’s wrists. Gradually, he slid his fingers up the hand to pry the fingers away from the other’s face, Atsushi burying his face into his knees. He pulled the hands closer to him before rubbing small circles into the hand. “Atsushi, look at me.” It was as if his voice had triggered the tiger’s instincts to protect and Atsushi’s hands jerked against Chuuya’s hold.

But the executive merely tightened his hold on the hands, preventing the tiger from ripping them away. Once the fight died down, he released the hands to run his fingers through the silver locks. Sobs fell from the younger’s mouth as hands wrapped around Chuuya’s wrists. It was clear to the smaller that Atsushi didn’t know whether he wanted to keep Chuuya’s fingers in his hair or push his hands away.

Taking this advantage, Chuuya’s fingers curled into the silver locks, twisting them in his fingers lightly. “Atsushi,” His voice was a whisper and the tiger winced again. Resting his head on the knees before him, he moved one of his hands lower to push the hair out of the younger’s face. Holding the hair back with his other hand, he began rubbing circles into the other’s temples.

After a few moments, Atsushi’s sobs had lessened but were still there, trembles now overtaking his body. “Look at me,” The whisper of his voice flitted through the silver hair. A few moments flew by before the hair began to move. The hands at his wrists moved to cover his face once more. Another sob sounded through the tight lips.

The sob wasn’t muffled by the other’s knees and hands this time, and Chuuya was privy to the absolute heartbreak that was etched into each noise. The executive’s heart clenched and flew up to his throat, swallowing thickly, he slid his hands to cover Atsushi’s, his fingers slowly prying the hands away just to curl his fingers around the other’s. Before his subordinate could hide his face again, he pressed his forehead against Atsushi’s. Another sob fell out of the other’s lips and the tiger tried desperately to conceal it by biting his lower lip. Immediately, the smaller’s heart leaped back into his throat and he had to close his eyes as he swallowed once more.

“Hey, Atsushi? Talk to me.” Although his voice was feather-light, it created an aftershock he wasn’t expecting. The hands in his untangled to clench in his shirt, the taller’s head diving into Chuuya’s neck as another sob left his lips, one after another.

Leaning back, he slid them around so that he was against the headboard and Atsushi was curled up
between his legs, his face and hands buried in the white t-shirt. One of Chuuya’s arms snaked around the small body, settling on the hip. His other hand ran through the silver hair as he hummed softly.

“Atsushi.”

“I’m not worthy of living!” The words were ripped out of the tiger, each syllable accompanied by a jolt in the younger’s body. Blue eyes widened as he pushed Atsushi back, noticing the taller wasn’t moving his hands nor his face. Laying his hands over the tiger’s, he pried them gently out of his shirt before wrapping the arms around his waist, his hands then moving to cup the tear-stained face.

Unused to the gesture, Atsushi tried to move his hands toward himself but they merely brought the smaller closer to him. Chuuya finally lifted the other’s face and pulled it up so that it was level with his own. His thumbs brushed over the tear streaks, brushing the salty drops away. Gold eyes opened in shock, eyes wide.

Chuuya was struck once more just how much he could get lost in those eyes. Letting his eyes soften, he continued to rub the other’s cheeks with his thumbs. The tiger’s eyes seemed to roam over the executive’s body before he collapsed back into the awaiting arms. Chuuya could feel that the tiger didn’t want words of reassurance, he needed proximity – he needed intimacy.

His fingers trailed through the silver tresses and he leaned his head on Atsushi’s. The arms at his waist tightened and he felt himself being tugged closer, closer, closer. Blue eyes widened as he found himself flat on his back. Tugs on his shirt caused him to look to his left.

Atsushi was on his side, his eyes focused intently on his t-shirt while two fingers hesitantly pulled. Without another moment to spare, the superior slid his arm under Atsushi’s neck, pulling his closer to his chest while his other arm came around to wrap around the tiger’s waist and his body turned on its side as well. Small shakes consumed Atsushi’s body and Chuuya continued to run his fingers through the locks under his chin. He felt hands fist in his shirt and he molded himself against the tiger, reminding Atsushi his superior was still there, was going to be there.

A few minutes passed before Chuuya heard soft snores sounding from the tiger and he allowed himself to breathe again. But it was then that the thoughts he had been pushing out of his mind made their way back to him.

Chuuya was a mafia executive. Tonight’s events weren’t even the tip of the iceberg. The mafia was a reputable organization for its reasons and in order to become an executive, you had your own throne that was being held up by millions of deaths. In order to become an executive, you needed to have the ability to kill without question, without reason, without delay, and with perfect precision.
Atsushi had broke under the weight of nineteen deaths tonight. *How was he going to survive in the Port Mafia? But, somehow even worse, how would Atsushi perceive Chuuya now?* What if the person who saved him, had committed more deaths and crimes and wrongs to fill Yokohama’s dirt? Atsushi was innocence within a place that would smother it with sadistic smiles. *How could Chuuya protect Atsushi?!*

The executive bit his lip against the intruding words, his body tensing. But the hands that had fallen to the bed between them stirred and wrapped around the smaller’s waist. Atsushi’s head nuzzled his chest as he locked his fingers behind the executive’s back. Within a few more moments, snores had sounded again but with purrs this time.

Chuuya felt his heart strangle his throat and his thoughts stop. He was overwhelmed and confused and *hurting*. Tears fell unchecked into the pillow under his head. He refused to let his hands tighten around the tiger – he wasn’t worthy of this dove. He would stay here long enough for Atsushi to be able to function, then he would take him home.

Chuuya could think of only one way to protect Atsushi: to stay away. He should’ve sent Atsushi to one of his safe houses out of Port Mafia territory when they first met. He never should’ve gotten attached to him.

Atsushi deserved better.

Legs moved and pressed against his. His emotions shattered then and he had to bite the pillow to contain himself. *Chuuya loved Atsushi.*

He couldn’t possibly stay away from the tiger. Not now. Maybe he could indulge himself in this bit of selfishness?

**Atsushi’s P.O.V.**

He woke up warm, something he hadn’t felt in awhile. Opening his eyes, he found himself staring into red curls. Careful not to freak out too quickly, he began to move his toes and fingers, trying to figure out where his body was. His fingers were behind Chuuya’s back, and his toes brushed up against another set of legs.

Purple eyes widened. Now everything began to sink in.
Last night’s mission.

Passing out.

Chuuya.

Chuuya.

With merely one look from his superior, his depressive thoughts ceased to exist and he found a reason shimmering in those oceanic waves, he found a reason in the fingers that ran through his hair, he found a reason in the hands that massaged him, he found a reason in the voice that understood him.

Chuuya believed in him.

Taking a deep breath, he calmed himself as he began thinking through the events from last night. The visions continued to rub against his bones like sandpaper, but he needed to understand. There wasn’t possibly a reason why Akutagawa would just kill without thought. There had to be a reason. There also had to be a reason why no one seemed to berate him afterwards. There had to be a reason.

Clamping his eyes shut, he called upon his tiger vision and looked through the sharper eyes. He could see the tense expressions each man in the shadows had, the fingers shaking against each trigger in anticipation, the bloodlust in all of their eyes as the men from the shadows watched the men behind him. He could see the men at the front eying the men cloaked in shadow, could see them communicating without words. He could see the men in the front acting as decoys when a few men, the fated few who Atsushi’s eyes had been watching, began to lower their guns before he heard metal clinging as the men in shadow took their aim.

They were going to kill his team. And he was at fault. He didn’t notice it during the exchange. He didn’t notice the sounds, he didn’t pay enough attention to his surroundings – not just for his safety but for his team’s. They were going to shoot at them. Then Akutagawa.....he saw through it all. He knew. He knew and he was disappointed in Atsushi. He was mad Atsushi hadn’t been paying attention. Meaning...Akutagawa had believed in him too?!

Clamping his teeth, he softly pulled his hands from Chuuya before prying the other’s hands from him. Using light movements, he tried to sneak out of the bed before electric blue eyes opened.
Atsushi was transfixed.

“Atsushi?” Chuuya’s voice sent shivers down his spine but he couldn’t face Chuuya. He had let Chuuya down. Slipping out of the bed, he bowed to the older.

“I have disappointed you, senpai. I am very sorry, but I will make it up. I will be stronger and be worthy of your mentorship!” And with that, the tiger darted from the room, slipping into his shoes before running out the door.

His feet were taking him where he needed to go while his mind prepared a speech. But when he got there, there was no sign of the raven. Leaning against the wall, his chest heaved for air as the door shut. So, Akutagawa wasn’t training right now. Of course not, probably on a mission, or actually sleeping like a normal person at this hour.

Shaking his head, he walked to the back room and pulled out dummy after dummy. Keeping the image of last night in his brain, he placed the fifteen dummies into their places. Taking his spot at the entrance, he went through the video again. As soon as he heard the metal clink, he ran to the dummy and kicked it, forcing it to fly into the wall. He didn’t stop there.

With his pumping adrenaline, he transformed into his tiger, letting her take over once more. She flew around the room, dummy after dummy, strong attack after strong attack. She bit into necks, throwing them to the side as her lithe body twisted to launch herself across the room.

The image ended, however, when a shadow appeared out of the corner of her eye. She sunk back into Atsushi’s skin with a thanks in his fingers as he brushed through her fur. Opening his eyes, he noticed the raven leaning against the bleachers. They eyes met and Atsushi moved to bow when the gravelly voice stopped him.

“You can’t possibly think that you could annihilate all the men in the room?” Grey eyes closed in disappointment. “Jinko, you came here with great deductive abilities. Analyzing your actions and what happened last night, you’re not thinking clearly.” The steel eyes opened to meet Atsushi’s, challenging.

Anger sparked in the tiger’s gold eyes. “I am thinking clearly! We almost died last night, and it was because of me!” He dropped his head, his hands fistng at his sides. “I’m here to fix that!” Each word was pushed out of his mouth, ripped from his pain.
Footsteps sounded and Atsushi jerked up to look into sparking charcoal embers. “You,” A pause, “can’t possibly think that you could annihilate all the men in the room.” Atsushi’s eyes widened at the words. The raven stopped a few feet in front of the tiger. Anger seeped from the Rashomon user. “You want to fix last night?” Atsushi gave a quick nod, feeling as if he were being berated, but he stuck his chin up in the air. “Stop acting like you’re the only one in the room.” The words were sharp, and Atsushi felt them inside his abdomen like daggers.

There were so many different meanings for his words, the tiger almost couldn’t decipher them all. Turning from the raven, he began setting the dummies up again. His hands were shaking from the amount of weight the other subordinate’s words meant, but mostly how Akutagawa was still willing to push him after last night.

Akutagawa remained where he was, watching Atsushi set the dummies back up. Once the tiger was done, he turned back to the raven, eyes glowing. Without another word, Akutagawa stood back at the doorway. Atsushi soon followed suit as he pulled the mental image back up. But as advanced as his deductive abilities were, he couldn’t figure out where he should attack and where he shouldn’t.

“Akutagawa.” His voice was hesitant but strong. A heavy sigh sounded through the room and Atsushi had never wanted to punch the other as much as he did now.

“Where are you standing?” The words came from Akutagawa’s mouth as if they were a statement, as if it were the most common sense thing in the world and it pissed the tiger off. With a growl, she took over and leapt in front of the room, imagining the eyes following him as he went from a calm civilian to a glowing tiger. The dummies at the front fell and when the tiger looked back, he saw black tendrils wrapped around the others’ necks. Releasing a shaky exhale, he ran his fingers through her fur and she retreated into him. Without giving Atsushi a moment to analyze, he picked up the dummies that were in Rashomon’s hold and placed them at different areas. At the tiger’s confused gaze, the raven sighed heavily again, a bit of irritation seeping into his eyes. “You can’t possibly think each mission will be the same.”

And with that reasoning, they continued their practice. Rashomon would place the dummies in different places each time and Akutagawa would help him practice trusting his team with covering him.

**Chuuya’s P.O.V.**

He watched from the far corner. He wasn’t used to this ass-o’clock hour of the morning, but he couldn’t let Atsushi bound off like he had.
Speechless, he watched for an hour. What surprised him with this practice, however, was that Akutagawa had brought a bag. *A damned bag*. When Atsushi had passed out from exhaustion, Akutagawa merely walked over to the duffle bag to pull out two water bottles, a chocolate bar, and a fig. Blue eyes watched the raven return to where the tiger had collapsed, setting a water down along with the chocolate bar. Without another glance, the raven walked out of the building.

*That wasn’t Dazai-like at all, Ryuunosuke.* Chuuya continued to watch over the tiger, making sure he woke up. When grunts and complaints fell from Atsushi, Chuuya gave a soft smile. He tilted his head curiously, however, when his subordinate’s eyes lit up at the chocolate bar and water left on the floor. Ripping into the package, he greedily ate the sugar as he downed the water bottle.

After it looked like Atsushi was going to set up another round of dummies, Chuuya shook his head and stilled each one. He watched with a smile as the tiger grew confused then worried. Atsushi jerked around as he tried to look everywhere for the intruder. Chuckling, Chuuya floated to the floor.

Purple eyes flew to his blue ones and he saw his subordinate light up in a blush. Looking away, the tiger bit his lip. “Chuuya-san, I have disappointed you.” *If you only knew, Atsushi-kun.*

Blue eyes widened at the soft words before he flew to stand in front of Atsushi, two fingers under the taller’s chin to tilt it up. Purple eyes finally met his and he shook his head. “I’m not disappointed in you, Atsushi. Your reaction was to be expected from your first mission.” Purple eyes widened and tears pooled in them again. “But, Atsushi-kun, have you forgotten my ability?” There was a small scoff under the words.

Atsushi quickly shook his head, his eyes wide. “I could never, Chuuya!”

The executive leaned down into Atsushi’s space. “Then have a bit more faith in your team when you lead missions.” There was a small taunt underlying and the tiger gave a nervous laugh, a blush covering his face as he pulled away. As if to demonstrate, his gravity pressed down on the dummies and they fell to the ground. “I can stop bullets, Atsushi. I can manipulate the gravity of anything.” His words reassured the tiger.

“Yes, Chuuya.” He was quiet, but they were said strong.

“Atsushi-kun,” The tiger looked back at the serious tone. “Everyone in the Port Mafia has a gift that makes them strong, useful during missions. Boss wouldn’t put together a team that would easily betray you or wouldn’t be strong enough to protect you.” He could see the tiger begin to process the words and he nodded, lifting a finger to set the dummies back up, only this time adding some to the rafters. “We’ve trained you on attacking, but not on reliance. As a mentor, I apologize for not...
And with that, Chuuya gestured to the door and it opened. Seven people walked in, five Atsushi had not met so far which was best for practice. Atsushi needed to know when blind trust was necessary and when it wasn’t. Tachihara strolled in, dropping his coat to the bleachers. “Man! It’s so hot in this training room!”

Gin swept in silent as the shadows and appeared beside Chuuya. He ruffled her hair before turning his attention back to the room. Hirotsu was standing at the doorway, a cigarette in his fingers and Kaji leaned against the wall with his hands in his pockets. The other three were some of his other subordinates and they stood off to the side, awaiting his orders.

He smiled at his group, turning back to Atsushi who had wide eyes. Worry was evident in his tense muscles and Chuuya walked over, draping his arm over the tiger’s shoulders. “As hard as this lesson will be for you, trust in your team is a necessity. For now, you will have to trust that I would not let someone I didn’t trust come near you, do you understand, Atsushi-kun?”

After a few moments, the tiger gave a short nod. Smiling, the mentor walked away. “And training begins now!”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you SO MUCH for reading!!!! A huge shout out to all of the silent readers, all the kudos, and all of the comments!!! ^.^ Please let me know what you think!!!! Constructive criticism is welcome! :)

Tiger Lily

Chapter Summary

Atsushi goes on his next mission as a leader....

Chapter Notes

Hiya! ^.^ Apologies for the long wait for this update, I really hope it lives up to everyone’s expectations!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Atsushi’s P.O.V.

Two Weeks Later

His second mission was more successful. Although Chuuya was leading it, Atsushi was second-in-command.

This time, however, Atsushi was handed the ropes once again with Akutagawa as his second. Chuuya had left to go overseas for a few days and although it made the tiger uneasy, he could trust Akutagawa to make the judgement that needed to be made if Atsushi couldn’t.

But that wouldn’t happen. Atsushi was going to take his place in the Port Mafia the same way everyone else had. Striding forward, he kept his hands behind his back as he entered the store. As soon as the bell rang over the door, the customers littered throughout immediately hurried out, presumably because of the looming shadow behind the tiger. Power began to hum under his skin, able to mingle her senses with his whenever he wished.

The advantages to this were numerous, within milliseconds he could take stock of where everyone and everything was, he could pay extreme attention to his hearing while his eyes focused elsewhere. He had enhanced senses and he planned on using them to protect his team.

At this moment, there were at least a dozen employees mulling about the room, Atsushi could hear a few pairs of footsteps walk off into what was the back (he had memorized the blueprints of the store days before arriving). Cataloguing that, he kept his attention on the man behind the register. With a bright smile, he approached and released his hands from behind his back, raising them to show he
had nothing in his hands.

He could hear his team’s breathing from the door and knew they were awaiting his instruction. Taking a calming breath, he dropped his hands to the counter. “It seems our reports show that there are an increasingly large number of our stocks not being accounted for around this area. Would you know anything about this?” Atsushi’s voice was warm, bright along with his smile. But his eyes were strong, narrowed, and focused on the man before him. He could hear more and more footsteps approaching from the back and could feel the tension his team gave in response.

But the tiger merely stayed as he was. At long last, the man before him broke eye contact and looked away.

“I know nothing of importance, only that if Hirotsu-san heard anything we would cease to exist.” Although there was no change in the tiger’s outward appearance, he contemplated the man’s words.

So, he hadn’t been involved, if only due to his fear of Hirotsu-san and his desire to live. But on the off hand that this man was taking advantage of Atsushi’s “naïve” act, it would explain the inability to meet the tiger’s eyes. Or, maybe there were others in the store…

Just then, Atsushi felt the floor beneath him scream at the weight on it. Giving a soft hum, he tuned one ear into that area of the store as his eyes remained fixed. So there are others who know, and neglected to tell him but the man had his suspicions. Loyal to a fault it seemed.

Turning from the man, he was met with a group of six men. Three looked as if they could be bouncers for a club while the others merely looked like truck loaders. With another bright smile, he met each gaze directed to him. “Hello - ” Before Atsushi could get another word out, a knife flew from one of the men’s hands to lodge into the wall to his right. To the wall where –

Purple eyes widened as he took in the sight from his periphery. Behind the register, the man was clutching his neck as if to strangle himself, if it were not for the knife’s handle protruding from between bloodied fingers. The tiger didn’t have time to turn his attention away before another knife lodged into the man’s eye, effectively killing him. The hard thud of a body sounded achingly loud through Atsushi’s ears. No, no. Not again.

