Storms of yesterday

by thedollars666

Summary

“What’s wrong flea? Where’d that smug smirk go?”

Izaya wasn’t exactly left with a lot of options, he tried to tug on the knife, but he knew that Shizuo’s grip wouldn’t let up, no matter how much his hand was digging into the blade. He had no choice, he’d have to let go of the handle—but there’d be no way of getting his switchblade back—if he didn’t, he’d risk getting his ass kicked. For once, Izaya had underestimated him, he cursed himself for being just that little bit over confident. He knew he should have just made his escape as soon as he saw Shizuo fall. But seeing Shizuo lying in the broken stand of flowers beds, looking impossibly peeved, Izaya couldn’t resist the urge to tease him further.

Notes

I hope everyone had a great new year!

This is the sequel to Winds of change. I do hope it’s just as good as my last one.

Enjoy!
“Why don't you stick to your original plan. If you really want to control the city and the people around you. You need not make it so obvious, people tend to get suspicious rather quickly you know. Me? Well now, I am an info broker. I'd be happy to provide you my services, those who seek my info won't be refused. Can you trust me?” Izaya chuckled as he stopped walking after crossing the zebra line across the road. “That all depends on the situation. How I want things to play out will naturally effect your outcome. I'll leave the trusting part to your instincts, but I’m sure that you've already guessed that I'm a valuable ally to have. Personally, I’d be asking myself how far I'm willing to go to keep trusting this man” Izaya laughed then as he hung up the phone, sliding it back into his fur jacket. He then heard his other cell ring, he fished it out from his other pocket and just as he was about to answer it, he heard a crash and the sound of metal bending in the near distance. He looked over to where the sound echoed from, it seemed to be coming from across the street.

Tom looked over at Shizuo, he then spotted the cause of his friend's sudden rise of anger, Tom sighed. There would be no use trying to get through to him now, but he was going to try anyway. “Hey Shizuo, we're on a job, can't you kill him later?”

Shizuo growled, glaring deathly at the raven haired man from his position. The stop sign bent in the middle from his firm grip as it was torn from the ground. Even from this distance, he could see Izaya smirk at him. “I'm going to wipe that smirk right off your face flea!!” he yelled.

Tom grabbed his other arm “Come on, seriously, let's go before you get into trouble. This city just recovered from your last encounter a mere week ago”

Izaya gave him a sarcastic wave, jumping onto a hydrant, perfectly balanced on one foot. “Shizuchan!” Izaya called, arms out wide, drawing attention to himself. “Don't wanna play today? I'm kind of bored over here!” Izaya placed his hands in his pockets, never once losing stamina.

“He's so dead” Shizuo began to storm over to the informant, dragging the sign with him.

“Shizuo~” Tom started, but it was useless, as he had thought. The minute Shizuo saw Izaya in the city, he immediately saw red. “God damn it” Shizuo stopped just in front of Izaya. Who jumped down from his spot, landing inches from the
blonde. “Izaya” Shizuo said through gritted teeth.

Izaya's smirk deepened “Shizu-chan”

“What the fuck are you doing here flea?”

Izaya hmphed, unfazed by Shizuo's death stares. “Business, I am a busy man” Izaya sighed dramatically, spreading his arms out, as much as he could while his hands were still in his pockets. “Now I’m bored” Izaya got up in Shizuo's face, hopping up onto a small bench, he always did hate being the slightly shorter one. “Entertain me” with lightning speed, Izaya drew out his blade and swiped it across Shizuo's chest. Shizuo stumbled, a little surprised. He then growled, his hold tightening around the sign. “Don’t tell me you weren't expecting that? Honestly, if you weren't, I'm disappointed”

Shizuo's eyes widen in rage “Izaaaayaaaaa!!” the blonde practically screamed in the ravens face before stepping back enough to swing the sign at him. Izaya was quick to react as he jumped on top of the sign and legged it in the opposite direction. Shizuo spun around, the sign grazing across the ground. “Get back here!!” Shizuo chased after him, bringing the dented sign along with him. Izaya jumped up over a bench and then rebounded as his feet touched down on another hydrant, smirking as he did so. Shizuo lowered the sign down seconds too late and he hit the red water supply with great force. Water gushed upwards, causing a few panicked screams and a momentary lapse of confusion as Shizuo tried to search for Izaya through the waves of water. Losing the sign, he ran through the growing flood, his hair wet as it stuck to his face. Izaya was actually stood off to the side, standing on top of a green bin, the bastard was actually waiting for him. As if he had the nerve to do so. “It's like you wanna die louse!”

Izaya jumped off the bin when Shizuo began running after him again. He dodged the lamp post in front of him and then heard the breaking of metal again as Shizuo tore said post from the ground. Izaya chuckled. “Predictable as ever” he quickly jumped to the side as it came crashing down toward him. It dented the ground on impact and Izaya took the chance to run across the street, quickly avoiding the oncoming traffic that came at him as he jumped up over a car and onto the small roof of a shop. Shizuo mimicked his movements-though not as gracefully-until he was back in view of his enemy. Izaya smirked as he jumped across to the next part of the roof when Shizuo caught up to him.

Izaya grabbed the supporting pole above him and span around it once before jumping across to the next one. He ricocheted off as Shizuo tried to make a grab for his ankle. Izaya ran across part of the wall before landing on the railing of a balcony with well practice balance. Shizuo jumped onto the balcony below Izaya, grabbing the supporting beams and rocking them back and forth until it begun to give way. Izaya stumbled a little and then jumped off the balcony, bouncing across sturdier railings until he made his way back down to safe ground. The above balcony crumpled down toward Shizuo, Izaya watched with an amused grin as plant pots smashed over his head. Shizuo growled, feeling as if the balcony was dangerously getting heavier as he kept his hands up to try and stop the
rest from crushing him. “Izaaaayaaaaa!!” his only option was to lob the entire thing.

Izaya's eyes widen as the rest of the balcony came hurdling toward him. “Such a brute” Izaya muttered as he jumped backwards a few good paces, making sure he was completely in the clear. The balcony crumpled with great force as it hit the ground, waves of dust blew outwards, causing people—including Izaya—to shield their faces.

Shizuo stood still, breathing heavily as he stared at the mess the two had created. “Damn it” When the dust settled, people stared at the wreckage, half wondering whether the raven haired menace was crushed under it—since they hadn't seen him dodge. Shizuo was wondering the same thing, he couldn't see any sign of the other man, he smirked, maybe he'd finally rid himself of his rival once and for all. His hopes were dashed when two blades shone in the sunlight, he just about managed to dodge them in time and his reflexes caused him to topple over the railings and fall from half way up the building. Luckily, the stands below broke his fall, he landed on top of a large bed of flowers that some poor old woman had spent her time setting up. She screamed as he crashed through the stands, flowers sprung up from their places in the pots. Broken shards and soil littered the ground around him as he struggled to sit up. He glared when he heard a chuckle and the light of the sun was blocked from his face when the shadow of his enemy loomed over him.

“Naw, Shizu-chan looks so pretty laying in a bed of flowers” Izaya's sly voice teased as he plucked a large yellow rose from Shizuo's hair. He grinned and held the flower out toward him. “Peace offering?”

Shizuo glared daggers up at the smirking informant. Just as he was about to stand up and punch the smirk off his face, Shizuo caught sight of something glinting within the flower. He realised, that the glare of light was most likely coming from Izaya's switch-blade, which was concealed among the flower. Shizuo grinned and reached out to grab the flower. Izaya's smirk then faltered as Shizuo gripped it firmly, his fingers splaying over the flower and the concealed blade of the weapon. Blood soon began to drip to the floor between their fingers.

*How did he know?* Izaya thought as he watched Shizuo use the leverage to heave himself up from the ruined stands. “Let go. Brute”

“What's wrong flea? Where'd that smug smirk go?”
Izaya watched Shizuo raise his fist toward him, he was about to jump back-letting go of his blade-when the sound of sirens filled his senses. They both looked down the street, seeing the cops drawing near to them. Izaya felt Shizuo's grip loosen due to the small distraction. He gripped the handle and quickly yanked his switch-blade free. Shizuo hissed and then stumbled when something hit the back of his head. Izaya blinked in confusion and then chuckled as the owner of the flower shop continued her assault, smacking Shizuo over the head with her broom. Izaya laughed loudly at Shizuo's attempts to hold her off. It was clear now that the old woman had been the one to call the cops.

“You damn hooligan!” she shouted, as if Shizuo was a troublesome teenager. “Look what you've done! It took me months to grow those beauties” the woman screamed as she continued to use her 'weapon'

Shizuo covered his head out of instinct, trying to apologise. “Lady! I'm sorry-it was-unintentional-quit it-I'll pay for the damage-” as soon as Izaya's laughter broke through to his ears, his eyes narrowed. He grabbed the broom and snapped it in half. The old woman stepped back, only half angry now, as the other half of her looked scared. Shizuo mumbled an apology again before spinning around with his half of the broom, fully intending on using the splintered end to sheer through his nemesis. Only to realise that Izaya was long gone by that point, he snapped the wood with his fingers and yelled “Izayaaaaaa!!” hearing the cops draw up, he momentarily forgot his anger and decided to make a run for it, before they had a chance to capture him. He didn't know why, it wasn't exactly his fault that he had ruined the woman's stand, though he did feel bad.

Izaya watched Shizuo run past him, grinning from the shadows behind the wall of an alley way.

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Shizuo got back to his apartment, half chucking his keys across the coffee table. He was still incredibly pissed off, he paced around his living room. “Fucking flea! I'm going to kill him. Just wait until I see that bastard again, he's going to eat fucking flowers when I smash his face in the dirt!” Shizuo smashed his fist down onto his coffee table, splitting the object in half. His keys flying across the room. As his anger subsided, he then heard a ring coming from his back pocket. He pulled out
his cell and then answered gruffly. “What is it?” Shizuo sighed and then sat on the cushioned couch. “Sorry Tom. I didn't realise it was you. Yeah. Yeah I know. Is the boss mad? Well, could you tell him I'm sorry for me anyways? I appreciate the understanding. Didn't expect the ass hole to be around today. I don't know why, I always say that don't I? Heh. You'd think one of us would have learned by now. Just can't catch a break. He always pisses me off, every time I see his damn face I wanna ram it into the nearest building. Well anyways. Thanks for checking up on me. I'll see you tomorrow, ok?” Shizuo hung up. He was glad to have a friend like Tom, and damn lucky to have such an understanding boss. Anyone else would have fired him ten times over by now. He sighed and moved off the couch, now that his anger was gone, he was hungry.

Izaya entered his apartment, Namie stared over at him as he closed the door and made his way over to his desk. “Causing chaos again?” She asked as she switched the TV off after seeing the news.

“Whatever gave you the impression that I have?”

“It's all people talk about when you and that Heiwajima guy go at it”

Izaya shrugged. “What can I say? People just love good entertainment. They'll soon get bored of that within a couple of days”

“You know. You could just not go to Ikebukuro”

“As much as he likes to think so. Shizu-chan doesn't own the city, I go wherever I please. Besides, a lot of my clients tend to reside there”

Namie rolled her eyes “Gee. What a coincidence”

Izaya laughed “I thought that you didn't believe in coincidences?”

“Where you're concerned. “coincidences” just happen” she got up from the couch, taking a file off the coffee table as she walked over to him and placed it in front of him. “I have to make a phone call”

“What's this?”
“Some kind of request for info. I haven't had time to read it properly”

“You know. You can be a poor excuse of a secretary sometimes” Izaya pouted slightly.

“And you can be an obnoxious, irritating, weirdo of a boss. So I guess we're both screwed” Namie then left the apartment.

Izaya shrugged and then grinned as he took the file from the desk “Let's see what we have then” he opened the first page, his grin widened. “Well well. Isn't this intriguing. It's been a while since I got this kind of request” at the top of the file, there was a photo of a girl, who looked to be at least ten, judging from her extremely young face and the way she was dressed. “A runaway. I wonder why she could possibly be running away” Izaya scanned over the information, until his eyes landed on a surname. “Washiba huh? Well, can't say that I've ever heard of such a name. But, it is my job to find out” Izaya booted up his three computers and began to type quickly, his long fingers a blur across the keyboards. “I suppose the best of places to start is always at the beginning. I could ask the person requesting the info directly. But what kind of information broker would I be if I couldn't simply gather that for myself. It's kind of scary, that people should know by now that I don't quite work the same as other would be informants. But at the very least, I still get the job done” Izaya grinned “Even if the result is not entirely what they expected”

Namie came back into the apartment, she saw the already opened file on the desk and then watched Izaya as he typed away, eyes flickering across the monitors, completely tuned out to his surroundings. Sometimes, just sometimes, she admired his work ethic, despite his intentions most of time-and the people always got more then they bargained for-Izaya always put a hundred percent into his work. He'd have made a great ally in her and her dad's company. She sat on the other side of the other desk. “That sure didn't take you long”

Izaya typed a message on one computer and browsed on another and then typed again on his third. “Multiple jobs on the go is better. You never know when two may link together”

“Like your involvements with the yellow scarves and the dollars?”

Izaya chuckled “Implying something there Namie?”

“Jobs only seem to link, when something you do coincidently forces them to”
Izaya huffed a laughed “You make it sound like I do that all the time”

Namie rolled her eyes “One of these days. Karma is going to come”

“Waiting patiently for it's arrival my dear secretary”

“How you've managed to avoid it at all for so long is beyond me”

“I just know the right and wrong buttons to push, that's all, I'm too careful”

“The problem with you is that you tend to push the wrong buttons more so then the right ones”

Izaya laughed as he got up from his desk, looking at his phone and then said “That's a matter of opinion. Don't you think?” he walked around the desk and headed for his jacket, that was hanging on the hook by the door.

“Where are you going?”

“The file is oddly specific, it's a little strange that the parents of the girl refused to contact the police over such a feeble matter. Why go to a highly regarded informant to find the child if there just wasn't something they didn't want anyone to know about”

“Why don't you just stick to the job they asked of you. You don't know this Washiba family, snooping around behind their backs is probably not a good idea”

Izaya smirked and then shrugged as he placed his jacket on “Though fake as it maybe-I appreciate your concern Namie. One day you'll learn not to underestimate me. I don't 'snoop' until I have all the facts”

“That so you can cover your own ass if you get caught”

“I'm never caught, Namie, there in lies your underestimation”
“Whatever. I don't particularly care what or how you do your job. What about tainted?”

“They can wait. There's not much I can really do for them. All I can do is nudge them in the right direction” Izaya grinned

“And by 'right' direction you mean the way you want them to?”

“Well at least we're on the right page there. I knew you wouldn't have a hard time following me”

“And where exactly does your 'lead' take you now?”

“Why so curious? Assuming we're talking about the missing girl now?”

Namie leaned back on her chair “I am your secretary. Don't you think I ought to know at least some of your ploys?” Izaya shrugged with a grin Oh, how fucking helpful you are Izaya she thought with an annoyed frown, that she clearly let show on her face.

“There's nothing about the girl that's suspicious. So I think I'll start with the parents”

“Why?”

“Because. If nothing about the girl is suspicious, then it's something about them that they don't want being found out”

“Which by the way. Is why they went to you in the first place”

“True. You just can't trust anyone these days”

“I only asked the location of your lead to help. I don't have much to do right now”
Izaya eyed her with a little suspicion, she was never quite this demanding to know what he was up to—if ever. “Why don't you get on the tainted case. Talk to their so called leader, ask them what kind of targets they had in mind”

“You mean they haven't told you yet?”

“They're a sloppy group. But they're a cautious one. Amateurish at best. What stroke of luck that they have me to guide them” Izaya said with a smirk

“How long are you going to be?”

“An hour. Tops. The place isn't that far from here. A few train stops and a cab ride. Nothing too out of the way. Does that satisfy your odd curiosity?”

Namie huffed and leaned on her palm “Not really” Izaya laughed and then he was out the door before Namie could say another word. “Shit”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow at his friend from across the table of the restaurant they were sat in. Tom was acting weird, he wasn't that good at reading people, but he knew enough to know when his friends were being unusually strange. Tom laughed at his friends suspicious expression and waved his hand. “Don't be like that. You know, you're always saying you'd like to take a trip out of the city for a while”

“Yeah. Maybe. But it's unlike our job to actually make that happen”

“Sometimes. Our clients skip town”

“Sure. But it's not like we ever go after them for real. Especially if they skip town”

Tom shrugged “Boss man must be desperate today”
“Maybe you're right. But I can't help thinking that something fishy is going on”

The two exit the restaurant. “Like what?”

“I don't know. Feels like somethings out of place all of a sudden”

Tom looked at him, waiting for him to carry on. Realising he wasn't going to he then replied “Like with work?”

“Who knows. I get the feeling we're being led to a dead end. Usually when that happens, that bastard flea is involved”

Tom laughed then “I can assure you. The boss doesn't associate with him. Given your history”

“Yeah. That's what I thought. But still, I can't help this weird feeling that something is missing, like I'm forgetting something important”

“Really?” Shizuo looked at Tom, his friend seemed to be looking at him-with hopeful intent?

Shizuo laughed “Don't mind me. I suppose it's in my nature to be suspicious right? Every time I get that way, I just always feel like I'm missing something. It's a natural habit of mine. It usually goes away after a day or so”

Tom sighed then He says that like it's a twenty four hour sickness bug Tom thought. His cell rang suddenly, he answered and turned his back for a moment. “Oh? Really? That's- ok, well not really-no we haven't even left yet-well, thanks for the heads up I guess” Tom hung up

“Something wrong?”

“Well, throw your suspicions to the wind my friend. Turns out one of our guys just made a mistake, our client didn't skip town after all”
Shizuo slammed his hand against the wall, making it crack slightly “Damn! Can't they be a little more considerate! I mean we could have just gone all that way for nothing!” he kicked out at a two way sign.

Tom laughed nervously “Why don't we head back to the office. Better check with the boss man, so we don't make the same mistake”

Shizuo breathed deeply to calm himself “Ok. Let's go”

Tom sighed in relief. He knew Shizuo would be pretty pissed. He was just glad that he'd gotten the phone call in time before they actually went all the way out to a pointless location.

Izaya stepped off the train, hands in his pockets as he exited the station onto Yamata street. He'd only been here a couple of times, but it wasn't like him to not already know his way around. He walked down the street for a couple of minutes and then hailed for a cab to take him to his destination. He thought back to his conversation with Namie, she seemed extremely curious all of a sudden, more so then usual. At least where he was concerned, normally she didn't like to pry in his motives or his exact location. It wasn't like he had any real concern about it, he didn't care what she did or didn't do, it was the very reason he'd hired her in the first place. Because she was conniving and that boded well in his favour. His brows furrowed in confusion when the cab stopped. “This is your stop Mr”

Izaya looked at the location, he pulled out his phone and stared at the picture and then back over at the building. Somehow, they didn't seem to match up. “Excuse me. I think you've got the wrong place”

The cab driver looked at him and snorted “No way. I've been a cab driver for twenty years. I know my way around every damn street, city and houses. This is the address you gave me. Maybe you're the one who got it wrong”

Izaya snorted, if there was one thing that offended him, it was the questioning of his skills. He was the best there was, he never got it wrong”

“You getting out or what?”