No one moved as each party waited for a sign of life. Atsushi was the first to provide it. Angry and frustrated with himself, he pounced at the man in front of him, his hands wrapping around the murderer’s neck as he tightened his hands exponentially. With a yelp, the men surrounding him took a step back at the ferocity that leaked out from the tiger. Once purple eyes were now a blazing gold and the tiger’s claws had come out unconsciously to sink into the delicate skin between his hands,
blood running in rivers down the man’s shirt.

Atsushi saw nothing, nothing past the red haze of disappointment.

“Jinko!” And with that word, the tiger dropped the man in his hands. His anger was broken and left behind a jaded ache.

But that word had no effect compared to the words the man before him uttered, “You come here in smiles, but you’re no different than us. You’re Port Mafia.” The man leaned into Atsushi’s space, spitting out, “Like breeds like.”

With a roar, the tiger lurched forward, hands back around the man’s throat. *I am no murderer. I do not kill innocents!*

“You’re right.”

The gravelly voice broke through his thoughts once more. Hearing the loud clinking of Akutagawa’s boots, he dropped the man and leaned back with a snarl. He wasn’t entirely sure who he was snarling at; himself, Akutagawa, or the man before him? He didn’t have long to think about it as a tendril of Rashomon curled around the man’s throat, lifting him off the ground to face Akutagawa’s face.

“We are Port Mafia. You are measly pawns who have lost your time on the board.” And with those words, black tendrils impale the man in Akutagawa’s grasp.

In this state, the tiger’s senses were slowed down, almost as if he could see everything in slow motion. Steel gleamed under the coats of the five men before him; he could hear guns cock towards the entrance, and he could hear sirens in the background. *They called the cops knowing this was their ending? If they were going to be killed, they were going down as martyrs for the corruption that lurked under the Port Mafia, huh?*

With a snarl, Atsushi easily slipped into her, lurching forward to bite into the hands holding knives before leaping to the door, tackling the closest group to his team. Mouth wrapping around the barrels of the guns, she flung them to the ground to buy them time before throwing the guns to the door where Higuchi stood. By the time she had unarmed the men in the store, his team had taken care of everyone else. Tachihara stood a few feet from Akutagawa in the center of the room, a pile of severely injured men at his feet. Gin had returned to the door, standing next to Higuchi who was
looking over the Black Lizard Commander in worry.

With a soft smile, Atsushi turned her attention away. Everyone in the room was subdued and he quickly switched back, leading the group out of the back doors as the sirens grew louder. It wasn’t long before Akutagawa returned to his spot beside Atsushi.

The tiger wandered not for the first time if he was any better than a murderer considering the deal he and Akutagawa had made: Atsushi would watch over the team while Akutagawa cleared a path by whatever means necessary. Was Atsushi any better by allowing this deal? Now wasn’t the time to think about such things. He still had to report back to Mori.

It wasn’t until a hand was grasping his arm that he stopped walking, looking back at the taller with confusion clouding his eyes.

Grey eyes were looking over his body and Atsushi had the grand idea to punch the life out of the other; he even indulged himself in the idea before Akutagawa spoke.

“You have gunshot wounds.”

For a few moments, no one moved and no one uttered a word. Looking down, the tiger realized at once that it wasn’t confusion that was clouding his eyes – it was blood loss. There wasn’t a single area of his body that wasn’t stained in blood. The only thing Atsushi could muster out in response was a puzzled, “Huh?” before his vision faded into black nullity.

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When he came to, he was lying in a bed with white sheets and a comforter just as blank. As he continued to look around groggily, he realized the entire room was colorless and it quickly explained the headache that assaulted his brain. Placing a hand over the offending pain, he leaned up and came face-to-face with bright green eyes.

With a yelp, he jerked back and was met with a hushed laugh and soft hands on his shoulders, pushing him back on the bed. “You must be careful. You’ve lost a lot of blood, Nakajima-san.” With that, she leaned back and turned back to the clipboard on the bedside table. The tiger let out a soft huff of breath, relieved that she was merely a nurse.
And then the events of his third mission flew through his mind and he was met with a feral, untamed anger. Withdrawing from his primitive feelings, he looked away from the nurse. She quickly took his vitals and left. Atsushi sighed gratefully. Covering his face with his hands, he gave a rough groan full of frustration, irritation, disappointment, vexation; with all of this together, he felt overwhelmed. Gritting his teeth, he closed his eyes once more, hoping it would help against his headache.

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He was sent home a few hours later as a growling mess when Akutagawa picked him up. The raven hadn’t made a move to help him, which the tiger was eternally grateful for. The car ride was silent and Atsushi took the moments to calm his raging emotions. He could feel the bandages rubbing against his torso, neck, and shoulders; a painful reminder of the disappointing mission. Complete and utter non-fulfillment.

“Mori is giving you tomorrow off to recuperate. I gave him the report.”

The voice broke Atsushi out of his reverie and he found himself throwing a smile to the other in appreciation before resting his head back against the cool window. The contrast in temperature did wonders for his head and he made a mental note to turn his temperature down when he got home.

He startled awake by a hand jostling his shoulder, pain arcing up his body. With a hiss, he jerked up and away from the offending limb. A small smirk lit Akutagawa’s mouth and Atsushi never wanted to shove the other out of a moving vehicle more than he did now. With a final snarl, he grabbed his bag from the hospital, opened the car door and walked up to his house. Pulling out the key from his coat, he unlocked the door and immediately went for the thermostat to lower the temperature.

Setting his bag on the counter, he noticed the new bag inside and pulled it out, a ghost of a smile crossing his lips as he saw that the other had thought to order in his medicine. Taking out the bottle, he popped a pill into his mouth. Swallowing it, he made his way back to his room upstairs, collapsing onto the bed with a heavy sigh. Turning over, he grabbed the remote and turned on the television, if only for background noise. He wasn’t hungry but he was absolutely exhausted. With a few incoherent noises, he shuffled under the covers and curled into himself as sleep found him once more.

Atsushi woke up feeling warm. With a sigh, he stayed in his cocoon of blankets a little while longer before making a move to sit up.
Confused, he threw the blankets back to see if he was having an allergic reaction to the medicine, but his eyes immediately took in the arms wrapped around his waist. Now wide awake, he leaned into the warm arms, taking care not to move too much.

He knew Chuuya had a key to his house, but he didn’t think his mentor would visit him. Was it selfish of him to want to pretend he was sleeping for just a little longer? Was it wrong to desire being wrapped under those strong arms? All at once the tiger wanted to break, he was way too overwhelmed for all of this.

He had failed yet another mission and he was severely injured on top of it all. Now his mentor, his crush, was here with him. He bit his lip to keep his emotions in check. The soft snores from the older had Atsushi breaking.

He turned his head into the pillow next to him, muffling his noises. How much longer could he put up with this? How much longer would he pretend to not have feelings for his superior? What would happen when the subject was finally brought up? Would Chuuya want to be with him? Would Chuuya leave? Would the Port Mafia approve? What answer did Atsushi want?!

His frustration spilled over and a soft sob sounded from the tiger. With a rustling sound, Atsushi’s body tensed as he stilled; he hoped the other hadn’t heard his sob and would just go back to sleep. Atsushi needed to end this before it started, he couldn’t handle rejection of this magnitude.

But his mentor was intuitive and could unfortunately read his not-so-secretive body language. Sleepily, the smaller asked, “What is it, Atsushi-kun? Are you in pain? Do you need your medicine?” Immediately, as if jerked awake, the mafia executive made a move to get off the bed to grab the pills when the tiger stopped him with a hand to the other’s wrist.

Long moments passed, and silence bounced around the room. The tiger’s hand began shaking, willing his fingers to loosen their grasp but they refused. Atsushi bit his bottom lip, sucking on it to prevent another sob from sounding through his mouth.

What was he thinking hoping his mentor would return to his bed?! The question as to why Chuuya was in his bed to begin with flitted through his mind, but he didn’t pay it much attention. Chuuya was strong and he didn’t need Atsushi to weigh him down. The tiger’s hand finally fell from the other’s wrist and he immediately covered his face as he felt his tears pricking his ducts.
His mentor didn’t need him. Chuuya would never need Atsushi the way he wanted Chuuya. Chuuya was strong, and Atsushi was still trying to climb his way up the ladder of respect, if not through to his strong heartbeats. Chuuya couldn’t afford to have his subordinate pulling him down. His hands curled into fists in his face, teeth clenching as he tried to contain himself. His mind was reeling, his body shaking, his thoughts scream-

The tiger’s body stiffened as he felt arms ghost around his waist, brushing against smooth abdominal skin. Atsushi couldn’t move, and he certainly couldn’t think. Everything ceased to debate in his body. As soon as the slender fingers met and entangled at his stomach, the tiger swiftly turned in his cocoon of blankets to hug the other to him. The fingers seemed to be lurching toward his skin, pressing down ever so slightly. Tears stung the blanket around them and the tiger finally broke. Sobs fell from his mouth as he focused on the one thing Chuuya could give him an answer to, a willing answer.

“I failed,” The tiger’s voice broke on the syllables and his hands fist into the blankets. Soft fingers ran over his back and instantly the taller began calming.

After a few moments, Chuuya sighed softly. “Akutagawa informed me. Listen, Atsushi.” The tiger felt hands at his cheeks and he clenched his eyes shut as he looked away, not wanting his superior to see him like this.

But the mentor wasn’t having it. Gently but strongly he turned Atsushi’s face to his. The tiger refused to open his eyes, trying to jerk his face down to bury them in the covers. “Atsushi. Stop it.” The voice was calm but held the demand that everyone knew well. With his bottom lip between his teeth, the tiger stopped his struggling but kept his eyes closed. He felt a wisp of a breath cross his cheeks and knew Chuuya was giving in.

“Atsushi, you completed the mission. You found out who was supplying the missing weapons, and more importantly you protected your team. Atsushi,” The darker tone that slipped into Chuuya’s voice had Atsushi’s eyes open, blazing gold rising to meet the bright blue ones. Atsushi could see the other’s mouth open slightly, the blue eyes widen and Atsushi found himself getting lost in those irises, “You…could’ve died, saving your team the way you did.”

Atsushi didn’t dare try to explain the ones in Chuuya’s voice, didn’t think he could with the way Chuuya was watching him. He realized with the weight of a thousand pounds that he had not been this close to Chuuya since the aftermath of his first mission. He became acutely aware of the arms at his cheeks, his legs pressed against the other’s and the lingering smell of wine on the other’s breath. He wanted to try it. He wanted to taste it. He wanted to know what Chuuya felt like under his hands.

Finding his voice, he whispered shakily, “Why didn’t I?” His hands clenched in the blankets, the ache to touch the other, just to reach out and feel the warmth he knew was under the skin. Maybe,
maybe he could afford a single touch? Maybe that would be enough for his burning fingers…

A hand slid up his cheek and his body was positively *shaking* under the touch. When he felt fingers slide through his silver hair, the lip caught between his teeth was released as he could feel his eyelids flutter shut. When he opened them again, the ocean eyes were alight with a fervor Atsushi couldn’t place but could feel his body rise in response to it. “Your tiger regenerates.” His mentor’s voice calmed a part of him, only to awaken another.

In the next instant, a flame flickered in Chuuya’s eyes, mouth narrowing to a line as the tiger felt the hand in his hair tighten. A whimper fell from his lips at the new movement, biting his bottom lip as he closed his eyes. He wasn’t sure how he felt about this: he was afraid of the heat in Chuuya’s eyes, a heat that could scorch an entire village overnight but his body was quivering under the smaller’s hands. He could feel the mafia executive’s breath wisp across his skin and goosebumps rose to meet the intruding wind.

“You didn’t know?” The words were spoken softly, but Atsushi could barely breathe, merely responded with a shake of his head. The fingers gripping his hair loosened and slid further back to brace the back of Atsushi’s head. He *willed* his body to control itself, to stop reacting like this with his mentor knowing it would only end in disaster. Thankfully, his hands lifted from the blankets to grip the shirt draped over Chuuya’s chest.

A body would respond to the human brain, if the brain was in consensus. Right now? Atsushi didn’t know if he wanted to push the other back, keep him at arm’s length, or pull him closer. A gasp forced itself out of his mouth as he desperately grasped around his thoughts for some kind of anchor, something that he needed in order to push Chuuya away. *He would not do this to Chuuya nor himself!*

But his mind refused to latch onto one single thought, and therefore his hands remained fisted in Chuuya’s shirt. The hand at the back of his head was shaking slightly and Atsushi’s eyes flew open, immediately regretting it. Those blue flames were *scorching.* “You threw yourself in front of everyone. You could’ve died.” There was a tone screaming at Atsushi for attention but he refused to acknowledge it. His body was shaking, his thoughts scattered. He knew he wouldn’t be able to move a single inch away from Chuuya.

He couldn’t move his eyes past those all-consuming orbs, the red fire surrounding the pale, flushed face before him. Without warning, Atsushi found his head pushed forward before fire seared through him – through his mouth, his head, his *body.*

All too soon, the moment ended and he opened his eyes to see Chuuya’s eyes blazing with *need.* Atsushi’s mouth opened in awe, his gold eyes simmering. He could see the reflection of his eyes in Chuuya’s and they were *glowing.* With a small cry, Chuuya’s mouth claimed his once more and
Atsushi’s hands were finally beginning to work. He quickly tangled his fingers in red curls, pulling Chuuya closer to him as well. For the first time in his life, he could actually breathe and he wanted the fire that blazed through him before to consume him.

A moan left the tiger’s mouth as he pushed against the kiss, his body arching into the smaller, his knee pushing up to separate Chuuya’s legs. In the next instant, Chuuya had pushed Atsushi back and was now hovering over the taller with a knee between his legs. Shit, shit. They were both panting, hard. Everything about Atsushi was shaking, and he could see Chuuya was no better. Before the tiger could mention anything, the mafia executive leaned their foreheads together as he bit his lip. “You can’t do that, Atsushi,” The tiger’s voice seemed to give out, so he was forced to stay still and silent as his mentor chastised him. “You can’t just throw yourself out there without knowing everything!” The tiger shook at the desperation and anger that seeped through Chuuya’s words.

His hands fell out of the red curls, covering his face as another torrent of tears assaulted his eyes. Why was he feeling like this? Why couldn’t he control his emotions? Why couldn’t he leave before all of this worsened? Chuuya would leave him because he couldn’t contain himself during his missions. He couldn’t assess the entire situation and make a decision on the fly the way everyone else had.

His mind broke off its whirring as soft hands covered his, tangling their fingers as Chuuya pushed Atsushi’s hands out of his face. Without waiting, the mafia executive claimed the tiger’s lips softly, a stark contrast to just moments before. Atsushi let out a sob, Chuuya’s lips muffling it as the slender arms led their joined hands over the taller’s head, allowing the executive to slide his body lower and kiss more effectively. Gasping, Atsushi tried to keep up with the older, his body shaking.

Everything was too much, too soon. Yet, at the same time it wasn’t enough. What was happening right now? What did any of this mean? His hands clenched in Chuuya’s, a whimper falling from his lips. His mind and body were raging against each other, so it shouldn’t have been a surprise when the tiger saw his tail patting the bed.

But the sound that escaped the younger’s mouth was a very undignified choking sound. Immediately, Chuuya jerked back, eyes surveying Atsushi’s face. When the older saw his eyes looking down, his eyes dropped as well.

A light chuckle left Chuuya’s mouth as he took in the tiger’s tail wrapping and unwrapping from around his leg. With a yelp, Atsushi pushed himself back against the headboard of the bed, tucking his tail under him. Concealing it this way was painful to say the least and he bit his bottom lip to keep from whining.

Hands on his waist had him releasing his lip in favor of a gasp, eyes jerking up to meet crystal ones. Curiosity shimmered under the surface of those irises and Atsushi instantly grew wary, his eyes
narrowing. “Chuuya-san…?” The smaller didn’t bother with words, merely ran his hand behind Atsushi’s back to unfurl the tail. Atsushi threw his head back to the headboard, a sigh leaving his lips. His tail felt much better now that it wasn’t bunched up and screaming at him.

When slender hands ran down the length of the tail, a sharp shiver worked through the tiger’s body and the mentor whispered in awe, “My little oniyuri.”

Atsushi’s breath hitched at the nickname and a shuddery breath wisped across Chuuya’s face. “O-O-Okay, Chuuya-san.” The tiger’s voice was shaky and his eyes a bright purple when he opened them. With a teasing smile, the executive released the tail and leaned back. Without a moment’s hesitation, Atsushi leapt from the bed, almost tripping over his tail in the process had it not been for strong arms under his shoulders.

“Where are you going, Atsushi-kun?” The tiger shivered at the voice in his ear but leaned back on the smaller, nonetheless. He was still exhausted and he could feel the strong arms wrap around his waist and the back of his knees. Chuuya had scooped him up and immediately Atsushi buried his head in the crook of Chuuya’s neck with a sigh.

“Kitchen, please.” His words were muffled but he knew the other could understand them clearly. His hands clenched into the other’s shirt and he allowed himself to relax in his mentor’s arms. The tiger took immense comfort in the scents that were a constant on Chuuya, almost falling asleep again. When they got to the kitchen, Chuuya sat the taller on the counter before rummaging through the cabinets.

Atsushi splayed his hands over the counter and watched Chuuya, trying to guess what the older was going to make. Smiling to himself, he picked up the remote for his radio from the end of the counter. Turning it on, he scrolled through channels before finding a song beat he liked. Nodding to himself, he began softly humming to it. Closing his eyes, he let himself get swept away before he felt two fingers under his chin. Jerking his eyes open, he couldn’t stop the kiss that was one second from meeting his lips. He tasted like a sweet red wine and the tiger found his fingers hovering over the shirt in front of him. Chuuya pulled back without mentioning the kiss, holding out the tiger’s pain medicine and a glass of water.

Smiling, he picked up the items and the executive turned back to the stove, swaying his hips to the song as well and Atsushi quickly took the pill.

After a few moments, the song ended and another song replaced it, the beat slower. Shaking his head to no one in particular, the tiger picked up the remote and sifted through channels once more until he crossed a rhythm that immediately washed over him. Setting the remote on the counter, he leaned back and closed his eyes as he enjoyed the music.
It was nice, a calmer and more domestic feeling overcoming Atsushi. Chuuya was cooking him food, making sure he took his medications, and was watching over him while he slept. For once in the younger’s life, he felt completely safe and he smiled to the back before him. Perhaps this is what being newlyweds was like, he thought to himself.

A few songs later, the tiger began to feel less tense and could think without his head hurting. Sliding off the counter, he walked over to Chuuya and wrapped his arms around his waist as he dropped his head to the small shoulder. The executive looked over and smiled, pecking the tiger’s cheek and chuckled at the immediate blush that dusted Atsushi’s cheekbones. Picking up the spoon from the counter, Chuuya dipped some of the soup into it before blowing it and holding it up to the other. Without a thought, Atsushi took the spoon in his mouth and drank the liquid. *It was good.* When Chuuya pulled the spoon back, the tiger gave his approval with a nuzzle against the smaller’s neck.

A shocked noise left Chuuya’s mouth before Atsushi pulled away. The tiger was feeling happy, carefree. Biting his lip, he tangled his fingers behind his back. Maybe it was because of their kiss, or maybe the medicine, but Atsushi was a smiling and stuttering mess. When the smaller turned to face the subordinate, the tiger smiled shyly.

He didn’t notice the widening of Chuuya’s eyes nor the audible gasp that even a deaf person could hear. The tiger padded up to Chuuya, taking the slender hands in his and began walking back to the center of the room. Confused, the older followed with half-hearted stutters of questions. The words stopped, however, when the taller pulled Chuuya into his arms and began purring softly.

This time, however, the tiger caught the widening eyes and open mouth from his superior and Atsushi smiled shyly again before burying his burning face in the red curls. The purrs stopped but the taller continued swaying them, uncaring of the beat of the song.

For now, he merely wanted to hold Chuuya, to have him near. It was enough for now, he supposed. He could feel his tail wrap around Chuuya’s waist, pulling his mentor closer and Chuuya responded by locking his arms behind Atsushi’s neck as he rested his head in the neck in front of him.

A bright blush formed everywhere on the smaller, but he couldn’t stop the purrs that began to sound through the room once more.

Chapter End Notes

A few things, Oniyuri is the name of a shinobi (ninja) sword but is styled like a katana to prevent speculation. They are custom made and hand forged. Atsushi's nature is
essentially his tiger, but no one would suspect otherwise at first glance. But in addition to this, Oniyuri essentially translates to Tiger lily and just...yeah. This nickname came to be when the wonderful juuzouswife probably from Tumblr mentioned it, and I just HAD to add it!

AH. I have waited for the *longest* time to write this scene. Please let me know what you think and please feel free to come yell at me!!
Intoxicated

Chapter Notes

*Collapses onto the floor with the new chapter* I have returned!!! Will I be forgiven if I offer an almost 8 k word smut scene? Oh yessss, my lovelies the long awaited scene is finally upon us!! Don't worry, the smut has plot and character development!! So, without further ado~~

Mori....You little dog >.>

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chuuya’s P.O.V.

Laying amidst the navy comforter and white sheets, the executive wondered about everything and nothing. He wondered how Atsushi would handle his past, what essentially demanded the respect he has now.

How Atsushi would respond when he saw Corruption for the first time.

How the tiger would view him after seeing everything dark he was made of.

And the mafia executive wondered if he could handle the rejection. He wondered if he could handle the response he was hoping for; a response he wasn’t even sure he wanted.

But the bite each of these thoughts and feelings brought, wasn’t nearly as sharp when he was holding the tiger in his arms. His eyes were closed as he enjoyed the feeling of the silver ocean waving across his face, enjoying the warmth the younger radiated.

But the one thought that outweighed everything? What if he had lost Atsushi? What if the tiger didn’t have regenerative powers? What if he had died without Chuuya holding him one more time?

What if he never felt the soft hair again? What if he could never bask in the presence of Atsushi after yesterday?
What if…What if…What if…What if….

No one had ever meant as much to Chuuya as the tiger in his arms did. Sure, he would make sure to watch over his subordinates, would make sure to keep everyone in line, would make sure each order went according to plan. But never had Chuuya wanted to save another from the darkness that permeated the Port Mafia.

It scared him.

But he knew that he was entirely too selfish to let Atsushi go now. To further prove this point, he flitted his lips over the silver locks under his chin and ran a hand down the legs wrapped around his waist. He needed this tiger, but he couldn’t exactly pinpoint why.

Chuuya’s body immediately relaxed as purrs rumbled over his body, purrs that he was entirely too weak for. Swallowing thickly, he calmed himself as he looked to a spot on the wall across the room. He’d bed many others, knew he was skilled and experienced in everything he did. But never once in his life did he think he would get turned on by inexperience.

He wanted to change the tiger – wanted to give him confidence Atsushi deserved. He wanted to watch the younger bloom brighter than any other. And he wanted to be a part of that.

With a twitch from the legs around him, his thoughts ceased as his attention flew to the tiger. His breath hitched; lidded, bright purple eyes watched him, to which Chuuya forgot how to breathe.

“What’s wrong, Chuuya-san?” The honorific had the executive wanting to bite the word out of Atsushi’s language. He tried to move his mouth, tried to get the immoveable lips to open and form syllables, but nothing came. A small, tired smile grazed the tiger’s mouth as he detangled himself from the shorter, using his toes to push himself up and for the first time, Chuuya felt an arm slide under his neck. Stunned, the older’s body was frozen. The purple eyes before him were almost like flames, an ethereal flame he shouldn’t be worthy to see. Especially lidded and glazed. To all the gods above….

In the next moment, the mafia executive was turned on his side and found his body against Atsushi’s. A choked gasp left his mouth as he quickly pulled his hips back, breathing deeply to pacify his emotions. He found he wasn’t entirely against the idea of being pushed around the bed. No matter their status no one had ever dared to move him; he was the executive and therefore had more power. Although he had expressed his disagreement often, no one complied. Except one…
Loud and deep purrs soon reached Chuuya’s ears and nerves, immediately soothing and killing him. When he continued refusing to move closer to the other, hands cupped his cheeks and blue eyes jerked up to meet a waving purple. Soft lips covered his and he let himself melt into the innocent kiss. 

*He could drown in this;* a fate most appreciated.

When Chuuya pulled back, Atsushi’s hands wove through his curls and the executive relaxed instinctively, closing his eyes. Crooning, the tiger led the smaller’s head to his chest and let the purrs radiate around them as they fell asleep, finally warm.

**One Week Later**

“I want you and Atsushi-kun to escort our client to her event in three days.”

Blue eyes blew wide at the words. Escort? It wasn’t like he had never been on one, he’d accompanied at least twenty before but all with different endings. He really had no idea how this escort was going to pan out, and there was also Atsushi…

*Wait. WAIT. Atsushi’s still…*

“Boss, Atsushi-kun is a virgin.” His voice betrayed the worry he felt and he cursed himself for not controlling himself in front of his boss. A wickedly bright smile slithered across the other’s mouth and a dark sparkle entered those already blood-filled eyes.

With a tone Chuuya refused to acknowledge, his boss suggested: “That will need to be rectified, as you well know.” Fisting his hands in his pockets, Chuuya bowed his head and agreed.

“Do we have information on the woman?” Chuuya’s voice returned calm as he tried to hide his bone-deep blush. How was he going to rectify that? *Take the timid tiger to a strip club? Hell no, he was better than that for his first time. He couldn’t possibly take Atsushi’s first, but he ached to. How he ached to feel the tiger under him once more, to hear him….*

Breaking off his thoughts, he inhaled as he looked back up to his boss. How he wished he hadn’t. There was a knowing, an all-knowing gaze that wreaked havoc on Chuuya’s insides. Shit. Shit shit shit. But his eyes didn’t back down from that gaze, holding it like he was holding his ground. With a smile, the boss turned back to the papers in the file on his desk.
Ruffling sounded and Chuuya took the precious seconds to gather himself back together. “She is twenty, the event is a party and she has requested you and Atsushi.” Immediately, Chuuya knew the last phrase was a lie said through a slick tongue. No, no she had not asked for them together. Maybe Chuuya, but definitely not Atsushi. But Mori was not an idiot, he knew Chuuya was aware the tiger hadn’t been exposed to the world of escorts and knew his executive would catch his words. So what did the boss want Chuuya to piece together?

At a breakneck pace he knew what Mori was doing, knew what his boss wanted, had always wanted for the Port Mafia members. And his boss was nothing less than observant. However, the executive did not know what to do with the epiphany. The last time Mori had tried this was with Dazai, and that did not get the boss anywhere. *So why did Mori think this time would be any different?*

With a jolt, Chuuya realized. Atsushi was *not* Mori’s subordinate. He was *not* the Demon Prodigy. He was *not* immoral. He was *not* Dazai. Meaning, Mori had noticed *something* in Atsushi for him to openly support the relationship he was pushing to bloom.

Suddenly, the executive’s body felt light and he returned all of his attention to the man in front of him. His ears, ever listening even when he was thinking, filed away that the woman usually had two escorts: one male and one female. Tilting his head in thought, Chuuya commented; “Dress then, boss?”

With a smile Chuuya could only interpret as predatory, he dismissed the idea with a wave of his hand. With a nod, the executive watched as the boss dropped a picture of the woman on the desk for his appraisal. She had long, brown hair with bright hazel eyes to accompany it and a lovely snow complexion to contrast. Her cheekbones were just right and her eyebrows maintained. She had an overall clean appearance and it was clear she was easy on the eyes. Nodding he looked back up to those shimmering red eyes.

“Nyoki.” With a nod, he was dismissed.

**That Evening**

“Boss wants me t-t-to…?” The tiger lurched back to the headboard with immense speed. Chuuya remained seated at the corner, legs folded in front of him with his chin resting on his joined hands. He watched as Atsushi’s hands covered his burning face, a look that had Chuuya aching to see under those hands. He loved those blush petals and wanted to see them all the time. Exhaling, he crawled across the bed and gently pried the hands away.
“Hey, I’m going to be there so it won’t be so bad.” As if the mention of his name was enough to send the tiger into overdrive, those glorious purple eyes clenched shut and a yelp sounded. Patiently, the mentor massaged the hands he held and began kissing each digit. When the eyes began to open cautiously, a dark blush erupted over his cheeks and Chuuya lost himself. Silver locks dropped as Atsushi hung his head, a whimper falling from his lips and fuck, dammit Chuuya was a lost cause to this tiger.

“H-H-How… I-I don’t…I-I’ve never…Ch-Ch-Chuuya…..” Tears fell onto the mafia executive’s arms and Chuuya broke. The way Atsushi said his name, almost like a desperate plea and Chuuya couldn’t hear any more broken words. Pulling the taller into his lap, he rocked them and hummed into Atsushi’s ear.

After a few minutes, the tears calm and the hands fisted in his shirt loosen. Carding his fingers through the tiger’s hair, he continues to hold and calm his subordinate. “You don’t have to do anything, Atsushi. You can stay in the car or in another room with the doors locked and I will come to you afterwards.”

A choked gasp reaches the executive’s ears and purple eyes meet his – worry and disbelief evident. “But, won’t you get in trouble? For not following orders? Won’t I?” With the last question, the irises before Chuuya’s eyes whither and the color drains from the tiger’s face.

Quickly, Chuuya answers. “No, no Atsushi. Nowhere in the file does it state you must do anything other than walk with our client.” It was a lie, a blatant lie and Chuuya knew it. But he would take the lashing it would bring on. He would accept his consequences if Atsushi wasn’t comfortable with the idea. Granted, this would be the tiger’s debut escort and within the next week he would have at least ten inquiring about him. But if Chuuya could postpone the time for just a little longer….

As per his subordinates, Atsushi wasn’t stupid and could see through Chuuya’s lies. Chuuya could see a resolve bubbling in those purple eyes and he was quick to shake his head. “No, Atsushi. No. Absolutely not. Your first time deserves to be better than that.” His eyes were blazing with a passion he saw reflected in the purple flames that seemed to grow gold before his vision. It amazed him enough to stop his words. The executive froze at the hands that dug into his hair.

“You’re right.” And with those words, lips met his and all thought stopped. Everything ceased to exist. His body was attuned for the person in his lap and he could feel himself giving way. When a tongue shivered over his bottom lip, a gasp was heard and Chuuya couldn’t decipher whose it was. The executive felt the pressure lift from his lap to be placed around his hips and the lower portion of his back. A shadow of weight dropped around his shoulders and a moan rumbled from his throat. His hands dropped to the clothed hips in front of him, relishing in the soft sweatpants he had bought for the younger, but also couldn’t wait to rip the damned thing off.
With a nip to his lip, the tiger pushed onward and Chuuya could feel *every place* that was touched. His body was on fire and lit up from the inside out. He shivered as a tongue met his and searched along his mouth with a calm, a calm before a storm that ensued when the timid, innocent, inexperienced subordinate *sucked on his tongue*. A growl sounded and it *definitely* was not from the executive as their kiss broke off, only for lips to appear at his neck. His hands lifted from the hips in front of him to bury in a silver curtain. Moan after moan left his lips but he remained still.

He *loved* watching this innocence explore him quite passionately, but also didn’t mind the idea of someone else setting the pace. Especially if it was Atsushi.

But all of that exploded around him when the tiger sucked a mark against the side of his neck, shaking the executive to his core. A growl sounded from the taller and a very husky, “Chuuya.”

His world erupted into a sense of urgency. With a growl of his own, the executive lifted the tiger as if he weighed a feather and laid Atsushi on the bed. Their eyes met, flames spiraling up into a bonfire. The blue reflected in those gold eyes were like a fire over water. Immediately, legs wrapped around his waist tightly before a grind left the shorter, shuddering at the friction. Thanking his strength, he angled off the bed to grip the hips under him. Clear, dark eyes claimed gold and he asked darkly, “Are you sure? This is what you want?” They were both a panting mess and the view under Chuuya was doing nothing to help him.

“For the first time in my life, I have a choice. And all of it happened because of you. A-And, I… I want to make this choice.” When Chuuya began to open his mouth, Atsushi’s hands cupped the face above him. “Don’t take this choice from me, Chuuya.”

The executive’s throat closed, his voice hitching. Did Atsushi want this merely to repay Chuuya? But had he really given the tiger the better end of the deal? Was he worthy of this? Hell no he wasn’t. “Do you….d-do you want this?” The words were whispered and Chuuya’s throat constricted. *Oh how long had he been waiting for this?! How long had he dreamt of this only to wake?!!*

The executive leaned his forehead against Atsushi’s, their eyes lighting an electric current. “How could I not?” His words wisped across the tiger’s cheeks and immediately a rose bush bloomed over the younger’s cheeks as the thorns sealed Chuuya’s throat shut.

“Chuuya. I want this.” The words had begun light then quickly turned husky. How, in what universe could Chuuya have possibly stopped his next actions? If there was, *he did not want it.*

As teeth dug into Chuuya’s shoulder, he realized that maybe, he wasn’t the only one who wanted to
stay in this universe where he could not deny Atsushi. His body jerked when a slender hand wrapped around one of his wrists; purple-tipped flames met his as the tiger slid the executive’s hand lower and against the tiger’s spine. Chuuya did not overlook the way the younger looked at him from under his lashes, teeth digging into the tiger’s bottom lip. Damn, damn, damn. How the hell could Atsushi be so innocent and yet so sexy?! A shiver passed over his spine as he kept his eyes on the one under him. Inhaling deeply, he closed his eyes briefly; this was the tiger’s first time and he’d be damned if he was going to rush into this. When he opened his eyes, the fire in Atsushi’s eyes seemed to have dwindled but before Chuuya could see more, Atsushi turned his gaze away.

A soft noise left the executive’s lips at the worry clear in the other’s body language. “Atsushi,” Chuuya lifted his free hand from the younger’s hip to push the strands of metallic out of the beautiful face under him. Startled, the tiger gave a slight jump as he jerked his face back to meet Chuuya’s bright eyes. Without another moment’s hesitation, the executive closed the distance in a rather uncharacteristic show of emotion. His hand was gently cupping the younger’s jaw as he kept him in place, his other hand lifting the tiger up into a sitting position and ran his lithe fingers along the taller’s spine.

A sharp moan slipped through Atsushi’s throat to be caught by the executive’s lips as his tongue unwrapped the tiger’s mouth as if it were fragile. Fingers found their place in red curls once more and Chuuya found himself pulled back into the kiss as he was leaning back for air. Deciding his body didn’t need air as much as he needed Atsushi, he indulged the tiger and continued his exploration only to feel the younger sucking on his tongue.

A sharp shiver cascaded over his body and he pulled back to gaze at the flushed subordinate. The room quickly became laced with heavy pants and ragged breaths as their eyes continued to search each other. Chuuya rested their foreheads together, inhaling deeply again as he reigned himself in. His fingers remained hesitant to explore anywhere else on Atsushi’s body, not finding himself worthy but aching to fulfill what the tiger wanted.

“Chuuya, do not keep me waiting.” In this moment, the executive knew he would be a prisoner to Atsushi’s every whim and need, but he would never be complaining. With a sigh, the executive opened his eyes and dug his hands through the silver hair below him as he lowered them back down. Atsushi’s legs around his waist shook as the tiger tried to roll his hips. Dammit, Atsushi’s innocence would be the death of him. His mouth attached to the younger’s neck and throat, tongue flicking out occasionally but never biting – no matter how bad he wanted to. His fingers slid out of the soft curtain to ghost over the shirt under him, making quick work of the buttons. Within seconds, the shirt was unbuttoned and his mouth descended lower. Eyes widening, he jerked his head up as a broken moan reverberated off the four walls.

“Atsushi, code words. We-we need code words.” Chuuya’s voice was a bit shaky as he took in the beautiful being under his arms but his eyes were frantic. He was absolutely not doing this without code words. The tiger, however, hadn’t thought of such a thing and a soft laugh slipped through Atsushi’s lips unbidden. Confused, Chuuya cocked his head to the side in questioning as he listened to the glorious notes fill the room.
“S-Sorry, Chuuya. I-It’s just that you-you’re so s-serious,” Atsushi barely squeezed the words out between his laughter. Before long, both of the tiger’s hands were covering his face as laughter bubbled over his body. It was contagious and regardless of the seriousness of code words, the executive found an unwarranted chuckle leave his mouth. Shaking his head, he pulled the hands from the younger’s face and waited until he knew Atsushi was listening to him.

“I refuse to do this without code words, Oniyuri.” As serious as his words were, his voice was warm. After a few moments, the tiger’s laughter died out and he nodded his head in understanding.