Izaya paid the driver and then exited the cab anyway. He may as well take the time to look around while he was here. The cab rolled away and sped back down the street. Izaya stared up at the dark looking house. It was practically in the middle of nowhere, at least it looked that way. There were no
other houses or buildings attached to it or even nearby. The house itself seemed nice enough, except for its darkened appearance. It was as if it had only just recently been abandoned. Izaya looked at the photograph on his phone, studying it for a few seconds and then staring outward. The plants in the photo were the same ones that he was looking at now, except now they were dead. “Just exactly how old is this picture?” Izaya scrolled down a bit from the photo “Two days ago” Izaya looked at the house “But that can’t be right” Izaya walked toward the house. He was no botanist but he was pretty sure flowers couldn’t die that quickly. “Maybe the Washiba family are smarter then I thought. After all, humans do tend to be crafty when I least expect them to be, which is exactly why I love them” he stepped onto the porch. It seemed for an abandoned building such as this one, the house was in pretty good structure shape, which suggested that the family were rather house proud-or well off-or both. At least until it had been abandoned. Izaya reached up to knock on the door, he barely touched it and it creaked open. “Give me a break” it was like walking from daylight into night in a matter of two seconds.

Izaya began to search around the house, starting from the top. He found more or less what he expected from a family home. A double bed in one room with neatly folded sheets at the end. A dressing table off in the corner and a mirror on the wall. Izaya searched all the draws of the table, then running his finger across the top, scrunching his nose when gathered dust appeared. He brushed his hands off and then walked out of the room, down the corridor and into the next room. “A lot of dust for two days ago” the next room held a single futon along the wooden floor, a small chest of drawers and a lamp. Checking the drawers to find them empty, he was about to leave when he noticed that this door had a lock on it. It was the only room other then the bathroom that had one. Izaya then moved downstairs and began checking around the kitchen and the living room. Searching through papers and checking in cupboards, there wasn't even a computer around the place. That struck him as odd, considering the file he'd gotten was typed. Though maybe they'd completed the file at a library, it was possible but didn't seem likely. Izaya frowned, it was true that his information on the house was correct. That this was the family home of Washiba, but for some reason, his timing seemed off, or rather; someone was throwing him off the trail. The picture he'd found was sent to him from an unknown source, but the person who sent the picture was Satoshi. “I honestly didn't think he was the fooling type” Izaya knew when he was being played, he didn't like it, mainly because it rarely ever happened. Then there was Namie, he couldn't help but think that she was somehow responsible. He frowned in thought as he left the house. This was the first time that he'd come up empty handed when tracking a leading source. He had planned on digging up some info on the parents first, just to cover his own tracks if he did decide to play sides like Namie had said. Confronting them straight up was less obvious then snooping around. When he reached the house, it seemed as though someone had already done the snooping for him or rather-before him.

Maybe, whoever contacted Namie about wanting the info on their missing daughter was sending him on a wild goose chase, as if someone wanted him out of town for a short while. Izaya sighed irritably, he hated it when time was wasted, when he could have spent that time with more important jobs. Stepping off the porch and onto smooth ground, he pulled out his cell to call for a cab. There was one more place within the area that he could check, after all, the house wasn't the only lead he had to go on.

“Bastard!” he suddenly heard a shout from behind him, he turned around with a little surprise. He seemed to be impressed rather then completely taken a back-he had no idea someone was even around.
Izaya placed his phone back in his jacket, retrieving his knife at the same time, bringing it out but concealing it within his sleeve. “Some kind of problem?” a small grin appeared on his face, it seemed he wasn’t going to leave empty handed after all. “I take it you are part of the Washiba family?”

It was a male, mid thirties, short blonde hair; his clothes were a little worn and shaggy looking, but you could tell he was wearing a suit. “You know damn well that I am!”

“Actually it was more of a hunch really, since I’ve not seen you before and there's also the fact that you look like you've been hanging around here for some time”

“Don't fuck with me! You're the reason my life fell apart! You ruined my career and my wife's”

Izaya narrowed his eyes, now he was really confused. He was pretty sure he'd never seen this guy before until now, he most certainly hadn't been to this building, and if this guy really was with the Washiba family, then he hadn't met the guys wife either. “I think you have me confused with someone else. My name is-”

“Izaya Orihara. Right?”

Izaya's grin faltered. Ok, so a lot of people knew of him. It was normal, he supposed. But somewhere out here? In this small district? It seemed less likely. “So you do know me. Or at least, of me, I have a pretty good recollection of those I do business with, and I have no idea who you are”

“You can play dumb all you want. But it's not going to stop me from cutting you to shreds!” The man lunged over at him, the sharp kitchen knife poised in his hands.

“Seriously? Wow, so violent. I get the feeling you have no real skill here. Just an angry typical amateur” though it wasn't best to always antagonise someone with a knife, but Izaya often found that people like this guy attacked blindly when taunted. Izaya dodged the guy, stepping sideways, flicking his blade out. The guy slashed at him but Izaya was much quicker, he flipped over on his hands and blocked the knife with his own as he came down toward him. “Never underestimate me. You have no idea who you're messing with”

“Don't talk to me like you have no idea who I am!”
Izaya was starting to think the guy was telling the truth, he seemed adamant enough. But that still didn't mean that he had any idea who the guy was. Other than the fact that he was part of the girl's family. He jumped back when the knife came at his throat, Izaya dug his heel into the ground and slashed his blade—a clean cut across the man's chest. The man fell backwards and skidded across the ground. Izaya let out an almost relieved breath and pocketed his knife. He then pulled his cell phone out as it rang. “Orihara” he greeted. “Namie” Izaya announced her name with irritation. “It would seem that not all the facts about the clients were true” Izaya listened for any sign of nervousness in the tone of her voice. “You expect me to believe that the file you gave me was forgotten about?” Namie was deceitful sure, but she wasn't incompetent. Even a job as small as this, she wouldn't have forgotten to tell him about. Though there had been a lot of jobs lately, and he'd been remotely busy dealing with tainted. It would explain why the house didn't match the picture. “Even if that was the case. You could have said something before I came all the way out here. But you're not without flaws, I'm sure you did this to get back at me for some reason or another. Though getting my throat slashed was a bit much. Hm? No, I didn't—but someone here clearly didn't like me being here. He seemed to know who I was—but I've never seen him before. I honestly started to think you sent me out here to get murdered ha ha ha” Izaya smirked “But of course. If you really wanted me dead, I know you enough that you'd have done it with your own hands” Izaya looked over at the unconscious man and then walked away. “I'm heading back now. I think I've had enough excitement for one day. Oh and Namie? If you really decide to kill me one day, you would be wise to off me in my sleep” Izaya laughed and hung up, only wishing he could have seen her face.

He called for a cab and was soon on his way back to the train station. Something about this whole thing seemed wrong. Who the hell was that guy? And why did he get the feeling something was a miss? It was as if he felt out of sorts all of a sudden. That almost never happened. He didn't like not knowing something, it was his job to know everything. Izaya entered the train station as his phone bleeped. He received a message. The box was blank. He scrolled down and soon his eyes widened. What the hell?
Izaya stared at the image, frozen in place, barely paying attention to the people bustling around him. *What's going on? Why is-* he didn't even know how to finish that thought. What he was seeing in the image couldn't be real, surely not, it was impossible. Someone was messing with him. He was rarely fooled, which meant he most certainly was rarely ever surprised to the point where he was left speechless. There in the image, was him and the same guy who had attacked him at the house just a moment ago. They seemed to be conversing in what looked like a café? Maybe. But how was that possible? He'd only just fricking met the guy! Izaya searched the rest of the message, trying to find any clue as to who sent it and when this picture was supposedly taken. The ID was anonymous, obviously, that gave him reason to believe it was someone that he probably *did* know of. But there was no real way to tell when the picture was taken. He zoomed in on the image, maybe he could tell which café they were at by the objects in the background. There was a large picture on the wall beside them, which didn't really leave much to go on. The tables looked smallish and appear to be a light pine wood. He tried to think about such a place, he'd been to a lot of cafés, but the more he zoomed in, the more the image blurred. Something caught his attention as he zoomed back out again, there on the right side—it wasn't much—but he could just make out someone else with him, standing just behind him where he sat. Unfortunately, whoever it was seemed to be standing just out of view of the image, he could only see a shadowed figure, and, if he zoomed in again, just make out a person's leg. Well that was a hell of a lot of help. He wondered if the person was Namie, she would be the only one he'd have to accompany him. Though normally he would prefer doing his job solo when meeting with clients personally. If the image really was true, then the guy was right, he had seen Izaya before.

..........................

Izaya got off the train and headed back out into his familiar city. He needed to figure this out, now, he was already getting a headache just thinking about it. The background of the image itself wasn't much to go on, he checked the large picture frame that was on the wall beside them. That wasn't overly helpful either, considering all it's content consisted of was a portrait of fruit, which, ironically enough had the word fruit across the bottom-wait. Izaya stopped walking, if he remembered correctly, the café wasn't all that big and it only had one level with open faced windows. He *had* been here before, though he preferred cafés that overlooked the city, rather then being on lower
ground. It was most likely the reason he didn't particularly remember it. In fact, if memory serves, the
place was actually near Shinjuku and close to the station he was currently standing outside of, around
Shibuya-Ku. Izaya made his way down the street, in some ways, he preferred making his appearance
in public at night, it was easier to blend into the crowd. But since he was already here, he may as
well follow his curiosity, after all, he'd already wasted enough time today on pointless trips.

Soon enough he was stood outside the now familiar café, in the middle of the day, far too out in the
open. He was slightly grateful however, that the café was in his own city, rather then in Ikebukuro.
Verve. That was the name of the place, it really was rather small, at least compared to others he often
went to. Hopefully though, because of it's size and seating capacity, those who worked here, would
be more likely be able to remember him. He entered the café, thankfully it wasn't overly busy at the
moment, he received a few recognition stares which he optimally chose to ignore for now. The
woman serving behind the counter smiled his way as he approached the counter. “What can I get for
you today sir?”

Izaya smiled politely, he was not without his charm after all, he knew exactly how to get what he
wanted. He wasn't going to deny it, even if it did sound vein and just a tad arrogant, but he knew he
was good looking—he could always use that to his advantage, especially toward women, despite
being attracted to the opposite sex. “Actually. I'm in need of some help. I wonder if you could be of
assistance miss-” Izaya glanced down at her name tag, then locked eyes with her. “Kawasuka”

The woman smiled brightly at him “How can I help? Did you lose something?”

Izaya chuckled lightly “Not exactly. I was just wondering whether you may have seen me in here
with someone not too long ago?” Izaya would rather not go as far as to show her the picture, if he
could help it. “I know you must get a lot of customers, but I was rather hoping that I was someone
that would easily be remembered” Izaya smiled at her, she seemed like she was thinking about his
question carefully.

She tilted her head and tapped her chin in thought “Hmm” she looked at him, like she was studying
him. Izaya wasn't sure whether he should feel offended or embarrassed, given his bold blatant
description of himself. “I've not worked here that long. I don't know all the regulars properly yet”

Izaya gave her a reassuring smile “I wouldn't worry too much. I don't come here often myself.
Would there be someone I could talk to that works here daily?”

She smiled and giggled a little “Sure. Just to let you know, I would have definitely remembered your
face even if you only came in here the once”

Izaya returned the smile “Appreciate that Miss” he replied with a wink as he slipped a couple of bills
in the tip box.
“Don’t bother trying so hard with him Kawasuka” Izaya and the girl turn when they hear another voice approach. She was a taller woman with her hair dark brown hair tied back, wearing a skirt suit, her apron covering her waist. “He doesn’t bat for your team”

Izaya grinned at her “You’re good” he replied, though was having a hard time recognising her, she clearly knew him. “Maybe you can answer my question” The younger girl seemed to slump somewhat, but she smiled at him and then continued serving other customers. Izaya stepped to the side with the brunette, leaning on the counter. “Did I happen to come in here not too long ago with someone?”

“That’s a bit of an odd question, then again, you were kind of weird the last time we met”

Izaya chuckled “I’m just going to take that as a compliment”

“Suit yourself. Anyway, to answer your question, yes- it looked like you were having some kind of meeting. I don’t really like to know my customers business; but the guy was a bag of nerves if I’m honest. It was kind of funny to watch really, you were as cool as a cucumber, it seemed like the guy was pretty sceptical about whatever he was telling you”

Sounded like him, he was starting to question himself, since he really didn’t remember talking to the guy she was describing. He then remembered the-just about-visible figure standing behind him in the photo. “Was there anyone else accompanying us that day?” he was pretty sure by now she thought he was crazy. He smiled and then shrugged “My memory is a little fuzzy at the moment. Celebrated a friend’s engagement” Well, only a small fraction of that was true. Shinra, his would be only friend, was engaged, but he didn’t give a tiniest damn, certainly not enough to celebrate. The other lie was that he had no interest in consuming any kind of alcohol.

“Probably the person accompanying you. What happened, you lose him or something?” Wait, what? “The one accompanying you, he had a ring on. Was he the one’s engagement you were celebrating?”

Huh. Damn. Even his lies were good. But, did that mean Shinra was there? Shinra was the only one that was engaged out of those he knew—that he knew of. But he could have sworn that he hadn’t worn a ring to signify he was engaged. He certainly didn’t think Celty would either, but he hadn’t seen them in a while so...... “What was he wearing?”

She laughed “Man. You really don’t remember do you? Must have been some night” She gave him a sympathetic smile. Izaya cringed inwardly. He was starting to worry that he really had gotten drunk.
“I've been there. So I feel kind of sorry for you. Though I don't recall getting so plastered that it effected my memory this bad. Since the last time I saw you in here was three months ago”

_Three months ago? How is that possible?_ He was pretty sure the shock was showing on his face.

“You've gotta take me on a night out sometime. Must have been wild. Anyway, your friend that you were with- looked like he'd just come from work or something- because he was wearing this kind of bartender uniform”

Izaya's eyes widen _Bartender?_ Izaya lost his ability to speak, surely she wasn't talking about- it couldn't be!

“Your friend looked like he wanted to kill the guy in front of him. He looked pretty strong too. It also seemed like he was pretty protective of you, since he would barely leave your side. It was kind of cute”

 profesional

_What the fuck?_

The woman laughed “If I didn't know any better. I'd have said the one he was getting married to was you”

Izaya paled, he almost passed out, he discreetly held onto the counter top and feigned a grin. “He fucking wishes” he spat venomously “Ok. Well. You've helped a lot, thank you. I'll be going now”

“Sure. Glad I could help I guess” she watched him walk away. She couldn't quite tell, but he seemed a little different to the man that had come into the café before. She shrugged it off and then smiled as a customer approached her.

Izaya frowned as he made his way back down the street. Heading back to his apartment. There was no way in hell that Shizuo was with him! It wasn't possible! _She had to have been mistaken_ Izaya grinned _After all, Shizu-chan is only a monster, I doubt anyone could love him enough to marry him, or ever love him at all. If that is the case, then I truly pity them._

“It also seemed like he was pretty protective of you, since he would barely leave your side. It was
kind of cute” “If I didn't know any better. I'd have said the one he was getting married to was you”

Izaya shuddered. She was clearly insane. That's what Izaya was going to put her absurd observations down to. That, and her lack of memory. Not that he was one to talk right now. But she was wrong about one thing, Shizuo was not with him that day, it just wouldn't happen!

3 Months ago

Shizuo looked up from the couch as Izaya came through the door. “Hey” he greeted as he stood up from the couch. “Didn't expect you to be gone all day”

Izaya grinned “You know me. The more time I spend around the city, the more information I can gather”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “Don't you mean the more people you can irritate?”

Izaya feigned a hurtful expression “Shizu-chan! I would never!”

Shizuo snorted “Yeah right. So why don’t you tell me about your day then”

Izaya leaned up and kissed the blonde on the lips before heading over to his desk. “Don't worry. I haven't broken our deal if that's what you're concerned with” Izaya sat down on his swivel chair and booted up his computers. He stared over at Shizuo, who now looked a little guilty.

“N-no. Sorry, I didn't mean it to sound like that”

Izaya laughed “Relax Shizu-chan. I'm kidding”

Shizuo walked over to the desk and around to where Izaya sat. He pulled him up slightly by the hem of his jacket and kissed him hard on the lips, he then pulled back slightly, lips lingering. “Ass hole”

Izaya grinned and then kissed him again. “Gotta get my kicks somehow ne?”
Shizuo clicked his tongue and released his annoying partner. “I oughta kick your ass for that”

Izaya's grinned deepened “I'm sure you can think of something else to do to it then that. A punishment I'd gladly accept later” Izaya winked. Shizuo turned a bright shade of red.

“Stop doing that!”

Izaya chuckled and then leant on his palm, putting on his best innocent expression “Doing what?”

“You know damn well what. Stop putting words in my mouth”

“Would you rather something else?” Shizuo clenched his fists as his blush deepened. How the hell could Izaya say that with such a straight face?

Shizuo growled at him and then replied with clenched fists. “I need to shower. I've gotta be up early tomorrow” Izaya's eyes trailed downwards and then he smirked at Shizuo's obvious growing discomfort.

“Need some help with that?”

“Shut up!” Shizuo stormed out of the living room toward the bedroom.

Izaya laughed and then logged into the Dollars chat room. He had been thinking for a while that he might get Shizuo onto this, then again, the blonde didn't care for much communication online. But oh how much fun Izaya could have if he did, the informant grinned, it was amusing just to think about.

Taro Tanaka: How's everyone doing today? The city is pretty quiet lately. You don't hear of many attacks nowadays

Setton: I know. It's kind of weird, but I'm not complaining, it's actually nice
Kanra: So what you're saying Taro Tanaka, is that you liked it when the city was under attack from things like the slasher maybe?

Taro Tanaka: NO!

That isn't what I was saying at all!

I think the city deserves peace for once!

Kanra: That isn't what I got from that little message before

Setton: Don't be a jerk to him Kanra.

I understood what you meant Taro

Izaya chuckled to himself

Kanra: Oooook. But if he really didn't mean it that way. Why was he getting so defensive hm?

Taro Tanaka: I really didn't mean it that way. Why would I want people in the city to be attacked? Why would I want that?

Kanra: Because then you wouldn't get bored. Then you wouldn't have to worry about the fact that you might have to leave if the city gets too boring. Isn't that why you left your last town?

Taro Tanaka: You're wrong!

I mean, that is part of it. But.
That doesn't mean I want the city to be in danger!

There's plenty of things that could happen that doesn't involve people getting attacked!

~Natsukashii has entered the chat room~

Izaya's eyes glanced at the unrecognisable name. “Hm?”

Natsukashii: Don't listen to this ass hole Taro. He's the one that's bored. Since he practically use to thrive on chaos. He's simply looking for someone to blame really.

Izaya narrowed his eyes slightly

Setton: Oh. You're new. Welcome!

Taro: Hey there! Welcome!

And thank you!

Natsukashii: Not a problem. It's not wrong to feel a sense of calm. Sometimes, that can be just as exciting as something happening.

Izaya's eyes widen a little and then he grinned suddenly

Kanra: Sounds like you're talking from experience. Natsuk-chan.

Natsukashii: Not really. Just telling it how I see it.
Setton: Well

I think calm is good too

especially since the city is usually filled with danger

Kanra: Especially in Ikebukuro!

There's this one guy

he's so strong!

Scaaaaaary!

Setton: Who?

Taro: He's not at all bad

I think he's a good person

Kanra: oh?

You know who I'm talking about?
Taro: I think so

But

Didn't he move recently?

Kanra: Ikebukuro has been quiet recently

Natsukashii: think I know who you guys are talking about. Heard he moved somewhere to Shinjuku. I dunno. A friend of a friend told me.

Kanra: Shinjuku huh?

Oh no!

That's my Neighbourhood!

Someone save me!

Taro: You know.

He really isn't all that bad

But

piss him off
and he can be kind of scary

Kanra:

Now I need to move!

Setton: Seriously?

Don't be so quick to judge

Natsukashii: Speaking of scary people

I heard about this one guy who lives in Shinjuku

that he's trouble, kind of famous for it

Taro: oh

yeah I guess

he's pretty weird.

But I dunno

he's a little on the eccentric side
Setton: Heard he was the definition of chaos.

Izaya pouted, feeling like he was being ganged up on

Kanra: That's a little harsh!

He's not even here to defend himself!

Natsukashii: Well, I heard that he's not that much trouble any more

seems like he's a pretty ok person nowadays

Izaya looked up from the screen as Shizuo walked into the room. He grinned at him. “I'm a little impressed Shizu-chan. I had no idea that you even had an invite for this”

Shizuo smiled a little “Well. I kind of wanted to surprise you. Celty was the one that invited me. At first I wasn't all that bothered. But it's actually kind of fun, if a little quirky”

Izaya chuckled “Can't say the name doesn't fit you perfectly”

“Yeah. Didn't take you long to figure out though”

“Feeling a sense of Nostalgia when looking back on a past memory. Though not in a negative way, more like a happy way, as if staring into remembrance of a happy memory. Like looking back on old pictures of your childhood. In your case. You can be happy to look back on our past, now that we've become an item, the violent past we shared is somewhat a happy one to you now, knowing things are no longer-nor will they be again-the way it was back then”
Shizuo stared at him and then rolled his eyes. “Should have known. Only you would read that much into something”

Izaya raised an eyebrow “Does that mean I'm wrong? Who knew you were philosophical”

Shizuo shuffled and then clicked his tongue “Shut up”

Izaya grinned “Thought so. It's almost scary isn't it?”

“What is?”

“That someone like me can read you like a book”

Shizuo snorted “At first it was at least. I didn't very much like being very readable”

“The feeling is mutual”

The two shared a grin toward one another. If anything, they'd gotten used to it now, they appreciated that they were the only two that truly understood the other.

Izaya turned back to the computer screen, his eyes scanning the replies since their temporary absence.

Taro: Yeah, I suppose that's true

After all, I haven't seen him much lately

Setton: I think
he's got something more important to thrive for now

Taro: What do you mean?

It wasn't intentional, but somehow, Mikado and Anri had been left out of the loop, they didn't know about Izaya's and Shizuo's relationship. They weren't bothered either way. But still, Izaya wasn't one to go around bragging about it. Even though they didn't hide their relationship much to the public eye any more, they still liked to keep a low profile, just encase.

Izaya tapped the Pm button

**Kanra: Your last comment.**

Subtle much?

**Setton: Sorry. But it's true though**

**Kanra: Whatever you say**

Back to the message board

Natsukashii: that isn't to say he's still not an ass hole

Izaya grinned, Shizuo really did know him so well. Even if what Celty said was true, sometimes, even now, it was hard for him to admit it. Shizuo seemed like he picked up on the awkward vibe, so he switched the conversation to something Izaya found easier to respond to.

**Setton: Oh of course!**
Taro: He is endlessly unpredictable

Kanra: Maybe he's just waiting for the right moment to strike next

**Pm**

Natsukashii: Yeah right

Izaya pouted a little and then shrugged

**Message board**

Kanra: Anyway! Gotta bounce! See you laaaaater!

Taro: Night

Setton: Goodnight!

Natsukashii: Yeah. Gotta be going too. See ya

Taro: Bye Natsukashii

Setton: Goodnight

~Kanra left the chat room~

~Natsukashii left the chat room~
Izaya sat back and stretched his arms up. He then moved from the desk over to where Shizuo was laid across the coach, his arms leaning on the back of the couch as he looked down at him. “That was fun”

Shizuo looked up at him, his face seemed irritated but there was glints of excitement in his eyes. “Yeah well. It's pretty hard to surprise you nowadays”

“Well that's almost creepy. Like you're constantly thinking up ways to surprise your partner”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “It's not like that”

Izaya chuckled “But that's basically what you insinuated”

“Shut up. Even if that were true, it's in good spirits, unlike when the tables were reversed back in the day”

Izaya feigned another hurtful expression and then grinned “Touché”

Shizuo grunted and then said “By the way. Your personality seems different when you're using your chat name”

“It's called an alias. It just kind of happened. I mostly use it to throw people off my real self”

“I guess that's pretty clever. Given what you do for a living”

Izaya shrugged “It's not all about that. Sometimes it's refreshing”

Shizuo smiled a little “Yeah. I get that” he then blushed a little “It was kind of....hot”

Izaya raised an eyebrow “So my alias personality Kanra was a turn on for you?” Izaya laughed a little “That's a little weird Shizu-chan”
Shizuo frowned in embarrassment. “Shut up. Like you're one to talk”

Izaya smirked and tilted his head “Hmm, Or perhaps, now this might just be a hunch. But perhaps Shizu-chan has a little fetish for role play?”

Shizuo looked up at him and Izaya climbed over the couch and straddled him. “And that's weird?”

“Not really. It's almost normal. Though it depends on what kind of role play you like. I for one haven't tried it, but then again, I've never been with anyone long enough. I don't think it's something you do with a temporary partner”

“I agree. Though you're the only partner I've had”

Izaya leaned down so that his lips were just inches apart from Shizuo's. “Maybe that's the reason for your fetish”

“Hardly. I like you. For you. I need no other”

Izaya leaned comfortably on Shizuo's chest. “But you like the idea of Kanra”

“Well. Yeah. Since I know it's you”

“Yes. Me acting like someone different”

“Sort of. It's not too different though”

Izaya laughed “You make me sound schizophrenic”

“Well...that would explain a lot” Izaya frowned a little until Shizuo laughed “I'm kidding. You're hardly that weird”
“So that's your idea of role play hm?”

“Shut up. That's wrong”

“You're the doctor treating the schizophrenic slightly twisted patient, while fending off his good looks and advances?”

Shizuo pushed against him playfully “Get off”

“Oh!” Izaya said in a dramatic tone “Doctor. Please, stop these voices inside my head”

Shizuo pushed against him again “You're sick” the blonde nudged him and they ended up toppling off the couch, Shizuo's hands flat against his partner, holding him by the wrists. Now he was the one straddling. Izaya grinned up at him playfully.

“Then you better cure me” Shizuo rolled his eyes but leaned down to kiss the informant. Izaya moaned against the kiss, unable to do much since his hands were being held to the floor. Shizuo moved down as he nipped and lightly sucked his neck. “No Hickeys. Shizu-chan. Work”

“Oh. Because you cared so much about my work when you practically sucked my neck off a week ago” the blonde growled at him.

“You've got nothing to worry about. Most of your clients don't really get a chance to look at you, much less notice anything. Since they're half way across the city by the time they open their mouths”

Shizuo snorted “Very funny. You know. You're kind of ruining the mood here”

“You're the one that started with the nibbling”

“You're the one complaining about it”
“Not complaining. Just-protesting”

“It's the same thing”

“No it's not”

“It basically is”

“Complaining means to dislike. Protest means to not want it”

Shizuo stared blankly at him for a moment. “It's the same thing”

Izaya rolled his eyes. “If that's what you really think. But, I might suggest other places. Hickeys don't always have to be on the neck you know”

Shizuo frowned a little “Right. Because you don't make a habit of removing your clothes on a job”

Izaya frowned “Get off”

Shizuo realised too late what he had said. He didn't even know why he said it. Izaya hadn't done that in a long time, and they weren't even together when he last had that kind of encounter. “I'm sorry”

Izaya shifted, but he couldn't exactly use his hands, since Shizuo still held them. “Let go”

“Izaya. I'm sorry, I didn't mean it”

“Get off me” Izaya kicked out with his legs

“Just so you can run off”
“Yes! At least give me the dignity of storming off!”

Shizuo gripped his wrists firmly “No. Izaya, I didn't mean it! I can't even believe I said that!”

“Then why the hell did you!”

“I don't know! Fuck. Izaya, I'm sorry, I'm really sorry” Shizuo gripped his wrists more in panic. His eyes wide with anger, directed mostly at himself.

“Shizu-chan! Let go!” Shizuo wouldn't let up, not until he could be heard. Izaya kicked out with his legs and Shizuo moved from his straddling position but he didn't release his wrists.

“I'm sorry. I'm so sorry” Shizuo leaned over him, his head bowed and touching the others forehead with his own. It was then Izaya could feel the dampness of what he assumed were tears coming from his panicked partner. Izaya growled out a little, but he was relenting a little, now the only reason he wanted to break free was to lift the hold Shizuo had on him.

“Shizu-chan....”

“Forgive me...I didn't mean it, Izaya. I'm sorry” Shizuo gripped ever tighter, panic taking over his control.

“Shizu-chan. It's ok. Ok? You can let go now. I'm not going to run” Shizuo choked back-a sob-or a sigh- Izaya wasn't quite sure, but his grip didn't let up. “Seriously. Shizu-chan, let go. It's starting to hurt”

Shizuo shifted and then leaned up, his eyes a little wide as he quickly retreated his hands. “Shit. Sorry”

Izaya sighed. He sat up a little and then moved out from underneath the blonde's shadow. He rubbed his wrists, trying to get some feeling back in them. “Relax. I'm fine. I think, that maybe I might have overstepped my mark too. The violent outburst comment. That maybe you were just digging back at me”
Shizuo looked confused, then realised Izaya was talking about when he'd said about throwing people halfway across the city before they had a chance to speak. “No. that wasn't it at all. Izaya, I shouldn't have said that, at all, even if I was annoyed about what you said”

Izaya moved to lean back on the couch, fully into a sitting position, still nursing his sore wrists. “I only really did that a couple of times. If it makes you feel any better, it wasn't just for work”

Shizuo moved so that he could sit next to him, he frowned “It doesn't. But I get that some people simply have *needs*”

Izaya rolled his eyes at Shizuo's interpretation of what *normal* people did. “One night stands are very common Shizu-chan”

“I know. I just don't like it. But I didn't mean for what I said to sound like you were-” Shizuo couldn't think of the right word.

“A prostitute?” Shizuo shifted uncomfortably “Except the only difference being that I got information rather then money. Huh. Actually, I did. Well what do you know, I'm an informant prostitute”

Shizuo rolled his eyes. “Shut up. You're *not* that at all. I prefer to think of them as one night stands if anything”

Izaya sighed “Make up your mind”

“You know what I mean. I never thought of you like that, even before we decided to take our relationship to the next level”

“Even before that?”

“Yes. Even when I hated you. I still probably wouldn't have thought about it like that”
Izaya chuckled “Are you sure about that one?”

“Well. I never really made it my business to know what the hell you did. So no, I suppose I wouldn't” Izaya shrugged and lay his head on Shizuo's shoulder. “Does this mean you forgive me?”

“I'm still here. Aren't I?”

Shizuo smiled. He looked up at the clock, feeling tired all of a sudden. He groaned inwardly at the thought of having to be up in six hours. “It's pretty late. Wanna go to bed?”

Izaya sighed. Like he was contemplating if he had enough energy to drag himself up from the floor. He hated arguing, more so with Shizuo, since they were both so stubborn. He also disliked being yelled at. He looked over at the blonde, his half lidded eyes showing his own exhaustion. “Carry me?”

Shizuo rolled his eyes, shifting to a kneeling position before bringing Izaya with him. He was pretty sure the informant only did it to annoy him, because if Shizuo refused, he knew Izaya was perfectly capable of walking on his own. “Child”

Izaya snuggled against his chest, as if he was preparing to sleep right there in the comforts of Shizuo's arms. Shizuo supposed it was an honourable feeling really, that he was probably the only one that would see this side of Izaya, that he was comfortable enough around him to truly let his guard drop. That level of trust warmed Shizuo's chest, it wasn't easy, building so much trust between them. He wondered sometimes, how Izaya felt about it all, whether he'd even noticed. The last thing Shizuo was going to do though was bring it up, because if he hadn't noticed, he'd feel more inclined to retreat into some of his shell out of stubbornness. Shizuo lay Izaya across his side of the bed and took his pants off and socks with no resistance on Izaya's part and the informant wasted no time in getting into the covers. Shizuo stripped down to his boxers and walked around to get into the other side. As he got into the covers himself he pulled Izaya close to him. Izaya curled himself against the other's warm embrace, probably without really realising he was doing so, more out of involuntary instinct. Shizuo kissed his shoulder blades and then let sleep take him over.

Shizuo didn't mind a day off nowadays, since half the time Izaya would work from home on those days, it was often hard to find the time to spend together. Izaya didn't have days off it wasn't the normal everyday job that allowed much for days off. He was a workaholic really, his job required
him to constantly be alert to what went on around him. Shizuo didn't mind much, he admired Izaya's skills, to a degree. He understood that in order to do his job, he needed to observe people, it seemed like the job fit him perfectly, since it was his hobby to watch humans, which was probably why he was so good. Shizuo brought him a tea over to the desk, if only to get some kind of response out of him. “Here. Why don't you take a break?” Izaya didn't reply right away, too focused on the screens in front of him. “What you looking into anyway?” Shizuo was hoping his interest in Izaya's current work would be enough to rouse him. After all, the informant never much passed up the chance to talk about his gathered info.

Izaya exhaled a breath and sat back from the keyboard. “Black market scam, information on an attack between some underground gangs and a missing girl” Of course, Izaya hardly ever did one job at a time.

“Missing girl?” Shizuo questioned, because he'd rather not know about the other two jobs, it would only make him worry too much.

“I got a call yesterday. The parents of this girl haven't seen their daughter in two days. She's runaway”

“If she's missing, isn't that kind of the police's jurisdiction?”

Izaya nodded but momentarily grinned “Yes. But people who come to me instead of them shows they've got something more to hide. Something they'd rather not have the cops find out about”

“But you're hardly discreet yourself”

Izaya smirked “They don't know that” Izaya took the tea and drank half and then put it back. “I've already done some research into the girl. She's pretty harmless. There's nothing mysterious about her, nothing suggests anything the parents would want hidden. She's a normal child by all standards”

“How old is she?”

Izaya somewhat shrugs. “They didn't say” Izaya types on his keyboard of his laptop and shows the screen to Shizuo. “They emailed me a picture though” Shizuo sighs with sympathy “She's around ten. The uniform she's wearing suggests she's in her second to last year of elementary school in Shinjuku”

“Why would she runaway though?”
Izaya shrugs “There's plenty of reasons why a child might runaway”

“The forefront of those reasons?”

Izaya hummed and typed missing girls within a fifteen mile radius in the search bar “It's confirmed that no one has reported any missing girls that match her description”

“You mean no one else has spotted her around?”

“Well. People that don't want to be found, generally keep out of sight”

“She's ten”

“You'd be surprised how kids-even at that age-are clever enough to think up things like that”

“That still doesn't really say why she ran away”

“The parents are still married, that rules out divorce. They're pretty wealthy, so she's not without luxuries. Not that that would suggest she's spoiled. I checked out the school within their message board, it seems like she keeps to herself, she's only ever seen with one friend, the teachers seem pretty fond of her, but nothing suggests she's being bullied at school-”

Shizuo tensed, he got the feeling Izaya was ruling out all possibilities until he verbalized the other most common cause for a child to runaway. “Izaya” Shizuo said as he clenched his teeth. “Are you thinking abuse?”

Izaya looked at him, normally he'd berate him for jumping to conclusions. But in this case it didn't seem as if he was far off. “I don't know”

Shizuo's fists clenched tighter, overcome with sudden anger “What else do you know?”
“Now here’s the coincidental part, the parents? They're not actually blood related.

“What does that mean? They're not her real parents?”

“Foster parents actually. I'm meeting with one of them in three hours. The father, I believe. I'll be able to get more out of him, even if he doesn't talk much, his expressions will be more readable”

“You managed to find all this out, and arrange a meeting with one of them in just a day?”

Izaya grinned as he sipped the last of his tea “Impressed?”

Shizuo snorted “Can I come?”

“That's probably not a good idea. If he senses your anger, he'll suspect that we're already suspicious. He'll be less likely to tell me anything”

“Izaya. I won't give anything away. I can control myself, I'll just stand there, I won't say anything”

Izaya leaned back, he grinned a little “I don't need a bodyguard. Shizu-chan”

Shizuo shifted awkwardly “That isn't what I was-”

“I know you. That's exactly what you were thinking. You can't hide any of your protectiveness from me”

“Do you think he's going to tell you anything?”

“I think it's less likely if you come along. And don't change the subject, I can take care of myself. Besides, if what we believe is true, he's hardly going to take a swing at me in a public place”

Shizuo clenched his fists. “Maybe not. And I know, I know you're capable of defending yourself.
But, maybe I can help, better then sticking around the apartment all day”

Izaya sighed in defeat “Fine. Come with me. But let me do my job, don’t interrupt me and don’t question my methods; I have a reputation to keep”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “Yeah. I know”

Izaya stood up, logging out of his computers. “Let's go now. There's a couple of places I want to check out first”

Izaya and Shizuo walked toward the café across the road from them, it was their meeting point for the parent/s in question. “Why are we meeting one of them if you already knew things like their work place, and the agency in which the girl was fostered through. Not to mention their fricking house”

“Ah Shizu-chan. There's so much I can teach you. I told you, I find out as much about the client as possible. If there's something I can exploit about them, then that's what I'll do’

“But it's not about the client. It's about the missing girl, the information you gather is suppose to be about the girl, not them”

Izaya sighed, they stood outside the café, Izaya with his hands in his pockets, Shizuo almost glaring down at him. “Shizu-chan. Sometimes information on the client is necessary”

“I get that but not if it's going to exploit them, that has nothing to do with what's been asked from you”

“So you're saying, he doesn't deserve it? Suppose it's true, suppose the girl ran away because she was being abused, physically or emotionally or-”
“I get it!”