“Color codes? Red and yellow? Yellow for when I’m uncomfortable and red for when it’s too much?” Chuuya nodded and bit his lip as he remembered it and watched as Atsushi trained the terminology in his brain as well. When they gave each other mutual nods, Chuuya’s lips connected with the tiger’s skin once more and he continued his exploration. His breath ghosted over the heaving chest, enjoying the shiver that constricted Atsushi’s muscles.

When his lips brushed over a rose bud, the body under him jerked up and hands shook in red tresses. “A-ah,” The noises were barely loud enough for Chuuya to hear but he could read body language just the same and he flicked his tongue across the peak, earning him a shaky moan that sent heat straight to his lower stomach.

His fingers ran along the curves under him, his fingers fitting along them as if they were made to be there and he trailed his tongue across the lean chest to close his teeth around the other bud which elicited a sharp hiss and a snap of the hips around his. *This time,* the snap was instinctual and the thighs had gripped his sides perfectly to support the roll and the movement was flawless. Friction of the wonderful sort consumed his mind and Chuuya’s breath hitched in his throat as the tiger’s eyes widened. With another roll the same friction as before snatched away Chuuya’s thoughts and a moan ripped from his throat as teeth bit into the flushed skin below him.

Chuuya’s thoughts were muddled and he gripped the treacherous hips as he reigned himself in. His breath was ragged as he tried to calm his raging and burning erection as he moved lower, his knees sliding easily against the silk comforter. The legs remained at his waist but he didn’t care, much preferred it if he was being honest with himself. His lips mapped out the skin that had been aching for attention since he laid eyes on the tiger, relishing in the moans and keens above him.

His fingers deftly unbuttoned the black jeans covering the skin he ached to touch. Releasing the material, the black fabric was enveloped in a thin veil of red as Chuuya used his power to slide them off, his attention required elsewhere. He slid his arms under the glorious legs before him, hooking his wrists up so that his fingers were gripping the younger’s hips as his lips descended on the now available skin.
Deep purrs sounded from above him, and he kept his ears carefully tuned into every noise the tiger made. When his lips caught on the signs of scars, the executive’s eyes shot wide. He had been there to stitch every wound his subordinate received from his missions, but he’d never seen these. They were long, almost five inches and he knew precisely where they came from: a poker. Anger boiled in his blood and his eyes blazed with a fire that radiated off every item in the bedroom.

*Where was this kid before he found him? Who gave him these? These weren’t an accident, they were purposeful, placed where they would always ache no matter how scarred over they were. These were intentional.*

*And whoever did this would pay greatly.*

“Y-Yellow.”

The syllables were barely audible but it was all at once that the executive realized hands had left his hair and the body under him was shaking – not from pleasure either. Jerking his eyes up, he saw the palms covering Atsushi’s face and the room was a brilliant red. With a shock, Chuuya reigned in his anger and the bedroom’s light diminished. Apology after apology left the executive’s mouth as his fingers slid gently over the hands before him. Weaving their fingers together, the executive crooned softly.

After a few moments, Atsushi moved his hands and wrapped them around Chuuya’s shoulders, hiding his face in one of his arms.

The executive kissed his subordinate’s forehead, his hairline, and his temples. “Atsushi, you’re absolutely stunning. No amount of scars will change that. If anything, they make you more breathtaking.” He watched as molten gold met him, eyes wide and disbelieving. Hurt remained, but it wasn’t a betrayal kind of hurt – merely a lost look. Chuuya hated it. He leaned their foreheads together and closed his eyes, allowing his words to carry the weight of his anger. “However, no one will lay another hand on you. No one else.”

A sharp whine left the tiger’s lips as Atsushi’s mouth collided with Chuuya’s, his hands pulling the older closer, closer, closer. He could feel the other’s body relaxing against him and he growled possessively, a sound he had never felt the need to do. An answering rumble from the tiger was all Chuuya needed to know Atsushi was in the same state of mind.
The tiger thrashed on the bed, a hand in his mouth to muffle his noises as the executive continued to kiss up the shaft before him. Hips tried to thrust up, but Chuuya kept his hold firm on Atsushi’s hips.

“Chuuya.” With a look up, the older noticed the tiger was sitting up on his elbows and looking down at him through lidded, and quite bright eyes. Without another word, Chuuya took Atsushi into his mouth to the hilt as he maintained eye contact with the tiger. Although the executive was bigger, Atsushi was nothing to laugh at. As he drug his mouth up the member, the tiger’s body jerked and fell back against the pillows with a keen loud enough to rattle the walls as his hands fist into the sheets, nails ripping through the fabric. Atsushi had long lost control over his tiger and Chuuya enjoyed watching the younger unfold before him. The tail around his waist was tight with the pleasure its owner was feeling.

With a hum, he hallowed his cheeks and sunk back down, staying for a few seconds as his throat convulsed around the member before sliding back up and doing this in quick snaps. Within seconds, the tiger’s body was jerking and muffled screams lit up the room. One of the executive’s hands skimmed up the other’s hip to coax the muscles in the tiger’s stomach to calm as he bobbed to the bottom, humming as his throat convulsed once more. With a shout, legs clenched around his sides as Atsushi came and warmth flooded Chuuya’s throat as he swallowed. He continued to bob through the orgasm, adoring the overwhelmed shakes Atsushi fought.

Lifting up, he let his hands massage along the tiger’s stomach and sides as he calmed their twitching. When those gorgeous eyes opened and met his, Chuuya felt a smile caress his mouth instinctively. Fingers shakily wove back into his hair and pulled him up to meet the tiger’s lips. Although Atsushi had just released, his energy was no less than before. With each brush of his lips against the younger’s the heat pooled dangerously in the pit of his stomach and he was aching.

His body stuttered, however, when the now fluent hips rolled and his erection felt the wondrous feeling of friction. In the next second, however, he was on his back and the tiger was looming over him.

This sight rivaled any other he could possibly think of. Although Chuuya was shorter, he and Atsushi had the same height from the waist up – the tiger merely had long legs. The younger’s eyes were drawn down, teeth digging into his bottom lip as if he were trying to figure this position out. Atsushi thought too hard and it was entirely too innocent for the situation. But Chuuya was always a goner for innocence and this dove above him was the epitome of purity. In turn, he felt his member thrum with a familiar ache that had his pants tightening severely.

A low whimper fell from the tiger’s lips as his nerves increased. God, Atsushi was so damned beautiful. He was breathtaking, earth-shatteringly beautiful. His fingers laced with one of the tiger’s hands and lifted it from the bed, bringing the limb to his lips. He kissed each knuckle, each curve, and each crevice. Gold eyes blazed from atop him, soft moans escaping the taller’s lips.
“Beau.” Chuuya’s voice sung, the syllables etching into the tiger’s sensitive ears earning the executive a moan and bright red blush. Oh~? Atsushi……my little oniyuri….

When Atsushi covered his face with his free hand, the executive sat up and wrapped a hand into the silver curtain. “Mon Cherie.” Another noise left the tiger’s lips and Chuuya smirked as he kissed the neck in front of him, feeling a hand dig into his red tresses. Leaning back, he looked over the flustered tiger and smirked. “Viens ici et embrasse-moi, Oniyuri.” The executive rolled the syllables huskily as he crooked a finger in a come hither motion. With a soft whimper, the tiger complied to the crooked finger and leaned in to the older.

What Chuuya expected would be a soft kiss turned into one of surprise as a choked moan ripped out of his throat at the teeth that bit into his bottom lip. “Toi petit minx.” Chuuya groaned into the tiger’s mouth, hands wrapping around the taller’s waist and pulling him closer. A shiver worked through Atsushi’s body at Chuuya’s words and before the executive could make another move, he was shoved back on the bed and on top of the pillows. Although Chuuya could feel a slight shake in the tiger’s hands on his shoulders, there was now a determined set to his jaw and Chuuya grew at once intrigued and submissive (for the moment).

Atsushi’s hips found Chuuya’s thighs and their lips met overpoweringly. Hands gripped everywhere, teeth nipped, tongues explored, and breaths fought for air. At the first roll of Atsushi’s hips, Chuuya’s head threw back at the friction he so desperately craved. “Merde.” The executive hissed out as roll after roll met flawlessly and consumed his thoughts. This was Atsushi’s first time and he deserved to take it his own pace; Chuuya never felt more thankful for his long stamina than he did now.

Snapping, the tiger gave a short growl as Chuuya saw the glint of sharpened claws before he heard a piercing rip. If the beast’s eyes weren’t a piercing ray of gold, Chuuya would’ve joked about the impatience Atsushi possessed. As it was, the executive watched the other slide lower down his body and he felt his breath hitch as magnificent eyes rose to meet his. There was a blazing willpower behind those irises and he ached to push it to the limit, see how far he could push his tiger. Leaning up on his elbows, he watched as Atsushi placed kiss after kiss along his sides and led his head back against his shoulders as he closed his eyes. The tiger’s lips were soft and they stoked a fire in his veins no one else could.
The pants were easier for Chuuya to be rid of, deciding to help the tiger as he used his gravity to slide them the rest of the way off. Atsushi leaned back as he looked at Chuuya, uncovered aside from the black underwear and choker he was wearing around his neck. He watched as a dozen of emotions flitted across the taller’s face: adoration, amazement, awe, and a few Chuuya refused to read in to.

Fingers unwrapped every crevice on Chuuya’s chest, ghosted over every scar and bruise. It wasn’t long before fingers were replaced with lips and Chuuya truly had his breath taken from his lungs. True to the tiger’s nature, lips changed to teeth and nips blessed the executive’s skin. Never had Chuuya felt so adored. His chest heaved as he tried to take in breath but soon found it impossible when the curious tiger began kissing over the waistband of his underwear. Gasping, he felt lips sear through his skin faster than any fire, than even Corruption. He was steadily losing himself to the tease his minx was. “Vas-y bébé. Donne-moi tout ce que tu as. S’il vous plait, s’il vous plait.” His native tongue flowed through his body without permission.

Chuuya didn’t hear the sharp intake of breath from below him, didn’t hear the low moan that released from Atsushi’s throat, but he felt the fingers flick under the waistband to pull it down. He hissed as his erection met the cold air, but immediately shivered and moaned as Atsushi wasted no time in exploring the executive’s member. *Just like him, to dive in headfirst then deal with repercussions afterwar-

All thought ceased as the tiger took Chuuya into his mouth, sucking on the tip. A strangled groan left his lips and he dug his fingers into the sheets, not wanting to hurt Atsushi by accidentally shoving the poor kid further down his length. Breathing deeply, he tried to calm himself but it was impossible with Atsushi’s mouth on him. When hesitant gold eyes looked up at Chuuya, he felt a fire sear down to the pit of his stomach and he couldn’t stop the moan that pushed free of his lips. *Sh-shit!* He threw his head back, knowing if he kept his eyes on the innocent-yet-not-so-innocent cub over him, he wouldn’t last a minute.

“*Merde, tes yeux sont pécheurs,*” Chuuya gasped out. When the mouth was replaced with a tongue, the executive almost cried out at the smaller stimulation but found his legs shaking at the tongue that slid up his member, twirling it around as he rested a hand on the base to hold him still. He bit his bottom lip and groaned. When all motion stopped, Chuuya opened his eyes and looked down cautiously as he watched his tiger’s mouth inches from his member – flames on him.

His breath hitched as he stalked that dangerous mouth making its descent to the place Chuuya needed it most. Eyes remaining on him, Atsushi swallowed half of him in one go before sliding up and back down to the same spot. Chuuya’s elbows shook as he inhaled sharply, his lungs aching. His tiger continued trying to go deeper, stopping when he was a few inches away. Shakily, he lifted a hand to touch the younger’s cheek and immediately the mouth tightened as he began sucking. As if his soul were ripped from him, Chuuya’s body dropped back to the bed with a broken grunt. “H-hum,” Chuuya advised and not a second later, vibrations made their way up his member and spine, catching his thoughts before they could form as his body jerked. “A-ah!”
A few slow bobs were given as the hums continued to stimulate him. His hands fisted into the sheets as he tried not to make the tiger go faster. He was panting heavily, his body spasming. After a few moments of slow torture, Atsushi’s pace sped up and Chuuya was left a gasping and moaning mess. French oozed out of his mouth as his thoughts were fractured. If someone could break a brain, he was sure Atsushi had accomplished it.

Although Chuuya couldn’t focus, Atsushi was paying very close attention to each movement, sound, and pant that came from the one beneath him. Curious, he slid his tongue across the slit of the erection in his mouth and was rewarded with a muffled shout. When he looked up, he saw the executive was biting into the corner of the pillow and Atsushi was not happy about that. Travelling his tongue up and down the member in his mouth, he let the hand at the base work in tandem with his bobs. With a shout, Chuuya’s mouth released the pillow as his body jerked up as if he had been electrocuted and his hands ripped through the sheets. The growl that left the executive’s mouth was the only warning Atsushi received before he was on his back, Chuuya panting raggedly above him.

“La curiosité a tué le putain de chat,” Chuuya ground out between heaves, their faces inches apart. A hand lifted to cup the side of his tiger’s face, thumb sliding over Atsushi’s swollen bottom lip. “Your mouth is sinful, Atsushi.” He felt the shiver that wracked through the tiger’s bones and he smiled softly as he descended upon those lips. Their kiss wasn’t as violent as before, more of a leisurely exploration as Chuuya’s hands hooked behind Atsushi’s knees, bringing them up around his waist as he ran his fingers along the soft skin. When he pulled back from the kiss, gold entranced his eyes until he saw a flicker of movement in silver hair and raised his eyes just enough to see the cat ears that poked out of the tresses.

Chuuya choked.

As if Atsushi knew what had happened, he smiled shyly up at Chuuya before the telltale sign of a tail wrapped around his waist, securing him in place before the ears flicked toward Chuuya. A sharp groan lit the room and he felt his erection twitch. He was again reminded of why he never allowed himself to touch Atsushi, afraid he would taint he dove’s innocence and in a way he was. However, the dove was asking him. Atsushi wanted him.

Undiluted desire flowed through his veins. Leaning his forehead against Atsushi’s, communication passed between them before Chuuya proceeded any further. The tiger’s arms wrapped around the executive’s shoulders and he pressed his body against Chuuya’s, lips meeting in a soft kiss that ended in a bite to his bottom lip. That was all the executive needed. Reaching into his nightstand, he pulled out a bottle of oiled lube. Setting it on the bed, he grabbed a condom and set it next to the bottle as well. All the while, their lips never separated.

Atsushi was the first to pull back, eyeing the additions on the bed.
Chuuya’s eyes softened at the worry evident in the tiger’s eyes and face. With a soft smile, he rubbed his thumb along Atsushi’s cheek. “Hey, look at me.” The executive’s voice caressed the tiger’s skin and gold eyes met his before a silver curtain fell over them.

“I-I don’t……want you…..t-to..” The tiger stuttered out helplessly and Chuuya kissed Atsushi softly before pulling back, resting on his knees.

“We don’t have to do this, Atsushi. I won’t be upset if you decide not to, ya know.” Chuuya’s fingers ran along the supple, soft skin of the tiger’s legs, loathe to leave. Now that he was this close to Atsushi, he wanted to be nowhere else; there was no paradise, no battle that could give Chuuya more rest than at his subordinate’s side.

However, this was Atsushi’s decision and the executive refused to push his limits. If Atsushi wanted Chuuya to take him, he would and then he would leave. He was already completely taken with the tiger and the last thing he needed to do was make their work awkward. So, he would do this for Atsushi and he would leave. He would do as his tiger commanded, then walk through those doors and act as if nothing happened.

It would break Chuuya, but it would be better than continuing with his hopes only to be torn back apart. It was for the best.

With a nod of his head, he kissed the knee once more, cupping it with his hands before turning and lithely swinging down from the bed. He didn’t notice the tear that fell down Atsushi’s cheek, didn’t see the dumbfounded expression as he tried to gather his thoughts, didn’t see the tiger rushing to fix what he had done.

“W-Wait!” Shuffling sounded on the bed and Chuuya turned, knowing the tiger was clumsy and caught him around the tiger’s side as his knees almost slipped from the bed where he would have then fell into a heap on the floor. Blue eyes widened as arms flung around his shoulders, lips crashing into his messily. Warmth flooded all of Chuuya and a blush covered his cheeks and chest as he smiled into the kiss, hands gripping the tiger’s hips before he pushed them back. Once he was sure Atsushi was stable on his knees again, his hands came up to cup the face before him, leaning back slightly so their kiss wasn’t all over the place.

A pleasant hum coated Chuuya’s lips as he returned the vigorous kiss, fingers stretching out to rub the backs of the tiger’s ears. Hands curved along the back of his head and deepened their kiss – but there was a new sensation against his cheek and it left him gasping for breath. Instinctively, he leaned into the soft fur, a shudder consuming his body.
“Atsushi.” Chuuya’s voice caressed the lips before him, the tail against his cheek sliding back into red curls to push him back against the awaiting lips. Their kiss lit up the bedroom, their teeth catching on tongue and lips as thorns constricted Chuuya’s throat once more. How long had he ached for this?!

“Don’t view…me differently, Chuuya.” The words were breathlessly gasped out between kisses and the older pulled back, eyes wide. He took in the entirety of his tiger’s blushed face, heated eyes below lowered eyelids, and the tears that had begun again. All at once, the executive realized that this was no mere, lose-your-virginity-to-someone-you-trust-instead-of-an-escort. This was love.

Pure, unfiltered, undiluted love.

And Atsushi held that in the gold irises when he looked to Chuuya.

The thorns in his throat sliced down the tunnel as they made their way to his stomach.

The tail at the back of his head slid down to rest against Chuuya’s neck. Although Atsushi had the beast, he always managed to rip the beast from under Chuuya’s skin. With a growl, he lifted the tiger and threw himself back on the bed. With a flick of his finger, his boxers slid back off and he felt those glorious, long limbs wrap around his waist again.

His hands came up to cup the face under him; how could he have not seen it earlier? In the way the tiger’s eyes followed his every move, the way Atsushi’s cheeks always dusted with pink when he met Chuuya’s eyes, how had he not noticed it earlier?

“Atsushi, Atsushi, Atsushi, Atsushi.” Chuuya repeated the tiger’s name like a prayer as his lips worshiped the body under him, blessed it with little red marks that had the younger mewling into the sheets and tail furling and unfurling in pleasure around his neck. Atsushi’s hips rolled over Chuuya’s and although the movement was sloppy and desperate, it sent a fire scorching down his body. Atsushi wanted to please him. Shit. Shit shit. What was Chuuya doing then?! He finally had Atsushi, what was he waiting for?!

“Chu-Chuuya,” The moaned name had the executive shivering and felt himself lose it as the tail explored his spine, setting his body alight.
“A-Ah, mmm, ha!” Chuuya’s body was curving along the tail’s journey, his thoughts thrown to the wind as he was left to grasp at the sheets to control himself, eyes clenched.

When his eyes opened, bright heterochromatic orbs dissected him and what should have left the executive wary only increased his need to take the tiger as his own. Caught in the act, Atsushi jerked his eyes down and hid his face in the pillows but before Chuuya could move those glorious eyes back to his, the devilish tail slithered its way up his spine, over his shoulder, to caress his cheek. Before he knew what he was doing, one slender hand wrapped around the appendage and in the next instant, his mouth was against the soft fur.

Closing his eyes, he pressed soft kisses to the tail as he reveled in the silky feeling, his fingers trailing along the nerves. A very sharp keen sounded in the room, illuminating every nerve that was resting on Chuuya’s body. Hands were brought up to cover the tiger’s face, but the chest remained bare and he was made privy to the carnations covering every inch of the skin in a lovely blush.

A shiver pierced his body at the image and Chuuya moaned darkly. “Votre innocence sera la mort de moi.”

A resounding whimper had the smaller’s body jerking and igniting a blue flame inside his eyes. All at once, he was consumed with taking the tiger, making him his, marking him.

Setting the tail against the bed, he used his free hand to pull the hands away, kissing the back of each palm until those beautiful eyes opened up.

Chuuya immediately found himself hypnotized once again by the pure light in them. He wanted to cage it, protect it, claim it.

But before he could bring himself back to reality, the tiger lurched up to wrap his hands around the back of the executive’s neck and pull him down for an all-consuming kiss. Without even trying this kid could bring out everything within him and the tiger was there to play.

When Atsushi nipped his bottom lip, Chuuya gasped and then a rough grunt sounded off the walls as he found himself under the tiger. The hands slid from the back of his neck to cup his face and Chuuya couldn’t decide which hand to lean into and released a frustrated but ecstatic sigh against the lips devouring his.
Hips rolled over his and the movement effectively broke the intoxicating kiss so Chuuya could look down with amazement between their bodies to see the languid way those hips seemed to move confidently now, their members sliding together with electric pleasure. *Goddamn, Atsushi…*

Shakily, Chuuya placed his hands on those glorious hips and ground up into the other, forcing a delicious moan to sound at his ear. Turning his face, Chuuya’s teeth caught at the tiger’s earlobe before whispering sultrily, “Look at you, Atsushi. The…things…I want…to do to you.” He panted the words out as he licked up the shell, nails digging into the taller’s hips.

All movement stopped as the tiger leaned back with smoldering gold eyes, those hands now resting on Chuuya’s chest. “Then why don’t you start doing them?”

For all the confidence those words were spoken with, the disheveled hair and flushed face gave another shy tone to those syllables that *didn’t belong there* but were there nonetheless. And the words along with the sight before him were enough to lurch him into action.

All of the executive’s sass seemed to be gone where this tiger was concerned and it was simply amazing to see the effect Atsushi had on Chuuya. Digging those nails in deeper to the smooth skin, he flipped them over with a smirk before latching onto a nipple and a keen sounded above him.

Chuuya wanted to know what other sounds this tiger could produce…

Glancing up, he saw Atsushi’s face turned into the pillow, probably from the blush that encompassed his entire body at having been confident enough to push Chuuya. Either way, the executive took it as a lovely distraction as his free hand searched for the bottle of oil before sucking the other bud into his mouth to be rewarded with a back arching into his body.

Silently, the lid opened and he was able to soak his fingers abundantly with the liquid then set the bottle down before placing a finger at Atsushi’s entrance. He could feel the other tensing under him as he began to rub his finger along the rim. “You’re sure you want this, my tiger?” There was a very eager nod in response but his body remained stiff in apprehension. Balancing his body on his knees, Chuuya hovered over the tiger before placing kisses along the pale neck. Soft sighs escaped those beautiful lips and Chuuya could feel his member twitch in interest.

Atsushi was beginning to relax under the executive’s kisses and nips, but not enough. Sliding three fingers along his oiled hand, he gripped Atsushi’s length and began stroking slowly. A choked inhale reached the air as the tiger’s back arched wondrously under him and those silver locks tickled his shoulder and neck as Atsushi placed his forehead in the crook of Chuuya’s neck. Taking this moment, Chuuya slid a finger in, slowly.
A strangled gasp flitted over Chuuya’s ears as Atsushi tensed again and the executive immediately began stroking faster to distract. After a few moments, the tiger relaxed enough for Chuuya to slide the digit in and out at a slow pace. When the pants were light, and the nails digging into his back were loosened, he began to curl and twist to stretch the entrance.

“Y-Yellow,” The word was barely audible but Chuuya caught wind of it along with the note of anguish. Pulling out his finger, he peppered kisses along the shoulder in front of him.

“Let me know if you want to stop, Atsushi. It’s okay.” The executive’s voice was soft and warm against the sweat slicked skin of the tiger’s body and he felt the shiver that expelled the tension from Atsushi’s bones.

“Go ahead,” The word was a bit tense but Atsushi had begun kissing the neck he was buried in, so Chuuya gave a kiss of his own before rubbing the entrance in warning and sliding the digit in slowly. His free hand immediately began stroking the tiger’s member once more as he thrusted his finger in a careful rhythm.

When the tiger was taking the pressure well, those nails began digging back into skin as if to say *Come on, let’s keep going.* And Chuuya was not one to let a demand go unresolved.

Sucking a bite of skin, he waited until the tiger was pliant in his arms before easing a second finger in. When he unlatched his mouth, he whispered against flushed skin, “You’re doing amazing, *mon Cherie.*” A resounding keen sounded in the executive’s ear and Chuuya immediately new what would make this process easier.

When the two digits were sheathed inside, he whispered encouragements in Japanese and French. “*Tu as l'air incroyable sous moi… Étourdissant… Beautiful, my little Oniyuri…Listen to you… You’re taking me so well… J’ai hâte de voir ce que tu vas faire avec moi en toi…*”

By the time four fingers where inside, Atsushi was a blushing, panting, heaving mess. Keens and pleas made their way to the air and Chuuya was reminded every second just how *achingly ready* he was to take this tiger. He didn’t need four fingers, but Chuuya wanted nothing to be painful.

When those enrapturing golden irises sought out his, there was an animalistic gleam lingering just under the surface that had Chuuya smirking with challenge. But he couldn’t deny the need to take Atsushi and pound him into the next year…
Taking out his fingers, he leaned over the muscle-blessed body and tore into the condom’s wrapping to slide it on his member with practiced ease before placing his elbows on either side of Atsushi’s head and placing his lips over the other’s. The nails that had wound up in the sheets were now digging into Chuuya’s back in irritation, in impatience and the executive was eager to comply. Smirking through their heated kiss, he slowly slid into the scorching heat of the tiger.

He had almost forgot how tight a virgin’s body was and he was left clutching for breath in the crook of Atsushi’s neck as the tiger mewed. If Chuuya wasn’t busy trying to maintain his hip’s control, he would be completely shocked by the sound. But as it was, the executive clenched his eyes closed as he gripped the hips under him viciously hard as if to etch the severity of the tiger’s actions right now.

In a warning.

And the tiger complied with an arched back and ragged pants as those sharp nails curved their imprint into Chuuya’s back. Chuuya couldn’t feel it, though. He was too busy trying to open the claws that seemed to wrap around his throat restricting his breathing. When he was sheathed to the hilt, he gripped those hips tighter as if to say this isn’t over, stay still. With bated breath, Chuuya waited as Atsushi’s entrance spasmed around him to accommodate.

And then the tiger showed its cruelty in running that beautiful tail up Chuuya’s sensitive back as those hips rolled shakily around the member inside him. With a growl, Chuuya’s hands gripped Atsushi’s forearms and placed them on the bed as if it would help in restraining the other’s body.

But Atsushi was not patient and Chuuya was left grappling for breath as he slowly slid out and pushed back in at the same pace. But it wasn’t enough.

“Chuuya. Move.” There was an underlying rumble that had only shown during fights when Atsushi was lost in the moment of battle and it captured Chuuya’s entirety. Unable to stop the snap his hips gave in response, he was blessed with a shudder that wracked through Atsushi’s body and a pleasant weight wrapped around his waist as the tail curled around the long limbs, as if to hold Chuuya in place.

Cobalt drank in every response and when boiling gold eyes met his, he set up a fast rhythm that had the tiger grappling for something to hold onto that wasn’t the pistoning executive. Nails ripped through already tattered sheets, elongated fangs biting into a pillow as if to silence his sounds but they were discarded to the floor as soon as Chuuuya noticed. An unspoken command was given: Give me every sound, every reaction. Do not hold back. Embrace yourself.
And embrace Atsushi did. The nails lifted from the sheets to cling back onto Chuuya’s back and the growl that was released shocked him to his core. In the moment of distraction, the tiger’s arms slid to Chuuya’s sides and in the next second, Chuuya was on his back while gold eyes smoldered above him.

He couldn’t take his eyes off the sight before him: liquid gold orbs, wild silver locks, a flushed body, skin shining with the light’s reflection, marks of Chuuya’s kisses and shadows that clung to each dip and curve of the tiger’s limbs and muscles. Chuuya could spend all day under this creature and thank the gods for every second of it. The image only intensified when those bruise-littered hips curled up then slid down.

And all at once the confidence with which Atsushi had flipped them was gone to the wind as he realized he was still new to this and didn’t know if he was doing anything right.

The innocence suffocated Chuuya’s breath. He watched as those gold eyes lost a bit of their gleam and those teeth bit into a swollen bottom lip. For a few precious milliseconds, Chuuya couldn’t control his brain enough to help the younger. But then everything collided back together and he realized with belated humor and interest that he had yet to use his power.

With a smirk, a pale red light illuminated around them as he helped the tiger ride him. Once again, he was held prisoner under the pleasure Atsushi was feeling as that beautiful face tipped back and mouth held open as if he couldn’t catch enough breath in his lungs. Before while, Chuuya felt the tiger speed up his pace, the added strength of For the Tainted Sorrow no longer necessary and he released it in favor of watching this glorious body move on its own.

“Atsushi, beautiful. My little Oniyuri is stunning. Look at you,” With each syllable that left Chuuya’s mouth, the tiger’s hips stuttered to return to a pace faster than before and it left the executive gasping for breath. “Look at how well you’re taking me. Gods, Atsushi….” And then those blazing eyes met his, pupils blown wide enough to have the gold a mere stitched in outline.

And then Chuuya couldn’t take sitting still anymore, not with his tiger mounting him and riding him like the god he was. His hands clamped down on those bruise-littered hips to piston up just right and it ripped another mewl to scream into the room.

Now that Chuuya wasn’t trying to be gentle, he heard the noise in all its brightness and his limbs acted before his brain to drop the tiger onto the bed under him. Their lips seared against each other as Chuuya snapped his hips into the tiger at an almost brutal pace but it wasn’t enough to ruin the other to a wrecked mess. Smirking at the challenge and obvious fit for his stamina and strength, Chuuya lifted the tiger’s hips to thrust forward and release a strangled moan into the air.
More, more, more, more.

Chuuya knew the tiger could handle further, craved more in the way those blown eyes had yet to clench closed in pleasure. Who knew his perfect match in chemistry would be right in front of him? This tiger who pushed and pushed and pushed was now pushing Chuuya to more levels. Atsushi was a beacon shining with promise and he was going forward with or without others, it didn’t matter to him.

Chuuya was caught up in the rush as if it were a drug.

“Ch-Chuuya, more. More,” The words were a plea and finally, the executive let go. Illuminating them in a red glow, he lessened the tiger’s weight and doubled his own as he pushed them closer and closer to the edge they weren’t able to grapple at yet. The bed shook and groaned at the weight, the springs of the bed breaking.

With a laugh he couldn’t put a lot of focus into, he realized he was going to need sturdier mattresses and beds.

Fire and silver mingled around a bright red blaze and it wasn’t long before Atsushi was a drooling, growling, and keening mess. Chuuya knew all the tiger needed was one more thing, just one to topple him over the edge and oh how he wanted to watch this masterpiece bloom under him. Twirling a finger around the white and black tail, he brought it to his mouth and bit down.

Just like that, a monstrous scream lit up the room stopping short of making the walls tremble in its intensity. Hips locked around Chuuya’s waist, eyes fluttering closed, nails ripping into Chuuya’s arms and the back below him arched as if it were a perfect archer’s bow. The sight alone was enough to unravel the executive as he growled through his release.

When he came to, Atsushi remained under him with bright gold eyes and a deep purr vibrating the both of them. Chuuya gently slipped out of the other, sliding the condom off and tying it before disappearing into the bathroom. After disposing it, he walked to the closet to grab a washcloth and wet it with water and soap. With a smile, he found the tiger still buzzing with his eyes closed. Making his way silently, he suddenly lifted a leg into the air as he cleaned out his tiger. At first he met shocked gold irises but then it was reduced to soft hisses when Chuuya reached too deeply out of curiosity. Delivering a kiss to the thigh before him, Chuuya left satisfied Atsushi was clean before returning to the bathroom to put the cloth in a hamper and wash his hands.

Atsushi remained pleasantly glowing until he realized – he was still naked. And….the blanket was at the end of the bed. Lurching forward, he had just enough time to pull it up and cover himself before
Chuuya emerged.

Electric blue watched the not hidden tiger for a few moments before laughing softly to himself. Of course, his match would be completely opposite. *Of course.* Biting his bottom lip to keep from spreading his smile any more than it already was, he climbed into bed and felt a shaky arm pull him close. Shaking his head, Chuuya cupped the tiger’s face in his hands. “Hey, baby you did *great.* You were stunningly gorgeous.” A soft whine sounded and Atsushi tried hiding his burning face in Chuuya’s hands but the executive wouldn’t let him.

Lifting his hands, the now dichromatic eyes blinked back shyly. “Truly a sight to behold, Atsushi.” With a smirk, he wanted to see how brighter that embarrassed blush would go and he leaned into the tiger’s ear. “I can’t wait to see you all dressed up for me in a few days~.”

And just like that, Chuuya’s notions of Atsushi being the opposite of him were dispelled as those pupils dilated deliciously. But as soon as it happened, the tiger buried his face in Chuuya’s shoulder. The executive could feel something in his chest twist and ache, a feeling he wanted to clutch onto.

“B-But I don’t….have anything special to wear..” The words were mumbled into his ear and Chuuya grinned brightly.

“Don’t worry about that, sleep for now. You’ll need your rest. I’m going to introduce you to someone tomorrow who would love to go shopping for you.” The adored glimpse of red flashed through his eyes and he smiled nostalgically. *You’re going to love her. And she’s going to love you.*

There was a low, concerned hum of disapproval but Chuuya merely ran his fingers through the unruly hair in comfort. Although the tiger was wary, the executive heard the telltale signs of snoring and he relaxed into the arms holding him as he rested against the pillow under him and allowed the abyss of sleep to take him under.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter: Our little tiger meets someone *very* close to Chuuya and goes on a shopping trip~. We learn more about this woman who is after our boys and I do believe an Atsushi in heeled boots is long awaited? ^^ I'm excited, my lovelies!! Thank you sooo much for bearing with me through this!!!
Meeting

Chapter Summary

Chuuya runs into someone he would really rather not and leaves him more confused than before. Atsushi meets Kouyou and she opens his eyes to who he really owes his improvement to.

Chapter Notes

HOLY SHI--

Yeah, I'm back literally four days later. I know, it's a miracle!! However, let us have a chapter with more plot. ^.^

Apologies about the lie of the chapter preview, we won't make it as far as the party, *quite* yet...

Nevertheless, let's get to the plot!!

Atsushi’s P.O.V.

“Atsushi, this is Kouyou-san.”

The woman before him was absolutely stunning with an intimidating air that almost had him kneeling for her. She had bright red hair consumed by a hair tie in a loose bun with two sticks adorning in the sides. She wore a navy kimono decorated with red flowers hidden under a white cover that gradually fed into a pink that almost matched her hair color.

And then there was her eyes. Those red eyes that were covering him in warmth he’d never received before the mafia.

A bit shaky from nerves, he bowed before her, silver hair blurring the edges of his vision. “Hello! I am Atsushi Nakajima! It’s nice to meet you!”

A hand fell into his locks and he stiffened before they began carding through his hair. Smiling, he
leaned into the hand and looked up from under his hair. Earnest eyes met his and he smiled giddily.

“Stand up, boy.” Her voice was pretty, chiming off the surrounding walls. Biting his bottom lip, he straightened with a slight blush from the petting. “Oh my, look at you. You’re too cute for your own good. Could I call you Atsu-kun?”

Immediately, the tiger was vibrating with renewed energy. *He was excited.* The nerves he felt from the impending escort had him shaking all morning, regardless of Chuuya’s reassurances he would stop anything Atsushi wasn’t comfortable with. Then walking through the brothel doors to see a plethora of women in dresses that were too revealing for his tastes; all he wanted to do was put a blanket over each of them.

But now all of those nerves gathered in the welcome atmosphere around him to flip into eagerness.

Nodding he breathed, “Yes!” The woman before him opened a pale orange fan with red edges to cover the bottom half of her face.

“My, my Chuuya-kun. You’ve been withholding from me,” And then the warmth slid over to the man beside Atsushi and coincidentally holding his hand.

A smirk lit the beautiful face as Chuuya tilted his head to the side. “You’ll have him for the next few days, Ane-san.”

Kouyou’s eyes widened in wonder. “And what brings this pleasure?”

“Boss has him scheduled for an escort in two days. I will be going as we were both requested.” Those cobalt eyes gleamed with a shine Atsushi had yet to experience.

“My, I can see why my boy.” And then the warmth flickered back to Atsushi and the tiger smiled shyly as he tightened his grip on the hand in his. A thumb rubbed the back of his hand soothingly and Atsushi could’ve purred.

Kouyou stepped forward, stretching out a hand to brush three fingertips under his chin to tilt his face up. “I see…” She seemed to be murmuring to herself and the tiger blushed from the attention. Stepping back, she met Chuuya’s eyes in a silent dismissal.
The hand in his rubbed the back of his palm before leaving. All at once, the tiger felt *alone* but then the warmth found him again and he found himself smiling. A hand stretched out and he took it as she led the way.

“I have heard much about you, Atsu-kun. You’re moving through the ranks well with Akutagawa-kun and Chuuya-kun by your side.”