“Are you really going to stand there and tell me you don't think they deserve it?”

Shizuo growled, in actual fact, if it was true, there was nothing Shizuo would like more then to beat the shit out of them. “Just so we're clear. You don't exploit their lives if they've done nothing wrong”

Izaya rolled his eyes, his previous actions were a thing of the past. He missed it, but he wasn't willing to break his promise. Losing Shizuo wasn't worth that, he was starting to think that it was this reason Shizuo was coming along. Not for the protective thing-though that was probably part of it-but more so to keep an eye on him. “Trust me for once”

“I do. I was just trying to understand the purpose of this meeting I guess. I suppose I just don't see the point”

“As far as they're concerned, their Daughter is my priority, so it wouldn't make a difference what they tell me about themselves right?”

“I guess?”

Izaya almost sighed, he loved Shizuo, but sometimes-just sometimes, the blonde found it hard to keep up with him. Izaya didn't blame him really, he knew that his logic sometimes did get a bit twisted. “Whatever they tell me, I know the truth”

“Oh. So you think they're just gonna lie?”

“Maybe not about everything. But humans lie Shizu-chan, especially if there's the slightest hint that someone is on to them”

“I see. I'll try not to give anything away, I guess me being here isn't such a good idea then huh?”

Izaya shrugged and then grinned “You never know, it might go the opposite way, with you being around it might opt him to tell the truth-to a degree at least. After all, he's definitely not going to come right out and tell us about the girl”
“If that’s true”

“Right”

Izaya and Shizuo walked into the café, it wasn't all that busy, but Izaya would have preferred a less-out in the open-location. Izaya walked toward the counter, Shizuo following after him. He smiled at the waitress that was behind the counter, she turned to him and returned the smile. “Hi. What can I do for you today?”

“Tea and a thick shake please” Shizuo rolled his eyes, it didn't really bother him all that much that Izaya automatically turned on the charm when conversing with people. It was mainly women this happened with anyway, so he knew he didn't have to worry. He spotted a man over to the right, he was on his own and noticed that he kept glancing around. “Slow business today?” Izaya said as he handed her the money for their drinks.

“And always is around the middle of the week. Is this your best pick up line?”

Izaya chuckled “Just making small talk. I apologise if it seemed that way, I have been told on occasion I can be rather-charming?” Izaya somewhat scowled when he heard Shizuo snort behind him.

The woman looked at him for a second and then smiled “No complaints from me. But I get the feeling I'm not your type, right?”

Izaya smiled “You've a good observation there”

“It’s always the handsome ones, the best ones are always gay”

Shizuo leaned back against the counter and grabbed his shake “When you've quite finished, I think I found your guy” Izaya chuckled and then turned with his tea in his hand, Shizuo nodded over to the right.

“Seems about right”
The woman leaned over on her elbows “You talking about the guy on his own second seat down on the right?”

“Been here long?” Izaya asked

“About twenty minutes. I was tempted to boot his ass out, it's kind of rude to sit in a café and not buy a thing” She replied

“Yeah” Shizuo agreed “Pisses me off too”

“I suppose you must get that a lot too, being a bartender and all”

Izaya sighed inwardly, he was worried Shizuo might start losing it soon, he found it the most hardest to control his anger when his previous job was mentioned or why he wore the uniform when that wasn't even his profession any more. He felt a little stab of guilt in his chest momentarily, since he was the cause of that. He shook it off, that was long in the past now. “Yeah. Damn bunch of non paying delinquents”

The woman nodded with a laugh “A shame you're engaged. It's not my lucky day today is it? Two well good looking guys come in and neither one is available”

Izaya raised his eyebrow at Shizuo, either the blonde wasn't paying attention to what the woman was saying or he’d gotten better at controlling his anger. “The guy is waiting for us to meet with him, we were a little delayed. Perhaps I should purchase something on his behalf?”

The woman shook her head “Needn't bother really. The fact that he seems pretty skittish already is amusing enough to let it slide”

Izaya grinned “You know, if I were straight, I'd have a feeling you would be my type” She winked at him. Izaya heard Shizuo growl beside him and then felt himself being dragged off by his sleeve, making sure he held onto his tea. “Well that was impressive” he said calmly

Shizuo snorted “Would you two like to be alone?”
Izaya laughed “Hardly. But I was actually talking about you”

“What about me?” Shizuo released his hold on Izaya’s sleeve as they neared the table

“Not a single sign of anger when she mentioned your former job”

“Yeah. Sort of impressed myself there a little bit”

The two stood in front of the solo customer. He looked up at them. “Mr Washiba?” Izaya asked

The man stood up, almost knocking his chair over “Y-yes. Are you Orihara? We spoke on the phone?”

Izaya held his hand out for the guy to shake “Of course” the guy took Izaya’s hand with a small smile. Izaya could practically feel Shizuo’s protective vibes behind him as he took the seat opposite the man, prompting him to sit back down.

“Have you found anything about the whereabouts of my daughter?”

“Not yet”

“So. Why did you want to meet with me?”

“There's really not much to go on. I thought that talking to you might help give me some idea of where to look”

“Oh. ok. I didn't think that's how informants worked”

“It varys. Is there any places you can think of that she might have run to?”
“Not off hand. We're pretty busy, we don't get much time to go places that she would have gotten attached to”

Shizuo turned to glare at him and then said “How about why she even ran away in the first place?”

Izaya cringed, he wondered when Shizuo was going to say something

“I-I don't know. It's not like her. I'm worried...I just want her back”

“I spoke with her school. It doesn't seem like she's being bullied there” Izaya looked for any kind of surprise in the man, there wasn't any.

“She's a pretty popular girl, she's got quite a few friends”

Izaya took a few sips of his tea and then looked directly into the man's eyes. “Oh”

“What is it?”

“Nothing. It's just that when I spoke with the school, I got the impression she keeps to herself, seems like there's only one friend she hangs out with”

The guy was doing a good job of keeping it together, he wasn't giving as much away as Izaya had hoped, he figured it may have been because of Shizuo's presence. “You saying I don't know my own daughter?”

Izaya raised an eyebrow and then smiled, closing his eyes for a second with a one handed shrug

“You are her father. So I guess you do know her best. I'm just going by the impression I got, that's all” The man sat back a little, Izaya could have sworn there was a little relief there. “Let's change the subject. You said you don't have much time for outings, what is it that you do?”

“I own my own business, founder and proprietor of a car company”

“You sell cars. That's a motivated job, seems rather time consuming. Seems as though you're doing
rather well for yourself”

“Yes. Which is why I don't have as much time for my daughter as I'd like”

Shizuo growled, gripping the back of Izaya's chair “What kind of father doesn't spend time with his kid!?”

The man jumped slightly at the sudden aggression coming from the blonde “I work hard, it's not easy, but she's got everything she needs”

“Except affection” Shizuo bit back

“I love my daughter”

Izaya decided to end their meeting before Shizuo decided to throw the man through the shop window. “It's just an observation, but perhaps the lack of affection-however unintentional-might have been the cause?”

The man let out a breath “Maybe....I just-I hadn't thought about it”

“What about your wife? Does she own the business with you?”

“Yes. But she works from home, handles all the taxes and things”

“So she sees your daughter more so?”

The man seemed to relax a bit “Sure. I guess that's why I don't really know much, I know you think I'm a lousy dad, but I work hard to provide for my family”

“Of course. Just out of curiosity, is there a reason why you didn't want to report any of this to the police?”
Izaya could have sworn he saw the man tense “I know it's a bit unorthodox, going to an informant for a missing child. I just thought that if I started getting a load of police involved, it might scare her more if they approach her”

“Understandable”

Izaya and Shizuo stood outside the café, Shizuo lit a cigarette and took a drag, blowing out smoke before saying “What now?”

Izaya sighed with somewhat annoyance “I knew he wouldn't talk much”

Shizuo rolled his eyes, taking another drag “You saying it's my fault?”

Izaya looked up at him “It is your fault. If you weren't there I'd have been able to get more out of him, he'd have slipped up”

Shizuo shoved him in the shoulder “Whatever. Why don't you try asking in a normal way for once”

Izaya shoved him back, though his efforts didn't faze the blonde as much as the other had. “Manipulation and twisting the situation is the only way to get through to humans. It allows them to fall into a sense of security before they even realise what they're saying”

Shizuo scrunched his nose up “Well. From what you told me, and from what he was saying, there were times that he did lie”

“At least that's something. No indication that he'd fostered the child and he seemed rather convinced his Daughter was popular at school—at least to the point she had more friends then she actually does”

“What now?”

Izaya walked forward “It'd go a lot smoother if I just went off alone from now” Shizuo tried not to be
offended but he couldn't help but feel a little annoyed. Izaya gave him a small smirk “It's just not in your nature Shizu-chan. You're not cut out for the deceitful life”

Shizuo snorted and then gave him a smirk of his own “Getting a little too normal for you?”

Izaya brushed his hand over Shizuo's lightly and then replied “Don't wait up, I'll be home later”
Shizuo wasn't bothered that Izaya refrained from showing much affection in public, despite the fact that a good few people knew about them now, it was still a risky situation. Shizuo lightly grabbed the tips of Izaya's fingers, squeezed gently and said-

“Be careful”

Izaya gave him a quick smile and then Shizuo let him go. “See you at home”

...................................

Shizuo sighed as he trudged up the stairs, he'd been gallivanting around the city for at least seven hours. He couldn't help it, he was searching for the missing girl, couldn't shake the feeling of worry, that some little kid was probably frightened and in hiding. He was probably right, the “parents” were probably not to be trusted. He got that vibe straight off when they met the man at the café. Speaking of Izaya, who the hell knew what the fuck he was doing to gather the information he needed. Shizuo didn't want to know, he knew what Izaya was capable of, the less he knew the better it was to remain in a healthy relationship with the man. There was no doubt in his mind that Izaya had changed, at least, to a degree. But Shizuo knew that Izaya couldn't continue doing his job if he completely did a one eighty, and the blonde would never ask him to. As he took the final steps to the first floor-wondering briefly why he never bothered with the lift-he walked along the corridor and then stopped, frozen on his feet. What the hell? Shizuo took a tentative step forward, was that her? Was that the missing kid? Sitting outside their apartment? “Erm....hey, you ok there?” The girl looked up, Shizuo's deep voice startled her, she stared at him wide eyed before shuffling back slightly. “Hey, don't be scared...I'm not going to hurt you....” Shizuo walked further toward her and then knelt down to her eye level.

“W-who are you?”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “My name's Shizuo. How come you're sitting in this corridor?”

The girl looked down, pulling her knees up to her chest “I'm waiting”
“You're a little young to be out by yourself at a time like this. What are you waiting for?”

“He said to wait for him here. That I’d be safe here”

Shizuo sighed, he wished Izaya would give him a heads up once in a while “Who?”

“Izaya....that was his name. He said that he'd be back soon”

“How long ago was this?”

“I don't know”

Shizuo cursed under his breath as he stood up. Sometimes, his lover had no sense of time frame while he was working, surely even he knew you couldn't very well leave a child on her own for this long, even in the comforts of an apartment building. He pulled out his cell phone and began to search his contacts until he found the right one. He let it ring a few times and then growled when it went to voice mail “Izaya! You better answer your damn phone! Would it kill you to give me a heads up!? I know you know what this is about! Idiot. You better call me back......” Shizuo paused before he calmed slightly and then said “Hope you're ok at least....love you” as he hung up, Shizuo looked back down at the girl, she seemed to have shuffled away more, curling up into herself. He guessed his yelling had scared her a bit. He sighed and knelt down again. “Sorry about that....I didn't mean to frighten you. Why don't you come inside? Be safer inside then out here by yourself right?” the girl didn't move, so Shizuo opted for calling her bluff instead. He stood up and fished out his key from his pocket and then opened the door. “I suppose Izaya didn't tell you about me. I live here too, he's my....partner” He didn't have much experience with kids, so he had no idea how much their small minds could process. “I'm gonna go inside now. It's pretty lonely out here” Shizuo made his way into the apartment, purposely leaving the door open.

As he made his way to the kitchen, he heard the door creak open a little more and a small face appeared behind it. He gave her a warm smile and she shuffled into the apartment and closed the door slowly behind her and opted to sit down there. Shizuo sighed, well, at least she wasn't outside by herself any more. He made his way into the kitchen and grabbed two mugs from the cupboard.

Izaya smiled to himself as he listened to the voice mail that had been left on his phone. Listening to the bickering voice of his lover yelling at him and then “Wait for it...” he said at the moment Shizuo
paused. Izaya chuckled when Shizuo spoke again, softly this time. The blonde could yell all he wanted, but in the end, it always came back to worrying about him. Izaya found it quite amusing. He stepped onto the train as he slid his phone back in his pocket. “Another job complete”

Shizuo set down a mug carefully beside the girl, he didn't want to make any sudden movements that might scare her. “Hot chocolate” he told her “Pretty sure all kids like it. Careful though...it's-well, it's hot...I guess” damn he sucked with kids, he knew he didn't know much, but he thought he'd be better then this. The girl seemed to giggle a little. Huh. Well that was something. “I guess that was obvious right?” The small girl nodded, Shizuo then sat down in front of her with his own mug. “Wanna tell me your name now?”

“Yuri....Yuri Washiba”

Well, that confirmed what he'd already suspected, the missing girl was now in the apartment. He became irritated, exactly when was it Izaya had found the girl? While Shizuo had spent all day fucking searching for her. Didn't he have two minutes to just ring him up and tell him? Damn he was going to give him a piece of his mind when he got home. “Did you run away?” The girl tensed as she clutched the mug to her chest. “It's ok you know. You can trust me” she didn't say anything so Shizuo thought it might be best to leave her alone. “Well. I'm sure he'll be back soon” he stood up with his mug and then wondered over to the couch. He sighed as his body relaxed against the comforts of the couch, some day off that was.

After an hour of watching pointless television, Shizuo turned it off and looked over at the girl. She had fallen asleep, curled up against the door. He stood up and walked over to her quietly; kneeling down he carefully scooped her up into his arms and took her into the spare guest room. He gently lowered her onto the soft mattress, he then grabbed a blanket off the top of the wardrobe and just before he placed it over her, she shifted and turned on her side to get more comfortable. Shizuo smiled, he lowered the blanket to her and then caught a small glimpse of a purple bruise over her shoulder. He gripped the blanket tightly in anger for a moment, gritting his teeth and then covered her with it. He left the room, leaving the door open so that the light in the hall could keep the darkness away from the room. As he made his way back into the living room, he picked the empty mug up from the floor and then gathered his own from the coffee table. After all, Izaya was somewhat of a neat freak and he doubted the man would appreciate empty cups strewn about the apartment. He put the cups in the sink and then heard the front door click open. *Speak of the devil.* Shizuo thought. Izaya made his way into the kitchen, placing a brown paper bag on the counter top. Shizuo could smell the food coming from the bag, he didn't acknowledge the one who had brought it in, instead he left the kitchen, switching the light off on purpose.

Izaya rolled his eyes, leaving the food in favour of following his sulking lover to their bedroom. He leaned on the door frame, watching with half glinting excitement as Shizuo undressed before him. It
was obvious that nothing was going to happen between them tonight, so Izaya opted to get all he could. After Shizuo changed into some comfortable grey joggers and a white t-shirt—a true indication that nothing was gonna happen tonight—Izaya made his way into the room and began to change into his own night wear. “And why do I deserve the silent treatment?” he asked as he grabbed a dark grey long sleeved top and a pair of black pyjama pants and chucked them on the bed. He took his jacket off and hung it on the back of the door and then proceeded to remove his shirt. Shizuo remained quiet as he made his way into the bathroom, Izaya winced as he heard the door half slam. Izaya removed his trousers and slid into the comfortable bottoms, slinging his clothes into the basket in the corner. Shizuo came back out into the bedroom, Izaya looked over at him. “Silence is golden”

“Just as well” Shizuo replied as he sat on the bed

Izaya rolled his eyes, he couldn’t stand the silent treatment, he knew Shizuo knew that. Izaya hated silence, it unnerved him, then again, he also didn’t like being yelled at. “Exactly what have I done?”

“What have you done? You're fucking kidding right?”

“It could be a number of things, so you're going to have to help me out here”

Shizuo looked up at him, clenching his fists as he stood up. Izaya stepped back and Shizuo growled “For fuck sake Izaya, give me a break. We've been together just over a year. Do you really think I'd hit you?”

Izaya shrugged and then said “Well when someone clenches their fists at you, you automatically think they’re going to hit you. Also, it's just under a year. And old habits die hard, so give me a break” Izaya backed up to the wall as Shizuo stalked toward him, evidently unclenching his fists and laying his palm flat out on the wall beside Izaya’s head instead. Shizuo sighed when Izaya flinched.

“Jesus Christ. Stop being twitchy”

“Shut up”

“Anyway, enlighten me, what are the number of things you could have done, that has me so pissed at you”

Izaya somewhat grinned. “Well. One, I found the girl and never informed you, I'm pretty sure you
took the time to look for the girl all day. Two, I've been gone a pretty long time without so much as a phone call. Three, you were pretty mad that I didn't bother to answer your call nor return it. By the way, your voice mails are pretty predictable Shizu-chan” Shizuo stared at him, curling his fingers in frustration. Izaya chuckled “I'm fine by the way”

“I wasn't worried...”

“If you say so”

Shizuo leaned his forehead against Izaya's shoulder “I'm still mad at you”

“I didn't call because I was busy, I left the girl here because I knew you'd be back-it was better that you didn't know the girl was found until I was finished”

“I just like to know you're ok. If you're going to be gone all day....”

Izaya lay a hand on the back of Shizuo's neck, coaxing the blonde into a somewhat forced kiss. “I'll try, next time”

Shizuo chuckled then as their lips clashed. “Sorry. I don't mean to be a worried sap”

“Does this mean I'm forgiven?”

Shizuo grinned “I need some more reassurance” the two kiss again, Shizuo's hands coming to rest on Izaya's waist.

“Hungry....”

“Mmm....”