Immediately Atsushi bristled at the statement. He didn’t quite understand what it was that caused it, but he found himself wary nonetheless. “They have helped, but I really have my tiger to thank for it. *Without her,* I don’t think I would’ve made it very far.” The words had slipped his mouth and he could finally pinpoint where her words had stung. He wasn’t using those around him, sure their influences were great but he wanted to move forward, to prove himself. And he had his tiger to that for that.

When they reached the top of the steps, she turned to face him, a soft look reflected in her eyes. Atsushi couldn’t help the feeling that he had said something wrong.

“Tell me, Atsushi-kun. If you were unable to control your power before coming here, what changed in order for you to have the ability to call on it and dismiss it?” Her tone favored that of a confused but endearing parent and he found himself trusting in her more for it.

He dropped his eyes as he recalled the event. Chuuya had led him through the path, through finding *her,* through controlling *her,* and then through training with *her* afterwards. “I met with *her.*”

“By delving deep into yourself, yes?” There was an eagerness to her voice that he wanted to see in her eyes and he jerked his attention up. The red eyes were gleaming and he offered a nod, unsure how to respond.

A hand fell into his hair again and he smiled softly. “You have controlled your power, Atsu-kun. You have used it when you knew it would be best. Your power is not above you, Atsushi. It is you. Therefore, *you* have brought yourself this far. Not Chuuya-kun, nor Akutagawa-kun, and not your power. You, Atsu-kun.”

Purple eyes widened at her words and he looked away, too emotional to look at her. Did that mean…..*he had proved himself?*
The hand in his hair massaged lightly before removing itself to drop over his shoulders. “Come now, you deserve a reward for making it as far as you have.” And with that, Kouyou led him through a set of doors to their right.

Upon first glance, he noticed small potted plants along the corners shadowed by the presence of a white bed covered in a blue comforter. The walls were a cream color and the carpet a light grey. A mirror was standing on the left wall adjacent to the doorway and a closet took up residence to the left of the entrance. Two matching white nightstands hovered around the bed.

Atsushi felt loathe to walk in, it was much too luxurious for a few nights stay. When he turned to express his disapproval, those warm eyes met his with a shake of her own head. Looking away, he tried to reign in the overwhelming feelings assaulting him. Kouyou pushed them further into the room and placed the tiger in the middle of the open space. Stepping back, she scanned the body before her; Atsushi almost shook at the attention he didn’t want.

Almost as soon as it started, the evaluation was over and she nodded to herself. “Now we begin.”

**Chuuya’s P.O.V.**

Knowing the extent with which Ane-san was going to spoil Atsushi, he was going to need another outfit. Humming softly to himself, he pushed his hands in his pockets and began walking down the street for his tailor. He could only imagine the colors she would put before his subordinate and could only imagine the shock Atsushi would be put through.

Smiling, he stopped in his tracks when a color caught his attention from a store window – or maybe it was the shape. Regardless, he walked inside and picked up the hat from the stand. The material was soft and the color almost fought between blue and purple, the different colors catching in the light. *This was what he wanted.* Yes. Grinning like a fool, he continued his walk through the place. There wasn’t much more that matched the color of the hat, but he found a nice off-white ribbon. Unraveling the material, he placed it against the color of the hat and instantly fell in love. *Yes, yes.*

Chuuya knew Ane-san well enough to know that she’d put anyone in white whose complexion could pull it off. And Atsushi’s could. Almost giddy, he walked to a mirror to remove his and place the new hat on his head. He smirked at the choice, knowing he did well as his eyes seemed to radiate with color and his hair *glowing* under the hat.

And then it was plucked from his head. Anger boiled inside but he reigned it in as he turned. Maybe the hat wasn’t for sale…?
But instead he was met with a familiar bolo tie and brown eyes.

He cursed his very existence as about ten blood vessels popped in his forehead. “What the fuck do you want, Dazai?” Angry, he looked around the store in search of an employee. When he caught sight of the one behind the cash register, he shouted, “Oi! Who let this waste of bandages in here?!”

“My, Chuuya! The door let me in! Maybe your hats really are soaking up your brain. You know what that means~! No hat for you today!” The Demon began to twirl the accessory around a finger as he lifted it above the executive’s reach.

“You idiot fucking mackerel! Give me the hat back! Since when do you come in here anyways?” Chuuya knew Dazai would set the hat down somewhere and he waited patiently. Alright, maybe his foot was tapping angrily against the floor but he wasn’t causing a fight in the store.

Dazai threw his hands up as if the answer was obvious; Chuuya wanted to strangle him. “Because Chuuya came in here, of course!”

A vein popped in the executive’s eyes.

“When the FUCK DID YOU START FOLLOWING ME?!” If Chuuya’s body could’ve detached from the waist up, he would’ve been growling in the menace’s face.

“Now, now, Chuuya if you start yelling they’ll kick us out,” The Demon, as if he knew the strings he was pulling bent down to whisper.

Finally snapping, the executive’s gloved hands gripped the other’s shirt in his fists before pushing hard. Satisfyingly, Dazai stumbled a few steps before falling on his ass. “I wouldn’t be yelling, if your bandaged ass hadn’t followed me like a lost puppy.” Mumbling under his breath, he snatched the hat from the brunette’s hand and proceeded to wipe it down as if it were now infected. Smiling, he walked to the cash register and paid for the hat.

The lady’s eyes were narrowed to slits as if she’d had enough of them and honestly Chuuya couldn’t blame her. But it wasn’t like he’d asked for Dazai to come inside. Just as she was handing his bag to him, he caught her glance over his shoulder and he growled.
Not even a moment later, mummified arms fell over his shoulders before the absolute dead weight dropped over the top of his head. “But I am a lost puppy without my Chuu Chuu!”

Fisting his hands, he gripped the chocolate curls now in his face and lifted the taller off him. Meeting the woman’s eyes, he picked up the bag before dropping an excessive amount of money onto the counter in apology.

With the hand in Dazai’s hair, he tossed the waste of oxygen to the floor before floating over him and walking out of the store.

“Chuuuuuya~!” The mafioso jumped with a hiss as the yell sounded in his ear.

“All the mackerel! What the fuck DO YOU WANT NOW?!” By now, the smaller was vibrating with anger. This is why he could never go out shopping; the Demon always found him.

“I want my annoying hatrack~!”

All Chuuya wanted to do was put together a new suit. Was. That. Too. Much. To. Ask? With a roll of his eyes, he met the awaiting hazel. He could discern the smirk, but not those ever-concealed orbs. What the fuck did this mummy want?! With a resolve in his sigh, he turned to the nearest alley without looking behind him. He knew Dazai would follow, after all he wouldn’t speak with everyone else around to listen.

Chuuya couldn’t blame him.

Running a gloved hand through his hair, he turned to face the idiot. But was met with a pair of eager lips as he was pushed against the wall to his right. Shock weaved through his blood to lock his limbs like the venom it was. Instead of waiting for a response, the Demon Prodigy cupped red curls in his hands as he kissed with the gentleness that rivaled every battle they’d been in.

Blood coursed through his body, floating the course of anger that rose to the surface of his skin. They hadn’t met intimately since the mackerel was in the Port Mafia. What the fuck changed it now?!

No. Fuck no. Chuuya was not falling into this. Shit fuck absolutely not.
Fisting his left hand, he brought it up to collide viciously with Dazai’s ribs. A loud grunt sounded through the alley as the body was flung to the opposite wall. Taking a few steps closer, the mafioso put his hands in his pockets as he burned holes into the other’s eyes. “Where the fuck do you get off in pulling a stunt like that?!” Fury simmered under his skin, just barely restrained. “What are you trying to do?!” Chuuya’s voice recoiled off the walls, the floor under them cracking under the weight of his anger.

Closing the distance between himself and the waste of oxygen he dug his hair into the brown curls he used to love so much. Lifting roughly until Dazai’s face was lined up with his, he growled out, “We ended that ages ago. Matter of fact, you left that ages ago. Don’t come back acting as if you own me.”

A rough laugh left Dazai’s mouth as his eyes met Chuuya’s, empty. “But you never left, huh?” Shock ripped through Chuuya’s bones. He did not just… Fury cracked across his vision as he gripped the other’s thin neck in his hand before throwing him; his hands shook as the fire coursed through his veins. The body was thrown to the wall with a malicious crack but Chuuya couldn’t bring himself to care. “How fucking dare you.” He snarled out as he closed the distance between them again. “Just because I stayed in the Port Mafia does not mean I stayed for you, you ignorant fucking waste of energy. The world does not revolve around your schemes and manipulation.”

There was thick coughing coming a few feet from him but the wrath enveloping his core didn’t process it. He was tired of Dazai acting as if he knew everything. Sure, he’d had a wounded bounce back from his betrayal but Chuuya left it. He knew what was good for him, and that was not this piece of shit. “I did leave that shit hole of whatever-the-fuck we were. Do you know why?” A wicked laugh left Chuuya’s throat as he knelt before the other. There was a few drops of blood and the body was sitting up against the cracked wall. Seems the wall took the brute force of the impact…

“Because you’re a manipulating piece of shit. That’s all you were good at, because that’s all you knew. And you know what made your betrayal even worse? I understood it.” A groaned laugh left his lips along with the fury clouding his vision. “God dammit I understood it, Dazai you fucking mackerel.”

He watched as those hazel eyes widened in shock. Silence passed between them for a few minutes as Chuuya watched Dazai soak those words in. For those moments, the executive took stock of the invisible wounds the other must have had. “You alright?” The concern didn’t seem to fit in the dark alley, but they had a knack for that.

Another laugh sounded in the shadowed reprieve only it came from Dazai. Bright eyes met Chuuya’s and the confident asshole cocked his head to the side with a smile. A real, genuine smile
that Chuuya had *zero* experience in. It shook him to his core.

“Is Chuu worried about having to carry me?” Dammit he hated that nickname. Rolling his eyes, the mafioso stood and began to walk off. “How is...”

The syllables barely met Chuuya’s ears but the tones in them were ones he’d *never* heard from the Demon and they instantly had him wary. Turning back, he met eyes he was unfamiliar with. “How is...who?” Chuuya’s voice seemed unable to lift above the weight of Dazai’s tones as well.

And then the Demon *looked to the floor*.

_H-Holy shit.....wh-what?!*_ Surprise kept the mafioso from responding. Dazai wasn’t maintaining eye contact. Dazai *had looked to the floor*. Was this the same man?! Clearly not...

Groaning, he closed the distance between them. Kneeling, he watched the other judiciously. And then when eyes met his again, the mask he’d known for so long was back on and it *pissed Chuuya off*.

Whether Dazai had meant it or not, he’d just ensured that Chuuya would keep him in place, would smack the other around when he needed it just to *get rid of that mask*. Because whether the Demon wanted to admit it or not, he was *trying*. And Chuuya wanted to see where this led.

So instead of walking away like he would’ve four years ago, he brought his hand up and smacked the other hard enough to leave an immediate handprint. *Dazai was not about to show him that and then hide it again. Who was he so worried about?!*

“Ryuunosuke. How is he?” The question came out like a statement and it floored the mafioso. *Akutagawa?! WHAT?!*_ He couldn’t see the point of today *at all*. Why was Dazai following him, why did Dazai kiss him? And why was he now asking about Ryuunosuke? Just as he was about to growl in frustration, hazel eyes met his and the look in them stilled the smaller from anything he would’ve said or done.

Because everything began to click.

He was trying to figure out *human emotions* in the only way he knew how: manipulation. It was the epitome of unhealthy, but this show of emotion showcased the steps the Demon was trying to take.
He cornered Chuuya to try to know his feelings about Dazai, only to discover Chuuya wasn’t interested. And now he was evaluating every relationship he’d been in.

But not only had Chuuya not felt anything for the other anymore, *neither did Dazai.* So, *something* was calling to Dazai from the Port Mafia and he was trying to figure out what it was. There was an emotion there and he was trying to understand the source of it.

If Chuuya had to make any guesses, the source would *obviously* be Akutagawa. Chuuya knew the relationship they’d had, knew there was more than what everyone saw. Because he was there for the younger when Dazai had left.

Groaning, Chuuya covered his face with his hand. “You’ve fucked up there. Dazai, you *dumbass.*” Even though he was making steps toward progress, there was no way Chuuya would just let Dazai back into his subordinate’s life after the pain. *Especially* the heartache that still remained with the raven. “There’s a chance, however it is slim to none. Your dumbass left me to piece him together and he’s worked viciously – all in revenge and the approval he needed *desperately* from you. God dammit, Dazai.”

Glimpses of Akutagawa battered and bloodied beyond belief battle after battle his body *trembling* as he tried to hold himself together, of Akutagawa terrorizing every training room just to train Rashomon and himself, of Akutagawa ravaging himself to *shreds* through grieving and his dreadful need for *acknowledgement.*

Before the mafioso knew what he was doing, another hand punched the taller’s face into the bricks behind him. “Make it up to him, you fucking waste of bandages.” And with that, the smaller stood and left the alley.

How the *fuck* was he supposed to handle this shit *now*?! All he’d wanted was a new suit. Now he’s thrown four years into the past to the way his subordinate used to be. Growling, he pulled his phone out and texted the raven to meet at the café for lunch. He felt the need to make sure Akutagawa ate and drank at least *something* today.

Sighing heavily, he walked into his tailor shop to place the new suit order in, placing the hat on the counter for them to use as a reference.

Walking out, he drug himself to the café. Dropping inelegantly into the booth, he realized belatedly he’d forgotten his *previous* hat in the first store. Groaning his head fell to the back of the seat. *Dammit Dazai.* Whatever, it wasn’t like he didn’t have others at home. Although he felt pretty confident the owner of the store was holding the hat for him.
The waitress came by to take his order just as his subordinate walked through the door. Smiling, he waved the raven down and those grey eyes softened slightly as he closed the distance between them to slide into the booth. He’d traded in his coat for a grey sweater, black pants, and black shoes with his glasses. Chuuya had raised him well.

The woman took their order, not without the glances of intrigue to the both of them. As soon as she left, Akutagawa’s voice sounded in the air. “You saw him today, didn’t you?”

Blue eyes widened before he smiled; his subordinate knew him too well. “What makes you say that?”

Grey eyes looked at him as if Chuuya knew nothing. “You don’t have your hat.”

“I could’ve left it at home!” Uninterested slate eyes narrowed. Chuuya could’ve laughed, Akutagawa was after all, very observant.

“You look tired.”

“You sayin’ I’m growing bags under my eyes?” Grey eyes rolled noncommittedly. “The mafia is overworking me.” A nod of the raven’s head. “And~, I just took in a new subordinate.” Another nod. “We may or may not have had sex last night.” A round of coughs and a blush. Chuuya had almost forgot how nice it was to have meals with Akutagawa. It worried the executive how the other hadn’t denied it…how’d he know?..

When the coughs ceased, Akutagawa threw his trump card on the table. “You never order espresso.”

And then Chuuya broke his façade, what little remained as he threw his head to rest against the back of the booth. “Fine. Yeah, I saw him.” The executive thought for the longest time about whether to tell his subordinate about the information he discovered – especially the man that would no doubt come after the younger in no time. But before the executive could speak, their drinks and food arrived, effectively breaking him out of his stupor.

And then the screams of agony he heard often from Akutagawa years ago rung through his brain as it not-so-nicely offered the memory to his vision. His subordinate remained quiet and observant across the table as he sipped his tea laced with honey.
If Chuuya told Akutagawa, it could go one of two ways: he’d be angry and plot the thousand ways his fist would collide with Dazai’s face, or he’d be angry for a few days then imagine how their meeting would go and lose all of his anger. But maybe Chuuya was underestimating his subordinate…

Sighing, he decided to coat over the ordeal by skimming. “He’s still an asshole, but now he’s confusing.”

And like that, the subject of the event was dismissed in favor of their meals.

After their food was gone and they were sipping on their drinks just to kill time, Akutagawa opened a door Chuuya wasn’t expecting. “I was sent an invitation to a ball in a few days.” There was clear indecision in the other’s tones and Chuuya grinned.

His little subordinate was asking him for fashion advice. And then the words *invitation to a ball in a few days* caught his attention. “Who invited you?”

A hand waved uninterestedly as he stated, “Someone named Nyoki.” Laughing softly, Chuuya shook his head. Things were beginning to piece together. Mori placed Chuuya and Atsushi into the event, threw them in it more like, and now Akutagawa was invited. But the sudden appearance of Dazai was throwing off his brain more than it should’ve, forcing a massive headache to appear.

Needing to relieve some stress, he looked over to the other. “So you’re asking me for fashion advice?” Sliding out of the seat, he threw the remainder of his drink in the trash as Akutagawa followed him out with his tea in hand. His subordinate had learned long ago not to question Chuuya’s demands – spoken and unspoken.

So with a comfortable silence, they walked back to Chuuya’s tailor with the raven in tow. Akutagawa had never felt the need to attend such events and it confused the mentor as to why now his subordinate felt the need to go. Slowing his pace until he was beside the taller, he voiced his concern without a hint of response in return. *Hmmm….*

Opening the doors to the store, he noticed Akutagawa move his hand as if to throw his cup away. Chuuya merely shook his head as he walked further in the store. Akutagawa gripped the drink with both hands.
An employee arrived within moments to assist them and it wasn’t long before they were placed in a room set aside from the rest of the store. He could tell his subordinate was tense and decided to open conversation. But the raven was quicker.

“How’s he treating you?” There were too many tones under those words for Chuuya to discern so he tilted his head to the side in curiosity.

“He’s gentle.” Fondness reached the air and steel grey eyes met his unwavering ones.

“Why him?” Anger rumbled with the syllables and Chuuya’s eyes widened. This was more than mere a subordinate/mentor issue. This was a pit in Akutagawa’s life that Atsushi had unknowingly fell into. “Why does it have to be him?”

Chuuya remained silent as he waited for the raven to continue. Despair seeped into those eyes and Chuuya waved the man taking the taller’s measurements out of the room. Within seconds they were alone and angry tears fell from the subordinate hardened eyes. “Why does it have to be him?”

The executive knelt before the raven. And as if his presence were the catalyst, the raven gripped Chuuya’s shirt in his hands. “He comes here and immediately gathers attention. He comes here and flourishes. He comes here and becomes your subordinate without a fight at all. Why does it have to be him?!” And like that, the executive understood. Ryuunosuke had to crawl and fight his way to where he is now. He had gathered the Demon Prodigy’s attention and had to fight claw and teeth to earn the ranking he had.

And Atsushi hadn’t.

Chuuya wrapped his hands around the taller’s wrist, effectively pulling the hands gripped in his shirt away. He waited until steel orbs met his. “You don’t know what he’s been through.” The image of the scar littering Atsushi’s sides flashed through his mind. He didn’t know what the tiger had been through either. And no one could force it out of someone who wasn’t ready to talk.