Izaya chuckled and pushed against his chest “No, I mean I'm hungry. Haven't eaten since breakfast”
It was then Shizuo remembered the food that Izaya had brought home, that had been left in the kitchen. “Oh. Right, the food. It did smell good”

“I thought Japanese curry was a nice change”

“Or it was your way of bribing me to forgive you” Izaya shrugged and made his way into the kitchen, Shizuo followed after him. He sat at the table while Izaya was setting out the plates and began to reheat the food. “Are you not going to ask how the girl is?”

“I imagine you felt pretty awkward. You did your best to converse with her, probably made her some hot chocolate out of assumption that that's what kids like. She's probably asleep now, in the guest room”

Shizuo stared at him in shock, that was oddly accurate. “Were you in the fucking apartment?”

Izaya laughed as he set two plates on the table and sat down opposite. “No. It's not that hard to figure out, I know you pretty well, judging by your shocked face, that's exactly what happened hm?”

“That was scarily accurate”

Izaya laughed again “All right. You got me, I gave Yuri a spare phone, to call if something happened while she waited for one of us to come home”

“Tst. Figures, no one is that good”

“I come pretty close” Izaya grinned

“She seemed to trust you”

“That's a bad thing?”

Shizuo chuckled “Depends”
Izaya and Shizuo ate their meal, their disagreement forgotten about, they then cleared the table and sat in the living room for a while. Izaya laid across the couch, his head on Shizuo's lap as the blonde threaded his hand through his hair. “I saw a bruise” Izaya hhm'd in response, not really paying attention since he was almost asleep. Shizuo looked down when he got no more reply then that. “Oi”

Izaya looked up then “What?”

“Were you even listening to me?”

“Nope”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “I said, I saw a bruise”

“I don't have any bruises, nothing happened today”

Shizuo sighed in irritation “Not you! You idiot” Izaya pouted at the offending name which made Shizuo chuckle. “I was talking about the girl”

“Oh” Izaya replied as he shifted to get more comfortable

“Oh? That's your reaction?”

“Seemed like I was right after all”

“I didn't not disagree with you and this isn't a time to gloat you know”

“I wasn't gloating”
“Exactly how did you find the girl anyway?”

Izaya sat up and stretched “I followed a trail of information”

“From what exactly?”

“The house”

Shizuo looked at him with confusion and then what Izaya said registered in him “You went to the house?”

“Relax, the woman was there, I didn't break in or anything”

“That's not what I said”

“It's what you meant”

Shizuo sighed, they were bickering again. “Sorry, I guess I'm just tired. So what, did you just up and ask her in a confrontation?”

Izaya chuckled “Not exactly. I just asked her a bunch of subliminal questions”

“How can you ask someone a subliminal question?”

“Kind of like trick questions I suppose. Questions that Mr Washiba didn't answer”

“You mean, didn't answer how you wanted him to?”

Izaya shrugged. “Anyway. I got a good bit of information from her computer while she was distracted making tea”
“You hacked into her computer?”

“It was already on. I couldn't resist a little snooping”

“Are you trying to get yourself in trouble?”

“Turns out they're company isn't so innocent. They'll dealing cars illegally and avoiding taxes”

Shizuo growled angrily “Damn crooks”

“We already know they're abusers, somehow I doubted their company was on the level”

“So what now? I guess she didn't exactly tell you that directly-about the abusing I mean”

“No. But every time I brought up the girl, she tried to switch the conversation. She slipped up a couple of times, referring to Yuri as though she wasn't hers”

“Which she's not”

“I managed to find out who her real parents are-or rather-were”

“Were?” Shizuo suddenly grew cold, this was getting dark pretty quickly. “What does that mean?” Izaya grabbed his cell phone from the table and browsed the news section until he found what he was looking for. He then showed it to Shizuo. Shizuo scanned over the columns of the story, feeling anger boiling to the surface with every paragraph he read. “You can't be serious?” he handed Izaya back his phone “So they sold the parents a dodgy car, which caused their fatal crash while the girl was at school, she was immediately placed into a foster centre, when the same people that caused the crash just happen to be looking for a kid to call their own?”

Izaya nodded “That's basically the gist of it. Maybe they thought she'd find out about it, or something”
“How did they conveniently end up with her?”

“That I couldn't figure out. Most likely gave them a bunch of sob stories that they were good friends with the parents....”

“I guess that makes sense” Shizuo clenched his fists “Damn. I want to fucking smash their bodies to pieces for what they did”

Izaya stood up and placed a hand on Shizuo's shoulder “Relax. Let's go to bed. We've both got to be up early, I can't stand a cranky Shizuo at the best of times, let alone a tired one”

“Real funny” Shizuo stood up and they made their way to the bedroom.

Shizuo placed a bowl of chocolate cereal curls in front of the girl and a glass of orange juice at the side. She stared at it with hopeful intent and then looked at him “It's ok. It's for you, eat up” he said. Izaya made his way into the kitchen, wearing his usual black attire, he placed his hand on the girls head gently and then made his way to the steaming pot on the counter. “Fresh tea” Shizuo told him, as if he really needed to. It seemed a little strange, Shizuo was never the first in the kitchen. He looked over at his lover, something wasn't right, the informant looked paler then normal. “You look like shit”

Izaya snorted “Morning to you too, Shizu-chan” Shizuo watched him take a bowl from the cabinet and pour himself some cereal.

“Are you sick or something?”

“I rarely get sick. What made you even say that?”

“Because you look like shit, you're paler then normal and that-” Shizuo pointed to the carton that Izaya was pouring into the bowl “Is orange juice”

Izaya looked at the carton “Shit” he dismissed the bowl, he wasn't all that hungry anyway. He sat at
the table with his tea, warming himself. “I've got a headache is all. It'll pass”

Shizuo sighed at Izaya's lack of consideration for himself, when had he become that guy. And he thought he himself was stubborn. Shizuo retrieved a white box from the cupboard and Izaya flinched as the box was half slammed onto the table in front of him. “It maybe rare that you get sick. But this might just be one of those times”

“If you say so” Izaya shoved the medication away “And just because that might be the case, don't just automatically shove drugs in my face”

“Don't be dramatic Izaya. They're just ordinary pain killers, for your headache. In fact-” Shizuo took two out of the packet “Give me two, because you're giving me one”

Izaya opted to distract himself from his annoying lover and his aching head, he turned to smile at the girl. “Feeling ok today?” Yuri nodded shyly. He then grabbed his cell phone from his pocket and started to make a phone call.

Shizuo looked over at him, Izaya really didn't look good, maybe he'd been out too long yesterday. He was about to say something until Izaya spoke into the phone. “I've found her. She's safe” Shizuo stood dumbfounded, what did that mean? “Meet us at the Shinjuku park in-” Izaya then looked at the clock on the wall “One hour. No need to thank me” Izaya then hung up. He stared over at Shizuo who was giving him a glare. “What?”

“Are you seriously going to give her back to them?”

“That is what they asked me to do. Find the girl and bring her home safely”

Shizuo looked over at the girl, she was practically terrified, he then turned back to Izaya “This is a fucking joke right?”

Izaya ignored him and smiled kindly over at Yuri “Ready to go?” She nodded and Izaya stood up first, only to lean against the table as he did so, his palms flat out on the surface.

Shizuo stepped forward “What's the matter?”
Izaya shook off the dizziness he felt and then stood up, he was rarely sick, but he knew what the symptoms were enough to know it was coming. But he'd be damned if he admitted that to Shizuo now, after his little bravado speech. “I'm good, just a head-rush” he then turned his attention back to Yuri, even she looked at him with concern, did he really look that bad? “Come on, let's get you home ok?”

“Izaya! You can't-” Shizuo growled and then followed after them “I'm coming with you”

Izaya looked at him as they reached the door “What about work?”

“I already spoke to Tom last night when I found the girl outside our doorstep. He got me the day off. So I'm coming with you, I don't know what the hell you're planning here, because giving Yuri back to those ass holes is low. Regardless, I'm coming anyway to make sure you don't fall flat on your face”

Izaya rolled his eyes, wincing a little as that did his headache no favours. “Whatever”

“You can whatever me all you want. You look like crap, you shouldn't even be going out right now”

“Sorry Mother” Izaya retorted childishy

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Yuri was holding Shizuo's hand as the three crossed the street toward the park. Shizuo could see the man from the café, stood beside a set of swings with a tallish woman, brunette and average build. Yuri looked up at Izaya, her eyes a little wide, but he nodded at her and knelt down with a smile. “It's ok. Off you go now”

Shizuo clenched his other fist, this was ridiculous, Izaya better have something else planned, otherwise-sick or not-he was going to knock him into next week. Yuri let go of Shizuo's hand and happily ran up to her 'parents' Shizuo became confused at the warming sight, like they really were giving a lost child back to worrying parents. This whole thing was screwy.

“Oh my darling! I was so worried about you” The woman said, Shizuo watched her wipe away
tears, well damn—she was a good actress. The woman kissed the top of the girls forehead.

“Your mother and I were so worried, we didn't think we'd ever see you again” the dad said happily as he hugged her.

“Why don't we go get some ice cream now?”

“Ok!”

The dad walked toward the two as Izaya stood up “Thank you so much. You really did find her safe” Shizuo watched Mr Washiba hand Izaya an envelope, no doubt the payment for a job completed.

“No need to thank me. Happy to help” Izaya took the money and placed it inside his jacket. They then watched the happy normal family walk away, the parents each holding the girls hand.

“You better start explaining Izaya, because I'm going to fucking lose it”

“We're going to follow them”

The smiles of the man and woman faltered as soon as they rounded the corner into a small parking lot. The woman let go of the girls hand as she fished out the keys to the car. The dad's hand tightened harshly on the girls small one. She cringed and tried to immediately pull away. “Don't squirm brat! Do you have any idea what the hell you put us through! Ungrateful little shit” the man threw the girl on the ground and she yelped as her knees skinned on the pavement.

“We took you in when no one else probably would have. Honestly, kids these days are so disrespectful” The woman handed her husband the car keys and then she dragged the girl toward the car, opened up the door and roughly shoved the girl inside. The door slammed shut and the girl cried out, slamming her hands on the window. The woman got into the passengers seat as the dad started the car. He turned toward the back seat
“Shut up!!”

“Kazuma look!”

“Huh?” the two stare in fear as Shizuo stood over them, kneeling on the front hood of the car. “What the fuck!?” Shizuo growled and smashed his hand through the wind-shield in order to grab the man by the throat. He pulled him out, grinning as the man yelled at the pain as the glass shattered. Shizuo threw him to the ground, fists clenching as he kicked the man in the face.

“Bastard!! you dare lay a finger on a kid!?” another kick

The woman screamed as she scooted over to the drivers side, just as she was about to restart the car a hand closed over hers. “I wouldn't do that if I were you” she turned to see Izaya grinning at her.

“You- I thought-”

“That I could be trusted? That I wouldn't rat on you just because I'm an informant? Too bad for you”

“You cocky little- you better let go of me!”

Izaya's grin darkened, his pale face probably made it that much more effective. Just then, two cop cars showed up, Izaya let her hand go “You're their problem now. Have fun”

“I thought you didn't work with cops” She seethed

“I don't. Not really. But I didn't want to disappoint my partner, he doesn't much take kindly to domestic abuse. That's right, I figured you out the minute you called me for information. What can I say, revenge really is a dish best served cold” Izaya stepped back from the car as two cops approached, one of them being Satoshi.

“Are you sure you're not opting to join the police Orihara?”

Izaya chuckled “I prefer my own methods, my way, but thanks”
“Well, damn, that house had some rather interesting evidence to say the least” Satoshi tapped on the car “Step out of the car now, Mrs Washiba, don't make me force you” 

The woman got out of the car, she was seething, Izaya stepped back before she almost slapped him. Satoshi grabbed her by the arms and hauled her away into a cop car, all the while she was shouting obscenities at him. Izaya grinned as he waved. “Pleasure doing business with you!” he shouted sarcastically. He then opened the door to the back seats, he held out a hand to the frightened girl. “It's over now, ok?” she took his hand and he helped her out of the car.

Shizuo glared as the other cops dragged a battered Kazuma away from him. He then turned toward Izaya and Yuri, he smiled as she hugged him. “Hey. You didn't think we'd let them take you away did you?” Shizuo somewhat glared at Izaya “Although a heads up would have been nice” 

Izaya shrugged and then said “It was her idea” 

“Her idea? You're blaming a child?”

Yuri looked up at him, tugging at his shirt “It's true Shizu-chan” Shizuo glared at Izaya, Shizu-chan? The man was so a bad influence on kids.

The two watched as the cop cars dispersed from the scene. “What now?”

“I've called in a favour. Akane is going to live with the Awakusu family”

“Akane?” Shizuo looked confused.

The girl nodded “That's my real name. The Washiba's made me change it. They didn't like it”

“Probably didn't want to be reminded of what they'd done” Shizuo whispered under his breath. Then he registered on what Izaya had just said “Wait a minute. Did you just say the Awakusu? Are you out of your mind!!?”
“I know what you're thinking. But it's the only place I know she'll be safe. Shinra and Celty are too busy, Dotachin and his gang are not parent material either, they're influence isn't natural.”

Shizuo opened his mouth to say something but Izaya stopped him, knowing what he was about to suggest. “That includes us. We are not fit for parenting, our lives are too dangerous”

“But the Awakusu are!”

“A nice-normal-family. Shiki and his little lambs are long gone. Besides, I spoke to Mikiya, apparently him and his wife have been trying for a child for quite some time”

“But-”

“Shizu-chan, I'm well acquainted with the Awakusu, I know what they are, but I also know she'll be well cared for”

Akane smiled and hugged Shizuo around the waist “It's ok. Izaya told me Mr Awakusu's wife is really nice and kind. This way, I can still see you sometimes”

Shizuo looked down and ruffled her hair “Yeah. You bet”

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The two made their way back toward their apartment after making sure Akane was settled with her new family, she seemed rather happy. Shizuo noticed Izaya wasn't his usual talkative self, he looked at him, the man had gone deathly white in the last few hours since they rescued Akane. “You ok? Izaya?”

“I'm fine....”

“You don't look fine”

“Just a little tired...That's all”
“Bullshit” Shizuo placed the back of his hand on Izaya’s forehead.

Izaya gave him a small grin “What's the verdict?” he teased

“Shit. You're fucking hot”

Izaya chuckled “Thank you”

“Yeah yeah. I don't think I need to inflate your ego any more. Seriously Izaya, your skin is burning”

“Well, I feel pretty cold”

Shizuo clicked his tongue “That's because you're sick”

“I don't.”

“Yeah, you don't get ill. Whatever, face it. You-are-sick”

Izaya pouted, folding his arms in a huff “Not sick”

Shizuo rolled his eyes and they continued to walk. At some point Shizuo felt a tug on his arm, he looked back at Izaya who was practically stumbling forward. “What now? We're almost home”

“Shizu-chan....I don't feel good” Izaya swayed on his feet and Shizuo caught him before he could take a nose dive.

“God fucking damn it. You are such a stubborn ass hole” Shizuo knelt down and lifted Izaya up onto his back. Izaya's half conscious awareness allowed his arms to cling lightly to Shizuo's neck.
“Sorry....”

“Hate to say I told you so”

“But you're going to say it anyway....”

“Yes I am. Told you so”

They got into the apartment, Izaya had fallen asleep or he'd passed out, Shizuo wasn't quite sure which. He lowered the informant onto the bed, Izaya let out a small whimper as his head lulled to the side. Shizuo then retrieved a cold damn cloth from the bathroom and placed it over Izaya's head.

Izaya stirred and sighed contently “Mmmm....feels good”

“I bet it does. You're not gonna hurl are you?”

Izaya let out a weak chuckle. “No. Maybe it's just a twenty four hour thing....”

“Probably. I'm here though”

“I know....”

After a couple of hours of Shizuo trying to bring Izaya's fever under control, he settled into the covers beside him. He had to admit, he was worried there for a moment, he hadn't seen Izaya like that before, injured was one thing, but sick? It damn near scared the crap out of him. Shizuo knew he was being over paranoid, people got sick all the time, bugs and virus's. But seeing Izaya look so pale, he didn't like it. Izaya curled himself against his lover once Shizuo was inside the covers. “You're cold” Shizuo told him, his skin was like ice now that his fever had broke.

“Mmm....You're warm” Shizuo kissed Izaya's head. Izaya shivered a little and Shizuo pulled him closer and then wrapped his whole arms around his small frame. He heard Izaya sigh in content. Sometimes, like right now, he wondered just who the hell his lover was. He'd be his usual annoying self, hyperactive and full of himself during the day. Then when they were alone, he'd let down his guard and be this kind of small vulnerable-kitten—that Shizuo strongly needed to protect from the world, that he wanted to keep safe and shield from all the harm that might threaten to befall on him.
“As long as I'm around...You're safe”

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One month later

Shizuo walked into the apartment, damn what a day, the clients were just relentless. He was surprised he hadn't killed anyone today. It seemed as if everyone was on edge all of a sudden, why the hell was that? It was strange, even for a town like theirs, even for Ikebukuro, everyone was acting like the world was going to end. “Bad day Shizu-chan?” he heard Izaya ask from his place at his desk.

“Don't ask” Shizuo said as he toed off his shoes at the door. He made his way over to the couch and slumped against it. “Damn. Everyone was acting weird today. What gives”

Izaya didn't stop typing, but he acknowledged Shizuo's indirect question. “That might have something to do with that new drug that's been leaked”

Shizuo looked over the couch “What new drug?”

“I thought you at least kept up with the news Shizu-chan”

“Hey. I've been a little busy this last two weeks”

“The drug is new. It's called Crimson”

“Crimson?”

“It's an untested new drug. But apparently people in the city are already abusing it. Many have found out what the drug actually does and are using it against people they hate”
“Against them? What the hell does it do?”

“It's unclear. But one poor guy woke up in the hospital with over a years worth of memory gone, no explanation other then that he'd taken the drug or been given the drug without knowing it”

“How'd they know he'd taken it?”

“Though the drug is new. Something akin to abnormal signs of something in his blood stream”

“Seriously?”

“It's happened to at least a dozen people now”

“That's pretty fucked up. All these people, have they all been forced to take this drug?”

“It seems more or less the case. Though I read somewhere that a girl who lives in Shibuya took the drug because her boyfriend broke up with her. She woke up in the hospital, absolutely no memory of it”

“Damn it. What happened to good old fashioned break ups”

Izaya laughed as he leaned back on his chair. “Right. Like you're one to talk. When we broke up briefly, you wanted to throw a bench at me”

Shizuo snorted. “Yeah. Then your stupid ass when and got yourself shot”

“Want to start a couples counselling? Because that seemed to work, we're fine now” Izaya teased

Shizuo laughed “There's a great idea” Izaya grinned “We should warn our friends”
“Our “friends” actually watch the news”

Shizuo rolled his eyes, he had no idea why Izaya placed quotation marks at the word friends. He chose not to question it, instead he focused on the conversation. “I still think we need to warn them, just encase. At least they’ll be able to watch their backs”

......................................

~Setton entered the chat room~

~Taro entered the chat room~

Setton: Evening everyone

Taro: Hi there, evening

Setton: Just us two?

Taro: it looks that way

~Saika entered the chat room~

Saika: Hi everyone, I hope I'm not too late

Setton: Not at all, we just got here ourselves

Taro: Hello Saika, how are you?

Saika: I'm good thanks, how are you both doing?
Kanra: Kanra is heeeeeere!! in the house!!

Taro: Oh, hi guys, how's it going?

Natsukashii: Not bad. Work was kind of crappy

Setton: Just don't push yourself too much, you'll over exert yourself

Natsukashii: Thanks. But I'm fine. It's all good

Kanra: Natsuk-chan can take care of himself, he's a big boy. So did you hear about the Crimson drug!?

Natsukashii: don't tell them like it's something to be excited over!

Kanra: Sounds like you know about it Natsuk-chan

Natsukashii: I might. Some ass hole friend of mind told me

Kanra: Harsh!

Taro: So what's the crimson drug? I've never heard of it

Setton: drugs have been going around for sometime now
Kanra: this one is different! It's being forced on people and it's completely untested, but people that have taken it, lost a lot of their memory. This one guy, lost over a years worth of memory, bam! Gone!

Saika: That's frightening....

Setton: scary, what are the police doing about it?

Kanra: Nothing, they've got no leads at all, it's all pretty sceptical stuff

Setton: Well...what if Aliens are responsible-you know, I saw that documentary once. People were abducted into ships and brought back with no memory!

Kanra: Those stories aren't true Setton....

Setton: Well-they c-could be!

Natsukashii: On a serious note! You guys should watch your backs. Seems as if you might get it forced on you no matter who you are.

Kanra: it's happened to at least a dozen already!

Taro: Whoa....That's crazy, didn't the pharmaceutical company have someone's memory erased once?

Izaya stared in surprise for a moment, was it possible that they were behind this?

Pm board

Kanra: Ask Shinra if he knows anything, wasn't he the one that made that boy's memory disappear before? He's dealt with that kind of thing often
Setton: Shinra isn't involved!

Kanra: I never said that. I just asked if he knew anything

Setton: He doesn't!

Kanra: Touchy

Shinra scanned over the conversation, leaning over Celty's shoulder “Involved in what?”

Celty nearly jumped out of her seat. She typed on her pad and shoved it at him [You scared me! Don't do that!]

“Sorry. Anything I can help with? You look kind of freaked”

[That's because you just gave me a heart attack!]

“How's that?”

[figure of speech! You know what I mean!]

“Well. Besides that, why were you just biting Kanra's-or rather-Izaya's head off?”

Celty's shoulders slumped [Something to do with a new drug he's been hearing about. It's being abused among the streets and it's taking away peoples memories]

Shinra sat in the chair next to her “Let me guess, he asked if I was involved?”

[Not directly. He just asked if you knew anything]
“Oh Celty! I love how you care so much!”

[Shut up]

Shinra laughed and then asked “What's the drug called anyway? Does Izaya know?”

[Crimson, apparently. He said it's been mentioned on the news, though the stories vary]

“Crimson huh? You know. Come to think of it. I once heard my dad mention something about a drug he’d been working on. Pretty sure he said Crimson-or it could have been Cremson-or maybe it was Crimbon? Hmmmm…”

[Your dad!??]

“It's really not that surprising. But as freaky as my dad is, I doubt he intended to use it to “Attack” people”

[What if it got stolen?]

“I'll give him a call in the morning”

Celty slumped again, Shinra sympathised. [Guess I better tell him. Damn I hate it when he's right]

Shinra laughed “He's mostly always right”

[I know]
One month later

Izaya leaned up and kissed Shizuo hard on the lips as he neared the door. Shizuo moaned against him and then they pulled away. “What was that for?”

Izaya grinned “Happy Anniversary”

“Shit!”

“Forgot?”

“Um....well, I didn't think we- you know, counted”

“I'm not exactly a fan of counting how many days one remains together, but- I just wanted to see the look on your face when you realised that I remembered. You're the romantic out of the two of us”

“Are you sure about that? Because I seem to recall you booking us a table at Crista for Christmas”

“That was different, and-” Izaya yanked the hidden item that Shizuo had behind his back. “I know you didn't really forget” Izaya showed him the red rose, lightly hitting Shizuo on the nose with it, grinning.

Shizuo blushed, hand coming to rub the back of his neck shyly. “Heh. I didn't think you'd notice”

“Like I didn't notice the little 'I love you' on the bathroom mirror this morning? Or the heavily erotic sex-”

“All right!” Shizuo blushed again “So you noticed”
“You really do suck at subtleness Shizu-chan”

“Shut up”

Izaya wrapped his arms around his neck “I love you too” Izaya plopped the rose into the long empty vase-like glass. At that point, Namie decided to enter the apartment, she scrunched her nose up.

“I just had my breakfast” She held her stomach to add to the effect of her disgust. Izaya grinned at her.

“She's just jealous because the only one she will ever love and except that love from is with another girl”

“Argh! You rat!” Namie was about to throw her bag at him, but Izaya laughed and ran out the door. Shizuo followed him out, he didn't overly like Namie, she kind of creeped him out, so he tried not to converse with her.

Izaya and Shizuo stood outside their building, ready to part ways for the day. “Given what happened last night, you're in a pretty good mood, so I trust you might take it easy on the clients today ne?” Izaya said, giving Shizuo a playful shove.

Shizuo clicked his tongue. “I could be in the best mood ever, the clients will still piss me off”

Izaya chuckled “Lookout, Shizuo Heiwajima is on the loose!”

“Shut up. Where are you going today anyway?”

Izaya shrugged “Observing around the city mostly. Then I'm meeting with an old acquaintance of mine later. He's in a bit of bind”

“Do I wanna know?”

“Probably not” Izaya grinned
Shizuo snorted “Figures” he squeezed the tips of Izaya's fingers, something didn't feel right all of a sudden. He got this twinge in his heart, like something bad was going to happen. He wondered, if maybe things were going so well in his life now, that he was just expecting something bad to happen. Izaya noticed Shizuo hadn't let him go yet.

“You know. You need to let go of my hand so that I can actually go” Izaya teased.

Shizuo let him go then “Sorry”

Izaya noticed the worried look in his eyes “What's with you all of a sudden?”

“Nothing. Just be careful, I guess”

Izaya wasn't convinced, but he decided to let it go. He'd question him about it later. “See you tonight” Shizuo watched Izaya walk away, the twinge in his heart coming back again. What was wrong? Something felt off.....it used to be that way back in the day, when the two were enemies, he'd somehow be able to sense the damn informant's presence. But they were lovers now, had been for quite sometime, hell, they were fucking *engaged*. So why did his heart feel constricted, watching Izaya walk away, like it was the last time.

“Izaya!” Izaya turned around, smiling at him, damn he was fucking beautiful. “Ya liublyoo tibya”

Shizuo spoke the words Izaya had taught him, about the only Russian phrase he knew, but it was enough.

Izaya's smile simply widened a little. “Ya tozhe tibya liublyoo” he replied and then continued to walk away.

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It was almost dark, the sun setting between the orange tinted clouds, letting everyone know that the day was almost over. Shizuo entered the low lit bar, he sometimes came here with Tom after a hard day, simply to have a drink to unwind a little. Tom hadn't tagged along this time, the hopeless idiot finally had a date. Shizuo was happy for him at least, he smiled as he sat down in a open booth,
deciding what to have. The usual barman came over to him, Shizuo smiled his way. “Yo Jude. Slow day?”

“Yeah. You could say that” The barman placed a drink in front of him. “This is from that girl over there. She seems to dig you” Shizuo laughed a little “Yeah I know. Just humour her I guess”

The barman walked away, Shizuo looked over at her, he didn't recognise her, he simply lifted his glass up to her, nodding his thanks. She smiled over at him and returned the gesture.

Izaya clicked his tongue, he nodded a thanks as the waitress refilled his tea. The high rise café was somewhat of a favourite of his, he enjoyed the scenery, it gave him a clear view of the people below. Izaya sipped on his refilled cup, he looked at his phone, the bastard was half hour late. He'd hoped to be home in a couple of hours, yet he somehow doubted this was going to be a quick chat. As he looked up from his mug, someone sat opposite him.

“Sorry I'm late”

Izaya looked at him, registering the man was talking, but he couldn't find his voice. Something wasn't right, he looked down at his half empty mug, had he even looked up to the waitress that had refilled it? He was sure it was the same one from earlier.

“You ok?”

Izaya's vision suddenly became blurry. *Shit, they've fucking drugged me* Izaya stood up, this wasn't good, he had to get the hell out of here. He swayed against the table, knocking his chair over. He could vaguely hear the person near him talking, but as he tried to move from him—or her—Izaya wasn't even sure any more—he stumbled backwards. A hand steadied him, grasping at his arm.

The waitress looked over at them in concern. “It's ok. My friend isn't feeling that great, just taking him out for some fresh air. No need to worry”

He recognised that voice, but he couldn't place it in his current state. God he felt sick. He had to get the hell away, he didn't trust the guy holding him was really out to help him. Just as he felt the fresh air on his face, he then felt another hand grasp his other arm. *Shit*
Shizuo watched the woman pass by him “Hey, thanks for the-” then she was gone. “Drink. Huh”

Shizuo stood up, he expected Izaya would probably be done soon with whatever he had planned for today. He waved at the barman as he stepped out into the now darker streets. As he began to walk, his vision blurred slightly, well that was weird. Shizuo looked up, street lights seem to mould into a pattern of colours all of a sudden. “Shit....what was in that fucking drink?” Shizuo opted to turn back, to go back into the bar, but as he turned, he seemed to lose his bearings. Just then, he could have sworn he heard someone briefly call his name. He began to panic, his fists clenching, ready to defend himself, he had come to the conclusion that the drink was obviously spiked. His mind becoming hazy, he remembered the conversation he had with Izaya a month ago. Crimson Shizuo was frantic now, he'd rather not assume, but it was too random not to be. Shizuo stumbled down an alley way, he'd prefer to keep out of sight. Desperately, he fished out his phone, what if it was Crimson? What if he'd been targeted? What if someone had gotten to Izaya too? Izaya Shizuo just about managed to dial the right number.

Izaya was roughly shoved forward, he felt his hands skin across the ground. He could barely see anything, but he assumed they'd forced him down an alley way. He tried to reach for his flick blade, a lot of good that was going to do him now, but it was his only means of defending himself. Suddenly, he heard a ring, was that his cell phone? He tried to turn so that he could at least connect the call, he wasn't sure where his attackers were until his felt something smack into his side, a kick-he imagined. He coughed and his back hit the ground. Fuck this wasn't looking good, he couldn't even stand up. How fucking powerful was that drug? Drug.....Crimson! Izaya pushed himself up, like he'd gotten a spurt of energy all of a sudden, it was something he'd feared since learning about the drug. He'd become a target, which meant-at least it was likely-Shizuo had too. Shizu-chan

“Izaya....please....pick up” Shizuo swayed against the wall, he could hear voices again, seemingly nearer to him now. He'd made the mistake of coming down the alley way, now he was trapped. He tried again, one last time to reach Izaya. He wouldn't be able to do a damn thing if Crimson was the case. He feared what would happen, what would happen to them? He only preyed that Izaya was ok, if he himself was to be targeted, it didn't matter as long as Izaya was safe.

Someone picked his cell phone from his pocket, adding another kick to his already bruised rib cage and abdomen. Izaya groaned, desperately trying to protect himself, he wasn't doing a very good job of it so far. He heard the ring of his phone being cut off and thrown somewhere down the alley. They weren't even talking to him, they just remained silent, he hadn't heard a peep out of them since
they got outside.

Shizuo forced himself to his feet for the third time, he had to stay awake, if he succumbed to the drug..... Izaya wasn't answering his phone, that panic alone was the only thing keeping him from falling unconscious. Shit, he wished he'd asked Izaya where the hell he was meeting that Acquaintance of his. It just seemed all too coincidental all of a sudden. He knew he should have trusted his judgement today, he had a bad feeling and he was right! There were voices again, louder still. Shizuo stumbled, vision swimming, threatening to pull him down. “Who's there!!?” he shouted. He got no reply. “I'll fucking kill you!” Still no reply, then....... 

Izaya hissed as his back hit the wall with great force, pain danced along his shoulder blade. He tried to throw a punch at one of his attackers, as feeble as it might have seemed now, he felt something smash against his side-something harder then a knee or a fist-more akin to a bat, maybe. Izaya choked out a whimpered yelp as he hit the ground. He was pretty sure he was going to pass out soon, he tried his hardest not to, but the pain was becoming unbearable. Izaya rolled over, trying to get a glimpse of his attackers, not that that would help when his memory would most likely be gone when he awoke....if he awoke. “Who....are you....?” he managed through pained agonized breaths. Shizu-chan.....shit, please....be ok....

Three loud shots rang out, the sound echoing around the alley walls, ricocheting off the pipes. Shizuo blinked, pain suspended him from moving, his vision did him no good. He coughed, blood seeping through his wounds quickly. Izaya.....it was the last thought that entered through his mind as he collapsed to the ground, the last thing he heard was footsteps running off. Shizuo faded into unconsciousness, hadn't he had something like this happen to him before? But it felt worse, maybe it was the drug.....god it fucking hurt. I'm sorry.....Izaya.....please be ok.....please. Darkness succumbed to him, blood pooling around his body as he tried desperately to hold onto his memories. 

Izaya was lifted off his feet and shoved into the wall again, pain laced across his already beaten body. “Ngh!.....stop.....” he knew it was pathetic, he was pretty sure he heard one of them laugh. He didn't know what else to do, he could barely move, he was doomed right from the start, no way of ever defending himself at the first moment he realised he'd been drugged. 

“By the way” he heard one of them speak, at least, he thought so. His body held against the wall by an arm. In a last ditch effort, he reached into his pocket, there! His flick-blade was still in his pocket. “Gok sends his regards” Izaya froze. Gok? Did he hear that right? He felt his feet touch the ground
for a moment, then suddenly a sharp pain entered his body, bigger then that of his other injuries that had been inflicted on him. Izaya's throat closed around the blood that etched it's way up as he choked out a strangled cry of pain. He collapsed to the ground, hearing faint laughter and then nothing.

Izaya rolled over, his body crying out not to be moved. If he could just find his phone.....maybe it hadn't been broken, just cracked a bit. He moaned in pain as he shifted across the ground, further down the alley way. He realised then, as he decided on calling Shinra, that this felt awfully familiar. Izaya coughed, his whole body was wrecked, he could barely breath; but he had to get a hold of someone, someone had to know! Just then, he saw his phone light up. It didn't ring, so it was most likely telling him he had a missed call or a message. He didn't care, his phone was working..... Gritting his teeth as blood trickled from his mouth, he reached forward, his blood slicked hand making it hard to grip the phone. He couldn't move his left arm, he figured his shoulder blade had fractured when he was thrown against the wall. His vision darkened as he tried to focus on his phone screen. He could make out the letters barely enough to read Shizuo's name, it was him that he'd missed the calls from. He wanted nothing more then to call him, to hear his voice, to see if he was ok.....but he knew he was running out of time, if Shizuo was in the same predicament, then they needed someone to help them. Izaya groaned as he curled up on his side, his injuries were bad, he knew he'd suffered multiple bone fractures, at least four or five on his ribs, one on his shoulder blade and probably his collar bone too. Then there was the fatal blow, the one that was likely the cause of his tremendous blood loss, he'd been stabbed, again! His vision darkened again, he wasn't even sure he could speak. Izaya found Shinra's name out of whatever luck he had left. He heard it ring a couple of times. Please....please pick up....

“Izaya?”

Izaya closed his eyes in relief. He tried to speak, but something of a strained whimper came out instead, damn it. He coughed, trying to clear his throat. “S-shinra,......god....” this was some serious Deja vu. But damn it, he was in serious trouble, and in such fucking pain.

“Izaya? What's going on? I can barely hear you”

“Crimson,.....Shinra.....help....hurts....”

Shinra could hear the breathless sounds of agony coming from the phone. His body grew cold, he'd never heard his friend sound so awful. “Izaya, what happened? Where are you? Talk to me!”

“Shinra....can't.....see”

“Izaya! Tell me where you are!” Shinra was panicking, he ran into Celty at the computer desk. She
turned to him, seeing his panic stricken face.

[What's wrong!??]

“IZAYA, he's in trouble, I can't hear him-” Shinra turned his attention back to the phone “IZAYA! Please, where are you! Give me anything!”

“Café.....Shinjuku......alley way”

“The high rise one? Izaya? Izaya! Keep talking to me ok? Is it the high rise one?” Shinra and Celty were already on their way out the door.

“Shinra....”

“We're on our way, just hang on ok?” Shinra turned to Celty “Any luck getting hold of Shizuo?” Celty shook her head-or rather-her helmet. “Damn it” Shinra gripped the phone, his heart thudding against his chest.

“Tell.....Tell Shizu-chan......I love him.....and I'm sorry....”

“Izaya!” Shinra didn't hear reply. “Damn it!”

[We have to go now!]

Shinra nodded and he got on the bike. This was bad, so bad. *Izaya, don't you fucking die on us now.*
**Tainted**

Chapter Notes

I hope this clears up a few other questions.

I tried not to drone on, so I hope that this doesn't feel rushed.

I wanted to space it out so that it would keep people guessing :)

A lot more is to come!

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Four months ago

Eiji smirked as he stepped out onto the streets of Ikebukuro, wearing dark blue jeans and a short sleeved hoodie, he had raven short spiked hair and wore a chain connected to his jeans. He turned to his three other siblings. “Welcome to our new lives!” he shouted, arms outstretched wide. Hiruo and Jupei looked around the bustling city, it was unlike anything they were used to. Honestly, they didn't understand why Eiji had picked such a vibrant place, they were sure to stand out. Hiruo wore dark brown combat and a sleeveless army shirt with black tip-less gloves, he had jaw length brown hair that was jagged at the ends, covering over one eye. Jupei wore white knee length shorts and a long sleeved grey hoodie, he had light brown dreadlock hair that came passed his ears. Mayu was the only female of the four, she had her hands in her khaki slacks as her eyes were wide with anticipation. Sporting a brown slightly torn shirt. The four were actually quadruplets, though you wouldn't be able to tell by looking at them. “This is going to be the start of something amazing, I can feel it!”