Not even Chuuya.

Chapter End Notes

ALRIGHT EVERYONE. WE ONLY HAVE TWO-THREE MORE CHAPTERS
TOGETHER FOR THIS FIC AND IT'S ALL PLANNED OUT. I SEEM TO HAVE FOUND MY ENTHUSIASM AGAIN, BREAKING THROUGH MY WRITERS BLOCK TO WRITE ALMOST 20,000 WORDS OVER THE COURSE OF A WEEK.

Thank you to everyone who’s keeping up with me here, it really means a lot. Although it started from a Tumblr post, I wouldn't have it any other way and I'm excited to wrap this story up!!

Next chapter: The party comes around and confrontations arise, history bubbles to the surface, and trust is explored with more vigor. Time for an established relationship? ^.^ We shall see.

Please let me know what you think in the comments!!
Revelations

Chapter Summary

Time for the party~!

Chapter Notes

I present to you a very fluffy 7.4 k word chapter with a spice of character development and a Protective Atsushi and A JEALOUS DAZAI! Enjoy! ^.^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Atsushi’s P.O.V.

Two Days Later

Atsushi looked in the mirror. When Ane-san had told him she was custom making his outfit, he hadn’t believed she’d go this far. He was wearing a white waistcoat with purple underneath and bright purple buttons in the front. He was wearing a lavender dress shirt under the coat with a silver tie gracing over it. It was stunning, and much too dramatic for Atsushi to pull off. He had spent five minutes fumbling with the buttons so he wouldn’t accidentally break a stitch! Aside from living at the orphanage before the mafia, there was a reason why he didn’t have nice things!

The sleeves were decorated with two purple stripes around his elbow and his sleeves fit snug against his wrists. His pants were the same shade of white but curved comfortably despite how skinny they were as they were tucked into knee-high boots. These were the contraptions he’d had the worst time with. They were zip-up, thankfully, but when he first tried them on, he had almost tripped face-first into the floor.

All because of the damned four-inch heels.

He had taken the expensive footwear off before running down to find Kouyou and express his worry. She had merely smiled and walked with him back to his room for heel training. She had kept a strong arm around his waist for an hour as he wobbled around the hallway. Only when he had walked for twenty minutes straight had she released him and he began to walk on his own.

Ever since, they were his constant companions on trips around the brothel. In all honesty, the tiger
wished he’d been exposed to a smaller heel first then worked his way up but he supposed he didn’t have the time for that. However, he’d reigned in his clumsiness within the day and was proudly strutting in heels he’d be happy to wear every day.

And then the dance classes.

Atsushi groaned at the memory of beginning to dance, thankfully on his feet first, but then he’d been thrown into the ring with the boots on again. Only to see someone he’d rather not in the center of the floor.

His eyes narrowed and he threw a hand to his face as if it were all a nightmare.

“I’m training you?”

Atsushi groaned loudly at the embarrassing moment. Finally, he met those steel eyes and rubbed the back of his neck, feeling pressure there already.

“Let’s just get this over with, Akutagawa.”

The tiger shook his head but smiled when he remembered hearing Akutagawa’s laughter in the room as Atsushi had tried spinning the usually taller man out but Atsushi lost his balance and fell on his ass. “You try wearing heels and dancing!!” He’d hissed out but couldn’t help the laughter bubbling from his chest.

He was still smiling at the thought as he walked to the bedroom door. He’d received a message the night before from Chuuya stating that their client had fell ill, but their spots were still reserved. So, after a long phone call, Chuuya convinced Atsushi to continue through with the party. Even if there were video surveillance in the room, Atsushi would sternly refuse that he was not curled in a ball, blushing everywhere at the thought of dressing up for Chuuya.

With one last glance around to make sure everything was the way he’d left it, he walked out and down the stairs.

Atsushi had spent hours after his late night call imagining how this event would go…whether the night three days prior meant as much to Chuuya as it had to the tiger. It had his hands shaking with anxiety and nerves as he braced himself on the railing for a few moments.
This was happening. This was really happening. He was going to a party. With Chuuya. With his crush. And his crush had to convince him to go...His breaths were shaking slightly as he looked down at his outfit, wondering not for the first time if this was too much for Chuuya. Closing his eyes, he inhaled deeply before clenching the railing in his hands. Don’t mess this up, Atsushi. Don’t mess this up. Don’t mess this up. Exhaling shakily, he opened his eyes and wrung his hands out before finishing his descent.

The girls weren’t on the main floor and he spared the moment to contemplate why, but he saw Kouyou on a seat to the side. Smiling, he stood before her and bowed lowly in gratitude.

“Thank you for helping me, Ane-san!” The hand in his hair had him purring lightly and a small laugh left the woman. He’d remembered the first time she’d felt his purrs; he had grown tired of the damned heels, frustration wearing him thin but the hand in his hair was unexpected and he found himself purring. Her gasp was loud in the room and she had pulled her hand back in shock. Atsushi had offered her a small smile in apology and the tense air had dissipated.

When he straightened to face her, he noticed a strand of small purple and blue flowers in her hand. Before he could ask what she intended to do with them, her lithe fingers were twirling them into the longer lock of his hair to push the bobby pin inside the strands, effectively securing it. “There.”

Something in Atsushi’s chest tightened and he felt his throat close. She’d helped with so much, he didn’t know how to repay her. With shining eyes, he wrapped his arms around her neck and gave the woman a hug. He knew why she was called Ane-san, now.

Shocked, she lightly wrapped her hands around his back with another laugh. “You are full of surprises, Atsu-kun.”

Grinning, he pulled back and gestured to the outfit, looking down. “S-So it looks good?” When no response sounded for a few moments, he raised his eyes to hers and there was a tease amongst the warmth.

“Are you doubting me, boy?”

Laughing softly, he shook his head. “I’d better go, it’s almost time.” Nodding in agreement, Kouyou watched him leave.
Once outside the doors, the light reflected off a very nice black limousine and Atsushi found himself blushing as his eyes soaked in the wonder that was Nakahara Chuuya. The executive’s back was leaning against the blackness behind him, showcasing the indigo waistcoat and pants, pants that curved around those glorious hips Atsushi found himself desperately wanting to grip. He was wearing white shoes as well, and the buttons on the coat a bright silver with chains attached to connect each button. The white dress shirt underneath melded well with the colors and his usual leather harness rested on top.

And now his eyes rose to the unnaturally bright red curls draped over the waistcoat and disappearing under a hat of the same purple-blue. Atsushi was almost shaking imagining the way Chuuya’s eyes would be shining.

A few seconds passed as Atsushi reigned himself in before meeting those immaculate azures. There were too many emotions flickering through and the tiger found himself closing the distance in a few strides.

Cupping the smaller’s shocked face, he pressed their lips together in a searing, all-consuming kiss. Without a second to spare, hands were gripping his hips and Atsushi was flush against the executive’s body as Chuuya tilted his head to the left. A soft moan sounded between the two but Atsushi couldn’t tell whose it was.

The tiger’s tongue danced over the other’s bottom lip and Chuuya eagerly lent his passage as the executive twirled his tongue along the roof of the taller’s mouth, drinking in every moan and shudder. The hands in Chuuya’s hair tightened and pulled, earning the tiger a groan as the hands at his hips gripped enough to remind Atsushi of the bruises still gracing his body.

All too fast the kiss ended and they were left panting against each other’s lips. Those bright eyes were hazed with lust and the lips swollen from their kiss. And then the hands at his hips pushed the tiger back as Chuuya opened the back door.

Smiling, he placed another kiss to those intoxicating lips before sliding inside the luxurious vehicle. The seats were white, cloth, and the smell was nice. Was this what a new car smell was?

He didn’t have much time to think about it before Chuuya was sliding in and the driver slid the partition aside to make sure they were in and buckled. “There are snacks and refreshments in the fridge. Enjoy your ride.” A small smile was offered to them before the partition closed again.

Atsushi tried to contain himself – he really did. However, the man beside of him had a hand on his thigh and the curls brushing his jaw were teasing. Atsushi felt like he was suffocating. He really,
really wanted to feel the warmth coming from beside of him. But he didn’t know how Chuuya now viewed him, didn’t know if this relationship could even happen between them because of their work, didn’t know if he was what Chuuya really wanted. Maybe…three nights ago had only been Chuuya trying to fulfill what Atsushi asked of him…

Too many unknowns but Atsushi would never know if he didn’t ask him.


Before he knew it, Atsushi was straddling Chuuya’s lap with his hands dug in red curls, the blue hat tipped back as the tiger devoured the awaiting lips. An eager moan was swallowed by Atsushi’s lips and sent straight to his groin. The silk locks between his fingers, the very warm body under him, the hands at his back, and the lips on his were enough to melt the tiger against Chuuya’s chest as the executive explored the mouth against his.

How long had Atsushi begged for this moment, only to talk himself out of it?! The tiger shivered against the strong body beneath his, overwhelmed. When Chuuya’s hands slid to the tiger’s chest and up to tease Atsushi’s neck, making the taller squirm and whine into the lips against his.

Atsushi felt like he was _starved_, but too high to act on his hunger. He could feel blood rush to his face and neck, _all_ of his body. When the hands at his neck pushed back, Atsushi almost let out another whine in frustration as Chuuya pulled their lips apart. His nerves were frazzled, his body _hot_ and the eyes that met his helped him none.

The once cerulean eyes were now sapphire, the pupils blown wide in lust. But there was another emotion in those eyes: adoration. “Atsushi, I want you.” The words were said huskily and they shot through him like electricity, preventing him from moving. “I _really_ want you. I want to make you mine and take you out places. I want to show you wines, show you places overseas, show you _everything._” Hands were at his face and the tiger leaned into them with a shining smile. The executive’s voice was bright with promises unsaid and dark with the _need_ to do them.

Atsushi wasn’t worthy of it, wasn’t worthy of Chuuya, of any of this. But Kouyou’s words rang through his ears: _You have brought yourself this far._

His throat constricted and he felt a rush go through his veins, knowing the only way he could give his answer. First things first, he needed a backbone. He needed strength and right now? He was acting like a kitten that couldn’t fend for himself. Time to change things up.
Biting his bottom lip, the haze in his eyes cleared as mischief gleamed in his dichromatic irises. He watched with rapt attention as the pupils before him expanded and a tongue flicked over the swollen lip.

The hands in Chuuya’s hair confiscated flaming red curls as the tiger pounced. Pulling the hair in his fingers, the executive’s head jerked back against the seat and a grunt escaped into the limousine. Atsushi straightened his back and lifted his thighs so he could tower over the other, their coats brushing together. A small chuckle left the executive’s mouth, murmuring sultrily, “Look at you… why don’t you come down here, my tiger?”

Atsushi found a thrill in watching Chuuya’s smirk below him and he almost gave into the shiver that ran down his spine. He liked this, probably more than he should. And as much as he wanted those lips on his, he loved seeing Chuuya like this. But, apparently, Chuuya was a bit more impatient than Atsushi thought as he found his back hitting the seats of the limousine. A small yelp left his lips at the sudden change, the thrill finally forcing the shiver he’d been holding back to take him under full force.

Chuuya loomed over him with a grin as if he’d caught a treasure no one else had. A low purr vibrated against Atsushi’s neck as the older leaned in to press a kiss against his collarbone. Just as quick as his sudden thrill came, it left him in favor of the hands trailing up his body and into his hair as the kiss turned into a bite.

Atsushi hummed in pleasure as he tossed his head to the side, giving Chuuya more room to explore his thrumming skin. A sharp jolt of pleasure had the tiger throwing his head back with a keen, the spot under his shoulder blade arcing into the bite at the junction of his neck and collarbone. He was panting, heat coursing through his body as his hands shook where they gripped the seat under him. “Ch-Chuuya….” His voice was barely above a whisper as the teeth released his skin to soothe the mark with his tongue, catching his nerves on fire.

Deciding he was done with that area, the fingers in his locks tightened to tug the tiger’s head back. The warmth of the body on top of him, the lips and breath shaking over his neck, the nerves alight with need had him shuddering under the man above him.

And just like that, everything stopped as the cold seeped over his heated flesh. No. No no no no no. Where’d he go? What…

“Atsushi-kun, we’re here.” The voice sounded above him, the tones slow and deep with arousal. Dichromatic orbs were revealed as he opened his eyes and wished he’d kept them shut. The view was exceptional. Chuuya’s face was flushed, his lips swollen and beautiful with his eyes glowing cerulean under the blue-purple accessory. Damn, he loved this man.
Smiling sheepishly, he sat up and stepped out of the limousine, the fresh air giving him the much needed cool down before he observed the massive building. He vaguely heard the car door close behind him, but he wasn’t paying attention.

Instead, his focus remained on the stone building that expanded much larger than any place he’d seen, superior to his orphanage. It was mesmerizing. There were lights shining along concrete pathway that wound through the trees and flowers scattered about the grass with an elegant appeal that had the tiger longing to spend hours in the garden. He jumped when hands fell on his hips, pulling him back against a strong chest and he couldn’t contain his small giggle. Chuuya was floating.

A smack was given to his ass and Atsushi felt whatever heat left, come rushing back with a vengeance; he gasped against the onslaught and shivered when a chuckle sounded at his ear. Folding his hands in front of him, Atsushi bit his bottom lip trying to contain the smile he felt coming on. Yes, he liked teasing Chuuya more than he should’ve…

“Come now, let’s not be late for the party.” But Atsushi couldn’t stop thinking of the height difference between them, especially with his boots. Smiling, he met Chuuya’s wary gaze and wrapped an arm around the other’s waist. A jolt went through the executive and instead of something snappy, Atsushi was surprised to feel the smaller lean into his arm. Giddy, the tiger watched as a blush adorned Chuuya’s cheeks; he wanted to kiss them and so he did. Only for them to grow infinite shades darker. Stunned, Atsushi gazed at the magnificence that was Chuuya, amazed he was able to make the executive blush like this. With merely an arm around the waist…Unable to speak, the tiger turned his attention to the pathway with a grin no one could wipe off.

His heels clicked against the concrete and he found confidence injected into his bloodstream as he held his head higher. He scaled the steps with ease, glimpsing down to Chuuya to see those azure eyes shinning in wonderment at him. The attention heated his body, opening a part of him he hadn’t known laid dormant. The doorman held the black door wide, and Atsushi had to try to control himself at the interior of the majestic house.

They weren’t more than ten feet inside before the executive’s phone rang and he offered an apologetic smile before leaning up to kiss Atsushi’s cheek. “I’ll meet you in a few, this shouldn’t take long at all.” And with that, Chuuya left in a swirl of blue flames.

Alone, the tiger took a deep inhale before stepping into the grand room. The walls were dark brown with intricate gold spirals and twists while the floor was a stunning maroon with gold outlines. Three stunning chandeliers hung from the walls, lighting the room with varying glimmers off the walls and floors. There were already a number of people inside, along with someone he hadn’t expected. Smiling, he walked over.
Akutagawa stood next to a pillar in a burgundy gothic waistcoat that came down into a sharp V in the front, showcasing the black dress shirt beneath it. The buttons were a bright silver and meshed quite wonderfully with the dark background. Atsushi realized for the first time that the cravat that usually poked out of his coat was cast aside for the event – along with the signature coat in favor of a black cloak. Even Atsushi had to admit the cloak draped over his shoulders nicely but was rather big around the waistline.

“Does something not appease you, Jinko?” The gravelly voice, so accustomed to anger fell on light ears when Atsushi caught undertones of insecurity. Purple eyes drifted up to meet steel as he shook his head. He poked at the chains keeping the cloak close in front of the raven.

“You should loosen up, or others would think you can’t have some fun,” There was a teasing note in the tiger’s voice and he offered a lopsided smile.

Grey eyes narrowed and his mouth formed a thin line. “I do not recall naming myself the life of the party.” The words were said deadpan and the tiger shook his head in exasperation.

Taking a step back, Atsushi resigned himself to fixing the tense vampire himself. Peeking from the cloak were skinny black pants that disappeared inside a pair of thick heeled boots painted red and black. Whoever put this outfit together knew what Akutagawa could pull off and showcased it well. But that damned cloak was covering most of it. With a growl, he met dark eyes. “How do you expect others to notice the work put into this outfit if your cloak is covering all of it?” Those hardened eyes before him widened in shock before Atsushi pressed onward and leaned in close. “Who are you trying to hide from? Who would have you get all dressed up like this then cover yourself?”

Anger welled in the raven and his hands balled into fists as he glared with a boiling frustration. Just when the boys had taken a defensive stance, Akutagawa’s eyes did a double take and he straightened immediately. Confused, Atsushi jerked his attention around to meet the sight of a brunette in the doorway.

Although he was turning to pester the person behind him, Atsushi knew who it was and his eyes jerked back to Akutagawa. “Really…” He murmured unimpressed, but the rabid dog wasn’t paying attention anymore. Those eyes were solely for the man in a white waistcoat and a blue vest.

Atsushi took in more of the outfit as he stood in front of Akutagawa, feeling a protectiveness for the other. The waistcoat had four buttons that remained unlatched to show the brilliant blue vest beneath it with a stark difference. There was a blue and white striped shirt underneath that did little to hide the bandages remaining below but was pretty with the bolo tie in the front. The white pants weren’t as
tight as Akutagawa’s but draped over the limbs and over the black shoes adorning his feet.

Atsushi watched in distaste as Dazai talked animatedly to whoever was behind him, his hands moving along eagerly to the conversation.

“Say nothing.” Akutagawa’s voice sounded eerily unstable. Concerned, Atsushi turned his eyes back to the raven – only to find him gone. Taking a few steps out into the hallway, he caught sight of the other’s cloak and the tiger lurched forward to catch up. He knew the layout of the castle well enough to follow Akutagawa through the hallways and meander around corners. His boots clicked against the floors but not as loud as the disgruntled footsteps ahead of him.

They finally stopped when Akutagawa leaned against a wall, head bowed. Atsushi watched the uncharacteristic change and dared to move onward. They remained silent for a few moments in their thoughts before Atsushi broke it.

“How long?” His voice, although whispered, sounded much louder than the hallway could bear.

“Doesn’t matter,” The words grated against the tiled floors and Atsushi felt the undeniable urge to grip the raven by his shirt and shake sense into him. Until he could decipher the bare hint of anguish. Atsushi was walking on thin waters and he took the time to sift through his words. However, he couldn’t find them quick enough to stop Akutagawa’s heels clicking on the floor as he walked away.