Hirou shrugged, despite wearing an army get up style, he was the least likely to pick a fight with anyone. In fact, he was quiet and rarely expressed any emotion other then boredom; so it appeared to others. “Hope we don’t get lost”

“We'll be fine Hirou, come on! This city's energy! I can feel it already, coursing through my fucking veins!” Eiji, he could be seen as their leader if anything else, he was protective of them all, a somewhat skilled fighter-at least, to a certain point. He was actually the only one out of the four that truly had no empathy, when you got on his bad side-which was most of the time, since there wasn't much good in him-he could be considered rather psychotic.

“We don't even have a home” Mayu said as she blew a bubble with her gum, she was the level headed one out of the four, sometimes, if Eiji got out of control, she'd be the only one able to talk him down. “What exactly are we suppose to do? We're seventeen, we're still looked upon as kids, who the hell is going to listen or want to talk to us?”
“I’d be willing to bet a lot of people are pretty talkative if approached the right way. I just bet the people in the city are willing to provide us with a lot of stuff we’d wanna know about. I mean, who wouldn’t be enthusiastic about their own city!”

Jupei placed his hands behind his head, he was like Eiji’s right hand man. “Lead the way, we can’t exactly stand here all day”

Eiji looked around the city, grinning at how alive he felt, just by standing here. He could practically feel the mystical air around him, it was unlike anything he’d ever felt before.

“So what do we do then?” Mayu asked, popping another bubble.

“Let's go exploring” Eiji said and the three others began to follow as he walked away.

The four had been walking around the city of Ikebukuro for an hour, doing all they could to memorise certain places so they didn't get lost if ever separated. Hirou sighed and placed his hands in his pockets as he said “Well so far, we've learned about zero info about anything”

“Patience. It's a big city” Eiji replied

“He's right though, if we want to learn anything about the city, we should split up” Mayu said

The four stop outside a small building known as sunshine city.

“Seems like a good idea to me” Hirou replied

Eiji shrugged and looked at the building’s sign “All right, this spot seems like a good place to meet up, so let’s come back here in a few hours, 16:00 ok?” the others nod and walk off in their chosen directions, Eiji smirked and his hands curled into fists. “No more living in the gutters. This is our time now” he began to laugh which quickly grew into full blown hysterics. “This city will be mine!” a few people slowed their walking as they turned to the boy laughing in the middle of the path. Eiji continued to smirk and walk into the crowds, even as he began to get strange looks. “I can already feel this city's power, it's like a drug.....what is that feeling? It's filling every part of me, bursting through my every vein!” Eiji ran along the path, he seemed to lose all awareness and soon enough he was knocked off his feet. He grimaced a little, his elbows knocking against the side of the pavement.

Whoa, what the hell?

It felt like he'd literally just rammed into a wall. Eiji tilted his head up as he pushed himself up with his palms. Whoa, this guy is fricking tall!
“Jesus! Watch where the hell you're going!” the person that he'd bumped into yelled. Eiji's eyes widened for a moment and then he grinned as he stood up.

“Sorry about that. I'm new here. I guess I was just mesmerised by how amazing this city is” Eiji held out his hand. “I apologise”

The man—who appeared to be wearing a bartender uniform—snorted “No harm done I guess. You're kind of lucky I'm in somewhat of a good mood”

Eiji tilted his head with a lopsided smirk “Aren't you normally then?”

There appeared to be a shorter man with him, who gave him a sympathetic look “Just high tail in outta here kid, if you know what's good for you” he turns to the taller one and then said “Let's go Shizuo”

“Yeah. All right” Shizuo seemed to glare at him as he passed by, Eiji wiggled his fingers at him.

“Nice meeting you!” Eiji placed his hands in his pockets, he was taken aback by the strange presence of the man he'd bumped into. His size didn't seem to match the solid build he had, but looks could be deceiving. *Shizuo hm? I might just have to learn more about you*

Mayu walked into the mall, her eyes shining with yearning, like she could really afford anything. She wasn't exactly sure why she was here, but if she was going to gather some facts about the city, then she figured that kids around her age would probably be at the mall. She looked between the rows of shops until she came across two that looked close to her age, and- She didn't know the dress codes of school uniforms, but they certainly stood out regardless. She looked at her watch, it was only two, she had plenty of time before she had to meet her brothers. She ran across the other side and stepped in front of them. The two stopped walking, Mayu looked at them, they were almost identical, both girls. “Hey! We almost bumped into you, careful where you're walking” the one with glasses piped up, hands on her hips. “Were you deliberately trying to get our attention or something? There's such a thing as calling out”

Mayu was awed by the girls confidence yet friendly kind of nature. “Oh. I just, well I'm new- I mean, me and my brothers are new to the city. I was wondering if maybe you could tell me a bit about it, since you're kind of my age and all”
“Well, you seem a bit older then us, how old exactly you?”

“Seventeen”

“Seriously? That's kind of weird! Do you always just walk up to random teenage girls and ask about their home town?” the girl laughed

“You seemed approachable”

“Even weirder” the shorter haired one spoke, she appeared to be wearing gym clothes, though not much, wasn't she worried about stares?

“So. You're new, you're here with your brothers, they weird like you? Do they approach random people too?”

Mayu suddenly felt she was being scrutinized and interrogated. “My brothers are the same age. We've recently moved here today, we're just trying to get our bearings”

“Same age? Are you a triplet!?”

“Quadruplet”

The hyper one's eyes widen with excitement “Wow! That's crazy! I've never met a quadruplet before! Cool” she held her hand out “I'm Mairu Orihara. This is my twin sister Kururi. So have you finished school already? It's kind of pointless if your here to finish your last semester”

“We're not. I mean, we're finished”

Mairu jumped a bit “Sweet! So what do you wanna know? We can tell you all sorts of weird stuff you wouldn't believe!”
Hirou stopped at a crossing, as he looked to his left he saw a tall well built man handing out flyers. “Come! Come eat at Russia sushi! It good food and cheap deals!” the man bellowed. Hirou stepped closer to him, the man even had a Russian accent.

*Russia Sushi?* Hirou thought *That seems kind of Cliché* The man looked down at him, he grinned happily and shoved a flyer in his face.

“It good food! Come and try!”

“Erm. Sorry, I don’t have any money” The man continued to shout into the groups of people that walked by. “Hey, could you maybe give me some insight about the city? I’m kind of new here”

The man looked down at him, tilting his head and tapped his chin “Ikebukuro good city. Good people live here. Lots of interesting people, good friends”

*That's it?* “Anything else? Like who these interesting people might be?”

“Always good to see for yourself, learning is good for the soul! As is sushi!”

*What does that even mean?* Hirou waved a little and then skittered passed him. “Well that went well” he said to himself, he checked his watch, it was already 15:15 and he hadn't got barely anything to go on, he hoped his siblings were having better luck then he was.

Jupei smiled as he leaned on the railings, the boy in front of him seemed pretty keen on telling him about the city—or rather *cities*. It seemed as if there was just more then one interesting city, like the two had a strong connection to one another, yet so far, a lot of the more bizarre stuff happened in Ikebukuro. He must have struck luck somewhere when he found this boy, he hadn't stopped talking since finding him. He appeared to be wearing some kind of school uniform, so the boy was obviously youngish, maybe around 15-16. He also seemed kind of goofy, like he lacked a lot of self confidence, but Jupei had learned not to underestimate people like that.

“Honestly, you’d be amazed at what this city can offer a young guy like you, I was new, just like you are now. It's the best place to be once you get used to it, I don't mind showing you around sometime, I can tell you more about stuff—”
Jupei held his hand up with a small chuckle “Thanks. But I'll be fine, I can probably find my own way around soon enough. You've been pretty helpful, not many people were willing to tell me a lot like you did, so thanks”

The boy seemed to tense then, like he'd just felt like he'd made a mistake in telling him so much maybe. But then he smiled and said “I'm Mikado by the way, Mikado Ryugamine...I don't really know all that much, just what I see on the surface”

Jupei smiled “Now now, don't be modest, you were really helpful, my brothers and sister will be pretty grateful too”

“I can't believe you're new and you're a quadruplet, that's something that's never been in this city” Mikado panicked a little then “Of course I'm not implying you're something to be watched or anything like that-”

“Relax. I gotta say, you must be used to all this by now, so naturally when someone new or something, comes along, it's pretty exciting”

Mikado stuttered a little “Y-yeah... I guess so”

Jupei clapped a hand on his shoulder before walking passed him as he said “Well. See you around”

Mikado span around then “Wait!”

Jupei turned to him “Something else? You should start charging people you know, could make a little money with what you know”

Mikado seemed to react shyly to that statement, like he was generally flattered. “Like I said, I'm not that clued up on everything, I'm just telling you what I've learned over the time that I've lived here. Actually, there's this guy who knows a whole bunch of things, he's a pretty sketchy guy when you first meet him. He's an information broker, he does this sort of thing for a living, you'd be wowed by how much he knows”

Jupei hooked his thumbs into the hem of his white shorts “Thanks. This guy got a name?”
“Oh. Yeah. Izaya Orihara, he’s always around the city, mostly here. You’re best bet is to look around Shinjuku first”

“I just might do that. Well, gotta go. See you Mikado”

“Right....see you”

Jupei turned away from the boy with a grin Well that was easier then I thought, who knew that this town would be so willing to give away it's secrets to strangers.

Just as they agreed, the four met back up at 4pm on the dot, outside sunshine city. Eiji was sat on the high wall as he addressed his siblings. “So. What have we learned? Anything of interest?”

“Mine seems kind of far fetched if you ask me. I think I'll go last” Mayu said

Hirou sighed and said “I couldn't get a thing out of anyone, at least, nothing that was remotely helpful. All I could get was there were a lot of interesting people around and that the city was good. Also, apparently Russia sushi was the best place to eat” the others raise an eyebrow at him and he waved his hand submissively “Like I said, nothing remotely helpful”

Eiji then turned to Jupei, who in return smirked “I think I outdid everyone here, so why don't you go first”

Eiji snorted in doubt but decided to indulge him by going next “Within the first ten minutes of searching, I came across a guy, but this guy wasn't normal. I mean, he was human sure, but this guy, there was just something about him, something that screamed total strength. It was almost scary, I bumped into him and it was like honestly running into a wall. He seemed like the type to get mad pretty quickly too” Eiji smirked “Lucky me I caught him on a somewhat good day”

“Sounds like this guy is about as far-fetched as my piece of info” Mayu told him

“I thought you might say that, I asked around a little about him. Not many were willing to talk about
him, they got this feared look in their eye.....it was almost as if it was forbidden to talk about him. All I could get was a name- Shizuo Heiwajima”

“That's not exactly much to go on you know” Hirou said

“Well, at least I found something” Hirou folded his arms as if to sulk, but his face remained passive. “Jupei?”

Jupei chuckled “Nope. Mayu first”

Mayu placed her hands on her hips “I said I wanted to go last”

“Tough”

Mayu sighed frustratingly “Fine. Ass hole Well, I met these twins-”

“Twins huh? Hot?” Eiji asked bluntly

Mayu rolled her eyes “Young twins. Maybe fifteen. Anyway, they told me that there's some kind of urban legend that's famous around here. It's called the headless rider, the abnormal part is, they sounded really convincing that the thing was real. It rides around on a bike, only it's not a bike, it's a headless horse disguised as a bike. It's known a Dullahan”

“Dullahan?” Hirou said “Isn't that some kind of a fairy tail?”

“I said it was far-fetched, but I'm telling you, they were very believable, I think they might even be friends- I also got the impression the Dullahan is a female. Seems like they're willing to talk about that kind of thing, if needed, they'd be approachable. I got their names too, Mairu and Kururi Orihara”

Jupei began to laugh, the other three look at him, Eiji leaned over-his hands resting over his knees. “Ok hotshot. Why don't you spill your gained info” he told his brother
“I honestly didn't expect what I learned to be so connected to yours. It's actually pretty exciting. Just wait until you hear this—”

“So tell us already” Mayu said with annoyance

“Ok. At first, like Hirou, I wasn't able to get much out of anyone. Then I met this high school boy, he explained that he knew what it was like to be new, you wouldn't believe the stuff he was willing to tell me. He told me not to get on the bad side of nor to piss off—” Jupei pointed at Eiji “Shizuo Heiwajima, the guy is seriously fucking nuts, like crazy strong. Then, he explained about—” he pointed to Mayu “A headless rider, the legend of all legends, a Dullahan with amazing abilities. Rides around on a bike” Jupei could tell he had their attention by their shocked expressions, so he continued. “There's another strong guy who hangs around Russia sushi—”

“Whoa! I met that guy! He was huge” Hirou said

“He's pretty strong too, can just about stop that Shizuo guy's punches. He mentioned a few other strangely odd people around, like this group of people that drive around in a van, seems to me they're kind of protective of their people. He also mentioned a few dangerous gangs that hang around in the cities—oh by the way—there's another city called Shinjuku, this one and that one are kind of connected to one another; seems as if all the stuff that happens or will happen-happens in those two cities. There are gangs known as colour gangs, yellow scarves mainly—there used to be a gang known as the blue squares, but apparently they've blipped off the radar. The main gang—the most resourceful and probably dangerous— are known as the dollars. There's a whole lot of em it seems, they're a large gang with absolutely no colour, so no one could tell who's a dollar and who's not. This gang seems large enough, that I'd be willing to bet, that most of whom we come across, are in the dollars. Like I just bet that Shizuo, Mikado and those two twins are part of them. Maybe even that Russian guy”

The three seemed to be in awe at the information provided by Jupei, who the hell was this Mikado kid? Whoever he was, didn't have much of an issue telling people what they needed to know. “So. Seems like this Mikado kid could be a good source, seen as how he's willing to explain a lot of things” Eiji said. “And if he is in that dollars gang, that's even better”

“Thing is. Though it might have sounded like he told me a lot of stuff, he was careful about his detail. At first I thought the same as you, naïve. But he stepped carefully around specific detail, like whatever he told me, had more to it then what he was letting on. Details on the surface, rather then the depths”

“I see. Maybe he's the type that can be persuaded?”
Jupei shrugged “Don't know about that. But he did admit that he wasn't much on the know how—not by comparison to one other I learned about. Which—come to think of it now—might have a relation to the twins you met Mayu. This guy is apparently a well known information broker, he's kind of famous for it actually, Mikado said that he'd be the one to go to for everything that we'd wanna know about. I don't know about how much one guy can possibly know, but Mikado seemed pretty sure about this one. Izaya Orihara”

Eiji jumped down off the wall, he laughed and clapped a hand over Jupei's shoulder “Well, you my dear brother, are officially the king of gathering sources. Seemed like you picked a great kid there, stupid, but great”

Jupei placed his hands in his pockets “He did seem to freak a little, like he realised too late that he'd probably told me too much”

Eiji laughed again “Not our problem”

“So. That's a lot learned in such a short amount of time. What exactly are we suppose to gain with it?” Hirou asked

“I think. It's about time we were in control now” Eiji's smirk darkened “We've been looked down upon and ridiculed long enough. Starting from now, we will be the ones that are feared, we will be those people talk about on the streets, it's about time this city had something new to talk about”

Jupei leaned against the wall “I get that. I'm on board. But even with what we've learned, I don't think we're going to get very far with just the four of us. If those people that I mentioned are all connected to one another, including others around them, we don't wanna go messing with them—at least not right now”

Eiji grinned as he placed each of his hands on Jupei's and Hirou's shoulder. “That I understand. I think, if we want to move up in this city as well as Shinjuku. We're going to need a lot more man power”

“You mean like-our own gang or something?” Hirou asked

Eiji pulled a sour face “I don’t like that reference. Given what we know already, it appears gangs are outdated, there's too many of them. I prefer the term group myself, we're just a group of individuals
working our way up the food chain”

“So we're four people, looking for others to join us-in what exactly?” Mayu asked, she could tell Eiji was serious, like he actually believed they could pull something like that off. He certainly didn't think twice about what he wanted, from the minute they stepped onto the streets of Ikebukuro, things had already seemed like they changed.

“Control. I just bet, that we'll find quite a few people willing to aid us”

Hirou muttered under his breath “Sounds like a gang to me”

Eiji glared at him as he corrected his brother through gritted teeth “We're not a gang”

Hirou shrugged, like he felt any kind of fear from his brother. “Whatever. Your idea, I'll follow”

“Me too” Mayu said “Just try not to get too excited, we don't know what these people are really capable of”

“It's not them I want, no one can expect well known people like them to follow punks like us. No. we need people that aren't so well known, people like us”

Jupei laughed sardonically “You mean, lowlifes with nothing else to lose?”

Eiji shoved him backwards but grinned “No need to be so blunt. But I suppose that is the correct description”

“First off, I want to learn more about the headless rider, this Heiwajima guy and Izaya Orihara. Those three stand out the most to me, the more we know, the less trouble we can avoid-at least for now”

“I bet I could find those twins again. If they're a definite relation, they might be just as excited to talk about him as they were with the headless rider” Mayu said
“Think so?” Jupei asked

Mayu shrugged “Worth a shot”

Eiji turned to Jupei “Think you can get anything else out of that boy?”

“Probably not. I get the feeling that's about everything he knows or is willing to say, we don't wanna push it, it might look a bit suspicious”

“Good point. You can be my aid, we should “acquire” some cell phones. Doesn't have to be fancy technology, just good enough. Basics. Internet would be good”

“By acquire, you mean.....” Eiji tilted his head, like he really needed to confirm anything “Right. Just making sure”

“The law biding motives we ever had are long gone. We're going to do whatever it takes to get ourselves to where we want to be”

“I get ya. It's not an issue”

“Good. Hirou. Since you're kind of useless in the conversational sense, you can look for a place to hide. Something big I guess, relatively comfortable, just try keeping in mind that it will have to suffice as our home”

Hirou nodded “Though I kind of resent the useless remark, sounds like it'll be more plausible then whatever you guys wanna do”

“Shouldn't getting a place to stay be our first priority?” Mayu asked with somewhat sarcasm in her voice

Jupei held his finger up “Actually, I was thinking that getting cell phones should probably be first? How the hell are we suppose to gain anything new without them? If Hirou finds a place to stay, how's he suppose to let us know exactly?”
Eiji threw his hands up in frustration “All right! Cell phones first. But we better stop acting like amateurs, otherwise no one will take us seriously enough, and *that* I will not stand for”

Mayu looked among the crowds, it'd be easy enough to acquire a lot more then just cell phones, if they picked the right people. “I think we're going to need more then just cell phones. If we really are throwing honesty, morality and all that other good for nothing garbage to the wind. We need money. There's a lot of selective people around, there's plenty of daylight left *and* pickpocketing is something we all know how to do”

Eiji smirked and placed his arm around his sister “Your level cute head is something to be worshipped Mayu”

Mayu rolled her eyes, shrugging his arm off “You're hopeless. You always forget basic survival when you set your sights on something”

“Lucky for me that you're here. I can always count on you” Eiji clapped his hands together “Ok. New priority. Jupei and I will get the cell phones. Mayu; you and Hirou grab whatever cash you can get your sneaky little hands on. Be careful about those you pick from, we don't want any attention on us just yet, *especially* the cops, got it?”