With a growl, the tiger threw himself into the middle of the hallway. “So you’re just going to leave it?” There was evident disbelief and confusion, but a tone he hadn’t expected to leave his lips was disappointment. For the first time in their friendship, Atsushi was disappointed in Akutagawa.

The raven pivoted before closing the distance between them in a mere few strides, eyes seething. Hands gripped into Atsushi’s waistcoat and then he was shook vehemently. “What would you know about giving something up?! Anything you could want was given to you! You’ve never had to fight for what you wanted! It was always, always returned to you! So don’t you look down on me for wanting something I’ll never have!!” With a final shove, Akutagawa dropped Atsushi and the tiger didn’t try to brace himself for the fall as he fell on his ass in a mess of limbs.

The out lash disrupted his mind more than he had anticipated and he could do nothing as he watched the rabid dog walk away, heels clicking grimly. Not once had anything warranted that intense of a reaction from the raven…What could Atsushi have said to break him from that spell?
Nothing. He could say nothing. He had no words to offer the other. Akutagawa was right. He didn’t have to fight for the love he had with Chuuya, not where it mattered, not in the same mentor/subordinate relationship, and not for as long as the Akutagawa had for Dazai. The only information he had to go off of was the broken four years Ryuunosuke had before piecing himself back together. What kind of effect would that have on someone?

He remained on the cold tile for a few more moments before standing and brushing himself off. He stared off in the direction of the steps, wishing he could help before turning the opposite direction only to jump and bristle at the presence in front of him. The Demon stood before him with a soft smile and Atsushi couldn’t find it in himself to remain mad at the other.

Dazai was here. Did that mean he was trying? Or was he just fooling around with the raven’s mind…

Lowering his eyes from those warm hazels, he clenched his fists. “I don’t claim to know everything. I don’t claim to know you nor Akutagawa-kun. I do, however,” Blazing purple eyes looked up to meet those eyes. “Know how love should feel. If you can’t provide that, then turn back now.” His voice carried the strength he needed minutes ago.

A few moments passed and he watched the emotions flit over the other’s face. Then, with a final nod, brown curls bounced softly as Dazai made his way to Atsushi. The tiger’s eyes widened before he narrowed them in wariness. A hand was placed on his shoulder before the taller stepped around him to walk onward, the sounds of shoes clinking his departure.

Biting his lip, the tiger looked to the floor in front of him, replaying the faces of an angrily distraught Akutagawa and a concerned Dazai. Fighting with himself, he clenched his fists before walking back toward the party.

When he returned, he noticed the plethora of added people and he began to grow anxious without his partner in crime behind him. Taking a deep breath, he walked forward and through the threshold to look around. It wasn’t long before a body crashed into his and he smiled down to the girl wrapped around his waist.

She was wearing a bright orange kimono with red spider lilies adorning it. Her cellphone remained draped around her neck and her hair was decorated with small spider lilies throughout her ponytail. Atsushi grinned down at her and placed a hand over her navy hair. “How’s the party going for you?” The bright eyes rose to meet his and she gave a small smile.

“It’s good.” Her voice was just as timid as her personality but Atsushi found it endearing
nonetheless. He knew she liked crepes, rabbits, and warmth from merely spending one day out in the town with her.

“I’m glad you’re liking it.” And then, as if his brain wasn’t his own to command, the feeling of Chuuya’s body sliding against his was shot into his nerves. A shiver rolled down his spine to spread out over his body, the thought immediately causing a blush to cross his cheeks. He wasn’t left thinking about it long as Kyouka drug him to the center of the room where bodies had begun dancing.

With a nervous smile, he followed after her, nearly falling over his feet in her rush. Her small hands grappled after his, trying to get the gist of a movement she’d never experienced and he smiled at the gestures he’d made a mere day beforehand. Grabbing her hands, he placed one on his shoulder as he took the other in his hand. Placing his other hand on the smaller’s back, he led them in a slower dance than everyone else while she accustomed to his pace.

When she grew confident in her steps, she met his eyes with a bright smile as she tried to speed up their pace to everyone else’s and the tiger laughed as he helped adjust their feet. The nerves he felt when he first stepped onto the floor were gone with the smiles and colors twirling around the room as he whirled them. His heart clenched when he heard her giddy laugh, notes he’d never heard before and he had the fleeting thought that this, this was happiness.

The song ended with a flourish and they were left with smiles and laughter tickling their throat. A hand fell onto his shoulder and the tiger jumped with a short yelp before he caught sight of the familiar curls.

Chuuya.

Everything seemed to stop before them as purple eyes clashed with cobalt.

Soft leather lit up the nerves under his hand as Chuuya brought the knuckles to his lips, scattering small kisses that had the tiger shaking. Shit, he wanted this. He wanted this so bad. He wanted this. He wanted Chuuya. He wanted Chuuya.

It wasn’t until the gloved thumb rubbed over his hand that Atsushi realized he was trembling. Those ocean eyes, gazing up at him with the utmost care and warmth. He needed this. His breath hitched when he felt the same soft leather grace the nerves in his cheek and the tiger found himself immobile. He failed to remember Kyouka standing next to him, failed to remember everyone else as those eyes consumed him.
“You look amazing, my tiger.” The tones floated up to Atsushi’s ears and he held them close as if he’d never hear them again. He realized belatedly neither of them had mentioned their outfits when they met each other outside of Kouyou’s. In a rush he remembered Akutagawa’s despair, Dazai’s worry, and the compassion he felt for the both of them and he found himself wrapping the executive in his arms, feeling soft material under his fingertips but couldn’t possibly care about what his outfit was for the time being.

He wouldn’t lose Chuuya, he needed this man and he’d be damned if anything came between them. A soft laugh left the smaller’s lips as his hands connected in silver hair. “Well hello there,” Those cerulean eyes glimmered and Atsushi wanted to treasure them for eternity.

“Hi,” He offered breathlessly with a smile of his own. “I-Is this okay?” A hint of worry made itself known to the air around them and Chuuya’s fingers began to run through the silver curtain.

“Boss was planning this, Atsushi.” There was a teasing note under the words and it made the tiger giddy and full of excitement as the implications settled into his brain. This was okay. This was more than okay. This was expected. An elated sigh met the air as he buried his face in the red curls.

“It was okay. This was expected. An elated sigh met the air as he buried his face in the red curls.

Chuuya, I learned to dance,” His whispered ecstatically and the response was immediate. The hands in his hair fell to his shoulders and Chuuya began swaying them to the beat. Without delay, the tiger fussed into the steps, following the executive’s lead while he calmed his skyrocketing emotions.

“I was watching you with Kyouka. It appears I have a challenger.” The tease tickled his ear but he pulled away and frantically began to look around him for the smaller. She was remaining where she stood previously and Atsushi sighed, relieved.

Placing a hand on her head, he met her eyes with a smirk. “Kyouka-chan, does Nakahara-san have competition?” In response, the girl’s blue eyes brightened with a mischievous glint as she took hold of his hand and met Chuuya’s eyes with a vigorous nod.

Chuuya’s hands disappeared from around his shoulders and Atsushi watched as the stunning indigo waistcoat dipped low to hold out a gloved hand to the girl. Those bright curls ghosted over the material and Atsushi was mesmerized at how well the color looked on the executive.

“Kyouka, could I have this dance with Atsushi?” Another giddy laugh left a smile as the girl nodded her consent and blushed lightly when a gloved hand pet her before resting a hand on her shoulder. “You best go now, stay out of trouble.” The warning floated on an endearing tone and Kyouka gave
When Chuuya straightened and stood before the tiger, Atsushi noticed the silver buttons shimmer under the lighting and the tiger’s hands itched to curl a hand around the leather and pull. When those simmering eyes met his, Atsushi was struck speechless. Smirking, the executive draped his arms over the tiger’s shoulders and he caught sight of the silver patterns swirling at the end of the sleeve, contrasting spectacularly with the indigo background.

Red curls tickled his neck as Chuuya whispered sultrily into his ear, “Show me what became of these dance lessons.”

Swallowing thickly, Atsushi inhaled the scent clinging to those wondrous locks before wrapping an arm around the thin waist of the other and reaching a hand up to grasp the wrist of Chuuya’s right hand as he pulled it down to thread their fingers together. The moves that were once stiff and uncoordinated had molded into a smooth combination to prepare for the dance. His eyes remained locked onto the azure irises before him, noticing the way they widened at his fluid movements to soften into a more eager gaze. Atsushi’s confidence was always higher around Chuuya. He felt…admired, appreciated…acknowledged.

Pulling the smaller to him, he could see the white of his sleeves reflecting the boldness of the sleeves adorning Chuuya’s waistcoat. A belated moment of realization hit him as he murmured softly, “It seems everyone who’s experienced the mafia likes waistcoats.” A collection of airy laughs clung to his ears and the tiger purred in happiness.

“Of all the things you could’ve said…well I suppose so, Atsushi.” The tantalizing blues shone with fondness and before Atsushi could respond the hand at his neck pulled him down for a kiss. Their lips hovered over each other for a few moments before Atsushi pulled back to twirl the smaller out, biting his bottom lip with a smile. The tiger had lost the fact that others were in the room until he caught glimpses of colors from the edges of the room and immediately a blush spread over his cheeks and nose. Looking to the executive from under his lashes, he spun him back in and placed his hand on the awaiting hip just before a kiss was placed on Atsushi’s nose.

A small whine hitched into the room and he clenched his eyes closed as his blush grew. “D-Don’t do that here!” The whispered words fell on deaf ears as Chuuya’s hand came to rest on the back of his neck.

“Not my fault, look at my cute blushing Oniyuri~.” The tease fluttered across his ear before a kiss was given there too.
“Mmm, Chuuya!” His plea was adhered to and the executive pulled back with bright eyes. And then, like a blessing Atsushi noticed the white and black coats swishing into the room and a bright smile covered his mouth. Meeting Chuuya’s confused eyes, he merely spun them with vigor as the song continued on.

“Look behind us,” Atsushi whispered with bright fascination. They both watched unashamed as a familiar brunette led a blushing raven onto the dancefloor. The cloak had been pushed back behind his shoulders and the tiger could practically feel the heat coursing from Akutagawa. A hiss reached Atsushi’s ears and he was met with bright cobalt.

“About time he moved that damned cloak.” The executive mumbled with a smile that earned a head tilt from Atsushi.

“What do you mean?” Had Chuuya been here before him?

“I put a shit ton of time into that outfit but he insisted on wearing that cloak as if it could shield him. Why is beyond me.” Silence passed between them for a few moments as Atsushi pieced it together. Looking up to the couple again the tiger noticed Dazai was leading, but it was a wavering of colors as if fire and ice were melding together. It twisted Atsushi’s gut in happiness.

For the next few songs, Atsushi and Chuuya danced without a care in the world, merely glad they were together. A familiar red bun met his eyes and Atsushi beamed. Kouyou was here as well; she was wearing a red kimono that faded into black at the edges, small flowers decorating the material. There was another woman with her. She had short, purple hair with a pretty green pin and she wore a long, form-fitting crimson dress that moved with her and it looked like Kouyou couldn’t keep her eyes off the woman. Atsushi missed the blue irises glance up at him before slanting to where the tiger was staring.

So, it was safe to say his yelp of shock was expected when Chuuya jerked his hand down in victory with a smile plastered to his face. “About time, Ane-san.” Atsushi smiled at the reaction, relaxing as he watched the women’s smiles once more before looking away.

With a glimpse of brown curls, Atsushi was reminded how wary he was with Dazai being near Akutagawa. A thought occurred to him and he knelt down to the ear against his chest. “How about we have some laughter?” Blue orbs raised to meet his in question but he merely offered a kiss to the lips before him. Taking a step back, he pulled them from the fray. “I know you’re not too fond of Dazai,” At the mention of the name, Chuuya narrowed his eyes. “So let’s irritate him..” And with that, he kissed the executive’s cheek before catching sight of the couple near the edge.
They looked too stiff, but Atsushi was going to change that. Grinning, he walked up behind Dazai and tapped his shoulder. Shocked grey eyes met his while hazel glanced over in warning before softening with recognition. “May I step in?”

And without a fight, the Demon took a step back and Akutagawa cocked his head to the side in confusion. Since they’d danced in practice, it was easy to fall into the motions as he placed a hand in Akutagawa’s while the other draped over the raven’s shoulder. A dark gleam rose in his dichromatic eyes that the other soon returned. Smirking, the rabid dog led their dance with ease.

When the raven twirled the tiger out, Atsushi found himself laughing as he was pulled back in. With a glance over Akutagawa’s shoulder, he saw Dazai’s mouth drop and Chuuya grinning like a fool. Atsushi loved this.

As they turned about, Atsushi nodded over his shoulder and his partner in crime looked over to the brunette next to his mentor, a pout on his lips. A bright smirk lifted the raven’s lips. And then, as easy as in practice, they switched their arms and Atsushi led the dance. Now, Akutagawa was grinning as he locked eyes with Dazai while Atsushi met Chuuya’s.

Akutagawa’s words continued to push through his mind, however. No one knew what his life was before the mafia. Except Mori. But he thought if anyone needed to know, it was Akutagawa. The other would stay up for nights on end, training and strengthening Atsushi as well as their partnership. Trust, right? A tap to his shoulder told him Akutagawa could sense his tension and in his own way was worried for the other. Finally, with a bite to the bottom of his lip, he lifted his eyes to the slate ones.

“I was raised in an orphanage.” The grey eyes narrowed and Akutagawa’s mouth opened as if to interject but Atsushi needed to say this. To show the other he wasn’t taking the Port Mafia for granted. Looking away, he continued. “I was drowned, beaten, burned, and stabbed. The headmaster tried everything to kill me, saying I was an abomination, didn’t deserve to live and to go rot in hell.” Atsushi paused to take a deep breath but the other remained quiet.

“Having given up on me, they sent me out. And…that’s when I was caught in the storehouse.” Atsushi paused a minute before opening his mouth before realizing he didn’t know what to say. Closing his lips, he looked away. Atsushi couldn’t stop here. The point of telling Akutagawa this was to prove he was grateful. Meeting grey eyes, he continued. “I know you think I take everything granted, but if I’m being honest with myself I deserve none of this. I don’t deserve the Port Mafia, I don’t des-”

“Damn, shut up. Your complaining is annoying.” The voice sounded above him and for all the tiger was worth, he couldn’t make out what the tones meant. So he remained silent as he let Akutagawa lead. After a few moments of silence passed, the raven shook his head. “Your past is fundamentally
unrelated to who you are right now.” The words gripped around Atsushi’s throat like a vise as he was thrown into emptiness.

If that were true….did that mean Atsushi had proven himself? Did that mean Akutagawa approved of him? No, it was stated more as a fact, as if he’d tell any stranger those words. If it were true…..Did that he was finally more than his insecurities? More than the others who had raised him? Did that mean….he could let it go? He could finally allow himself to grow? Grow to be the subordinate Chuuya would be proud of and the partner Akutagawa could rely on? He’d never know until he gave it a try.

“I think Dazai-san…..noticed you long ago.” The words slid through his lips as confidently as the Demon had walked past him in the hallway. The chest under his head tightened and he could hear the other’s breath hitch. Before Atsushi knew what was happening, Akutagawa left him on the dancefloor. Shocked, he watched the black cloak sway as he turned his back on him.

Atsushi barely felt small hands fall into his but he smiled down to Kyouka with a heavy heart nonetheless as he led them through the next song.

Narrator’s P.O.V.

Hands like vises gripped the executive’s arms as Dazai shook him, the shock of white and indigo fighting for attention was intense.

“Get off, Dazai!” But the brunette wasn’t hearing any of it and continued to drape over the shorter.

“But Chuuya! I want to dance~!” Dazai’s voice was overwhelmingly pouty but before Chuuya could decide, blue orbs looked up into steel eyes and the hand held out. Surprise had a smile growing on his face as he accepted the hand from his oldest subordinate just before Dazai’s hand.

They joined the floor again and came across Atsushi dancing with Kyouka. Chuuya led their dance, despite the height difference with a smile gracing his face. The executive found himself relishing in the glow on Akutagawa’s face, the way his eyes sparkled like when Chuuya would bring him figs for his birthday. It was a refreshing breath of fresh air. Not to mention Dazai eating shit in jealousy across the room by himself.

Atsushi and Kyouka laughed as they watched the other two laughing, not feeling a bit of jealousy. Sure, Chuuya and Akutagawa knew each other longer and after all, Atsushi had only just stepped
into their lives. But he was confident in the way Chuuya was around him, the way he treated him. And Atsushi was happy. Looking down into navy irises, he grinned and twirled them around the floor of bodies, immersing himself in the dance.

It wasn’t long before Chuuya felt a tap against his shoulder and he knew who it was without the need to turn. Scoffing, he threw his chin up and to the side like a spoiled rich girl, Akutagawa mirroring the effect while he twirled them away. Dazai was left at the edge of the dance, his pout growing severe. Akutagawa couldn’t find it in himself to care, after all the Demon had four years to make up for and yes he was being petty and throwing it in Dazai’s face. Chuuya was smiling at him with pride and a light he hadn’t seen in years. Maybe Atsushi was good for him, after all.

Akutagawa realized with a bright shiver that yes, he approved of them together. Atsushi was a frightened cat when he first met him, but as soon as Chuuya stepped into the picture it was as if a switch was flipped in Atsushi. Over the course of a few months, Akutagawa could see the stark difference in the now tiger. Even if he fought for something stupid. No one was going to be around to give him a stamp of approval in order to live. The Jinko had to give the approval himself.

But the Jinko wasn’t his responsibility. With two taps to his shoulder, he brought his attention back to his worried mentor before offering a small smile. Nakahara’s gloved hand ruffled his hair and Akutagawa found himself blushing lightly at the acknowledgement.

“Booooooys~!” Dazai’s voice sounded with a dark pout but Chuuya nor Akutagawa could find it in themselves to adhere to it. Instead, they danced the night away with light hearts and clearer minds.

Chapter End Notes

AAAAHHHHHHHHH I HAVE LOVED WRITING THIS CHAPTER. A DAZAKU DEVELOPMENT? YES~. However, Akutagawa will never forget who will always be there for him. Precious boyssss, precious boys.

ONLY ONE CHAPTER LEFT EVERYONE, AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH. I'M EXCITED~.

Next Chapter: The long awaited and smut HEAVY chapter, starring a confident Atsushi after the party, a reunion at a coffee shop with Soukoku and Shin Soukoku. Atsushi shows the Port Mafia his newfound balance in heels and decides to cook supper for his executive mafioso~.
Please let me know what you think in the comments! Constructive criticism is welcome!

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