Jupei sighed “Come on Eiji. We know how to get the goods, no need for lectures”

For however long left they had of daylight, the four began to set their sights on vulnerable looking people. Starting out with the most common “*So sorry about that*” stammer as they intentionally bumped into people. They did the job quick and they did it well, having had a good few years of practice. They knew exactly whom to target and what they could and could not grasp without notice.

Just after the sun began to set, the four grouped together back at their starting point, satisfaction clear across their faces. “Time to reveal the prizes” Eiji said. They hid behind the wall as they knelt down in a circle. Each of them emptied their pockets full of stolen goods; cash, watches, a couple of cards, two expensive looking rings and – four cell phones. “Brothers” Mayu glared at him “And sister” Eiji amended “Days of begging and feeling pitied are over” Eiji smirked darkly “We're going to take this city, by whatever means necessary”
Within a week, the four had gotten used to the layout of Ikebukuro, they'd made themselves a relatively comfortable home located inside an old factory. They had a good supply of food and resources now that their means to purchase them wasn't so limited. Mayu placed a box of dried food items in a corner. “This place still gives me the creeps” she said as she took a Granola bar out of the said box.

Eiji rolled his eyes from where he was sat on the top of the railings. “Is that all you're going to say now?”

Mayu took a bite of the bar and stuck her middle finger up at her brother and then walked over to stand at the bottom. “We know now that this was where those other gangs use to hang out, feels like we're setting camp on a burial ground or something”

“Pretty sure no one died here Mayu, no need for dramatics”

Mayu glared at him “It's creepy”

“Whatever. Hirou didn't take long to find this place, and it's well suited to us, it's spacious and no one has bothered us”

“Yeah. I still don't get why we're using our money to actually purchase food. Couldn't we just steal that too? Save our money for more important things?”

“I told you, we don't want to draw attention to ourselves too early. Not until we gather more people to our cause”

“We don't have a cause. Taking over the city and becoming a gang is not a cause”

Eiji smashed his fist against the ground “We're not a gang!” he gritted his teeth at her and she glared at him and waved her hand submissively.

“Whatever”
“Tst” Eiji calmed himself and then stood up and jumped over the railing, landing beside her. “Speaking of gathering people. Did you run into the twins at all?”

“Yes actually. They go to a school in Ikebukuro, Raira Academy”

“I didn’t ask you to stalk them geez”

Mayu rolled her eyes “I didn’t stalk them. I ran into them this morning, they told me what school they went to and told me to meet them there after it finished”

“And?”

Mayu shrugged “I didn't get much more. Jupei was right though, that broker guy is a relation, he's their brother. He's around twenty something-twenty four I think-”

“That's not very useful information Mayu”

“Shut up. Does it matter anyway? They said he's pretty well known, but they didn't seem keen on giving much more detail about him. Probably close” Mayu placed a hand on her hip “While you're griping on at me, what did you do today?”

“Browsed the internet” Eiji smirked

Mayu snorted “For what exactly, ways to control a city for beginners? Somehow I don't think there's a guide for that”

Eiji folded his arms “Very funny. You'll see, I'll show you once the other two are back”

“Where exactly have they gone anyway?”

“Exploring some more, probably rubber necking or something”
Mayu sat down on the low wall, scrunching up the wrapper in her hand “Somehow I get the feeling we're not going to learn much more from those connected around us”

“I agree with you on that. I think we'd be more likely to learn more about the city and those we seek from those less fortunate”

“Not this again”

“Believe me all you want. Just wait, you'll see that people with nothing to lose, are easy to control”

Eiji placed his hands behind his hand “It'll all come together, you'll see”

“When I see more people in the group, then I'll believe you”

“You don't believe that people can be easily manipulated?”

Mayu shrugged and then tapped her chin in thought “It's probably possible, depends how confident the one doing the manipulating is”

Eiji grinned darkly “I think I can me very manipulative” Eiji then pulled out a gun from his jacket, it was a simple hand gun, 9mm beretta to be precise. Mayu's eyes widened and she ran over to him.

“Where the fuck did you get that?” for a moment, fear flooded through her, like things were escalating a lot faster then she originally thought they would. It had only been a week and so far they'd gotten a good supply of food, money, a place to live, they practically knew all the basics of the city and learned of the most interesting people. Now they even had a weapon for which to defend themselves.

“Getting too much for you?” Eiji looked up at her, his dark eyes penetrating her own

“No. I just didn't expect this, where did you get that?”

“It doesn't matter”
“Yes it does! Did you buy it?”

“I suppose. Not from a shop obviously”

“So you've got a dealer now?”

Eiji laughed “No no. It's not like that, relax, there's always someone in every city that sells weapons illegally”

“Are we talking black market here?”

“Exactly, isn't it amazing what browsing the internet can do? And you thought I was just being lazy”

Mayu's fear soon disappeared. In a way, having a weapon in their midst, she felt a lot safer. She then smiled “I'm rather impressed actually” she then grinned “I guess Jupei and I were right, acquiring the cell phones and this place first was a better idea”

Eiji snorted “Yeah yeah. Don't make me use this on you”

Mayu rolled her eyes as she turned her back “Like you have the guts. There's probably not even any bullets in that thi-” an echoing shot rang out, Mayu stiffened and then looked to her left. There was a little puff of smoke coming from a little marred part of the ground. She span around and glared at him. “You fucking idiot! You scared the crap out of me!”

Eiji burst into laughter “You should have seen your face!” he laughed harder as he clapped her on the shoulder, he calmed himself and then tightened his hold. “I told you. Any means necessary”

“Big deal” Mayu remained passive, but part of her was afraid, there was no going back now. “All you've done is demonstrate that you can shoot the ground. At least you've proved that you can use it”

“Worried that I might not be able to shoot an actual human being?”
Eiji chuckled “I'm sure it won't come to that. Relax, it's more for reassurance then anything”

Yeah right, I know you too well Eiji.

The two look round when the door to their hide out creaked open. “Just us” Jupei said quickly

Eiji chuckled again “She's just a little jumpy because of this” he showed them the weapon he'd obtained while they'd been gone.

Jupei ran into the factory with excited eyes “Whoa! Sweet, how'd you get that?”

Hirou shut the door and then moved over to the others “So we're gonna just shoot our way through the city or what? Threaten people into joining us?”

“Not in the literal sense” Eiji replied with a grin

“So then what?”

“Self defence really. But if you want to be in control, you've gotta make it look like you're not to be messed with”

“So we are threatening them?”

“No. But we'll make them think that at least. They'll see we're not just punks”

Jupei jumped up and pumped his fist in the air “Fucking so sweet”

Eiji grinned and looked over at Mayu “Seems as if you're the only one with the problem”
Mayu punched him in the arm “Shut up. I'm on board all right, I was just surprised, that's all”

“Good. That's my sis”

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Izaya stopped typing and glanced at his phone, he read the known caller and grinned as he answered. “Mairu. Using your cell phone during school hours?”

Mairu rolled her eyes “Yeah yeah. Don't go giving me the pep talk of school rules. You broke them all the time”

Izaya chuckled “What do you want? I am kind of busy you know”

“Shut up already. Let me talk”

“Since you asked so nicely....”

Mairu stomped her foot in frustration “Shut up. Anyway, I met this girl last week, she seemed normal at first. She said she was new to the city, so I told her some good places to go and told her about the headless rider, you know, cause she's a legend and all that”

“Mairu, what did you do?”

Mairu's mouth opened in surprise and then she pouted “Why do you assume I done something?”

“Because you're stalling. What did you do?”

Kururi looked at her sister, she then took the phone off her before she could blow a gasket. “She's telling the truth”
Izaya leaned back against his chair “Kururi. That's not very convincing coming from you. You're obligated to take her side”

“Shut up” Izaya rolled his eyes, wondering how many times they were going to tell him to shut up in only a few minutes. “We ran into her again yesterday. Outside the school. She started asking about you”

Izaya sat up then, more intrigued “And?”

“She asked about what you do, where to find you” Mairu then snatched the phone back

“She was kind of weird! Of course I didn't tell her anything, except that we were brother and sister. I don't think I needed to, she seemed like she already knew the answers. I think she was just expecting me to go into more detail”

Izaya opened up a new tab on his computer “Did she tell you why she was looking for me? How did she even know about me?”

“I have no idea. She didn't say”

“Did you get anything about her?”

Kururi snatched the phone back again “Her name is Mayu. She's seventeen and she's a quadruplet”

Izaya began searching through a few articles, looking up records of people going by the name of Mayu and adding quadruplets to the search bar. “Anything else?”

“We know she doesn't go to school, I don't think she's been here that long”

“Did you get her last name?”
“I couldn’t keep her talking that long. She reminded me of you a little”

Mairu pressed her face against her sister’s “She's untrustworthy if you ask me”

Izaya chuckled “Doesn’t say much about me then”

“Yeah well, we know you. Besides, we like you now”

“That’s good to know. Appreciate the heads up at least”

“I suppose you’re gonna do whatever it is you do to get everything on this girl now right?”

“I don’t think it’s anything to worry that much about”

Mairu frowned “You liar!” the phone then cut off “Did he just-”

“He hung up”

Mairu stomped her foot again “That ungrateful- I'm going to punch him right in the face when I next see him!”

“No you won’t” Kururi walked away and Mairu stomped after her

“Oh yes I will! You shouldn't ever hang up on your little sister! Especially when she's trying to give you a heads up that a creepy girl is asking about you!!” Mairu panted angrily, Kururi turned around and then kissed her on the lips. Mairu breathed out calmly and then smiled. “I feel better now”

“Good. Anyway, I'm sure Izaya knows what he's talking about. She probably isn't anyone to worry about”

“Maybe. Not that his stupid big head would worry anyway. He's probably excited that he gets to
Kururi continued to walk through the empty corridor back to their classroom. “You were worried about him” she said bluntly.

“Don't be ridiculous!”

Izaya stopped his search and leaned back, linking his fingers in thought. “How did such a newbie know my name? It's not like anyone who comes to the city automatically knows everything. Kida was the one that told-” Izaya grinned “Mikado. So nice of him to brag about me” he grabbed his cell phone and scrolled through his contacts. Izaya waited until the stuttering voice of Mikado came through the phone.

“H-hello? This is kind of a bad time-”

“Make time” Izaya told him, and he knew that as soon as he spoke that Mikado would know who it was.

“Oh. Orihara-san, I'm kind of on my way to my next class”

“We need to have a little talk”

“But-”

“I won't keep you. Just want to pick your brain about something”

“O-ok....”

“I think you know what this is about, don't you?”
“I don’t know-”

“Has anyone approached you recently? Someone out of the blue, someone that you might have told a bunch of things to?”

“Oh. Yeah. Last week, there was this guy, I guess a couple of years older then me maybe, he said he was new to the city. I just gave him some advice and stuff, I might have told him about Celty too-not in any detail! Just the legendary part.....”

Izaya hummed and drummed his fingers against his desk “Anything else?”

“Well. I told him not to piss off and stay away from Shizuo Heiwajima”

Izaya clicked his tongue and then chuckled “Good advice”

“Yeah....”

“I’m going to get to the point here. I know you told him about me”

“I’m sorry! I didn’t think of it as a big issue at the time. I didn’t realise until I said it, that you might not want someone telling another person about you. He just seemed to want to know a lot, I just-well, you were kind of the first person I thought of. It slipped out”

“I appreciate that on some level. But I know that he's got siblings”

“Yeah. He's a quadruplet”

“Information-despite how little-can go a long way. The sister of the group approached my sisters too, asking other info about me”

“I swear, I didn't tell him anything about them”
“She found them on her own, but once you bragged to their brother about me, well...naturally they put the last name together”

“Oh. I didn’t realise this would cause a problem. He kind of threw me off with his outburst questions. I know what's it like to be new, I was just—”

“Mimicking a certain young other teen we both know? Your time to act like the big shot that knows everything?”

“No! I mean...”

“You need to learn who to trust. Masaomi already knew you, therefore, the trust. But do you make a habit of telling complete strangers?”

“No. actually, he kind of reminded me of you a little”

Izaya laughed “That wasn't enough of a clue not to trust him?” though come to think of it, that's what my sisters said about that girl. “Anyway. I'll leave you alone. I just wanted to clear that up”

“Yeah. Um- Orihara-san?”

“Izaya”

“Oh. Yeah. Izaya?”

“What?”

“I'm really sorry”

“Well. Don't lose sleep over it. I'll deal with it”
“O-ok...”

Izaya hung up and went back to his search. It seemed as though something was stirring. “Those little fools have no idea what they're getting into” Izaya began to search the message board on the dollars website, he scrolled through the posts. Soon enough, there were several spouting the same kind of thing.

'My wallet was stolen! Can you believe this?'

'I lost my watch, does anyone know about a missing watch?'

'I still can't find my cell phone, it's been a week'

'Oh my god, I lost my cell phone too! How freaky'

'Me too'

'Sounds like a serial thief is around'

“Well that confirms how much of an amateur they are” Izaya searched the other social networks but didn't come across anything suspicious. Judging from the locations of the posts, they all appeared to be around Ikebukuro. Shizuo came into the apartment and shut the door behind him.

“Hey. I brought dinner. Chinese style, if that's ok”

“Fine” Izaya stood up from the chair and made his way toward his partner. “I don't suppose you've come across any suspicious looking people lately?”

Shizuo snorted as they entered the kitchen, he put the food on the table. “Define suspicious. You know I think of most people as such”

Izaya chuckled. “All right. I guess I knew that. Perhaps someone more along the lines of, sketchy, still in their teens. The kind that you might not like when you've just met them”
Shizuo brought two plates over to the table. “You mean like when I first met you?”

Izaya pouted and then sat at the table “If you want”

Shizuo laughed and then sat opposite as he took out the boxes from the bag. “You know. Now that you mention it. There was this one kid. I didn't really dwell on it. But he bumped into me last week, I was pissed off and told him to look where he was going. He didn't seem all that fazed, but then again he did catch me in somewhat of a good mood”

“That is rare”

Shizuo glared at him “Funny. Anyway, I didn't really like him, he seemed-as you put it-sketchy and kind of cocky. Actually-”

“Don't you dare”

“What? I was going to say he reminded me of you”

“I thought as much. Why does everyone keep saying that?”

“Whose everyone? This kid flaunting around acting like your double or something? Because I can barely handle one of you” Izaya glared somewhat at him and then explained the connections that he'd been able to piece together, it wasn't a whole lot of detail, but he knew the four seemed to be planning something. “So because that high school kid ran his mouth off, they're now asking around about you?”

“ Seems like it”

“They're just damn punks. But I thought it was normal, for your line of work”

“It is. But they haven't been in this city for that long. They don't strike me as the type that would need information.”
“Unless they were up to something?”

“They just don't know what they're getting into yet”

“The kid who bumped into me, he never mentioned you”

“I figured as much. Since you'd have knocked him into next week”

Shizuo smirked “Probably”

“It turns out. I'm not the only one they're asking about. You must have made some kind of impression on him that day, they want to know more about you too”

“Why?”

“Who knows. Social media I suppose, a lot of people probably upload all kinds of videos of you”

Shizuo clenched his fists “I'm not a damn freak show”

Izaya covered Shizuo's hand with his own “Humans Shizu-chan, they think everything unusual is a show. It's all for lol's”

“Bastards”

“Anyway. If they are trying to plan something, I bet it won't be much longer before one of them seeks me out personally”
The four siblings had quickly begun to gather more to their group, they discovered that those desperate enough were willing to do anything to gain some respect back. A few had been knocked down in the recent couple of years and made to live life poorly. Others used to be part of organizations of the underground and had found themselves soon without any power left at all. These types of people had no emotional attachments and portrayed no remorse, it was exactly the type of people the four were hoping for. Having no real idea what they really wanted still from their growing group, they had the resources and the man power, but still no motives or ideas. All they knew, was that they wanted to make people pay for ever treating them like nobody's, it would seem that the others in their group wanted the same thing. A few suggested to seek out the information broker's help, Izaya Orihara was clearly well known amongst them. They'd also learned that some held a few serious grudges toward him, they also didn't hesitate to share their equal hate toward Shizuo too. But it seemed like, that if they wanted to get further, Izaya was their best bet, that he enjoyed creating chaos and manipulated people just as much; acting as if the cities belonged to him. Though they had learned that he had become rather choosy about his clients nowadays.

Eiji stood at a nearby lamp post of a street corner. The feel of the gun tucked within his jacket kept him from losing his nerve. He soon felt a tap on his shoulder and he almost jumped. He turned to his left, no one was there, that was when he heard a voice to his right. “I'm somewhat impressed that you managed to finally seek me out personally. I had expected your call, though I don't know how you got my number”

Eiji looked at the man, he was strange, he wasn't what Eiji expected, but he didn't know if that was a good thing or bad. “Izaya Orihara. I'm glad we could finally meet” Eiji lifted his hand up. “I'm-”

Izaya turned to him, half smirking “Eiji Monaki. Age seventeen, one of four siblings. Quadruplets. Hirou, Jupei and a sister Mayu. Orphaned at the age of four in a small town just outside of Hinodedai. Working your way through Tokyo by any means to survive. Never been in any type of care. You've managed to survive this far and now you've come to Ikebukuro to seek out some kind retribution or possibly revenge against humanity. Tell me-” Izaya placed his hand against the lamppost, leaning in to the other's face. “Am I close?”

Eiji froze. What the hell?

“You might think you're some kind of hot shot now, like you've got this city all figured out hm?” Izaya chuckled “You have no idea what you're getting into. You're just a rookie, a pawn on the chess board. You're an amateur, this little tainted group of yours won't get you very far. I know exactly why you sought out my help, you were hoping that I would help you take control of the city” Izaya laughed then “I am someone that you don't want to entangle with. I'd have thought a few
would have told you that. In fact, does Mikado Ryugamine ring any bells?”

Eiji was shaking now, no one, no one had ever struck this much fear into him before. Maybe fear was the wrong word, but he certainly felt chills run up his spine. How could he know so much?

“If you continue to pursue your pathetic attempts, I can not be sure of my own actions” Izaya grinned darkly and then walked away. Eiji was left staring after him, he tried to shake off the shock, he'd never been so disturbed, but he couldn't even move his legs.

By the time he got back to the hideout, he was furious. How dare he threaten me! How dare he insinuate that me and my siblings are amateurs! How could he talk about us like that, damn it!

“I take it he's not going to help us?” Mayu asked

“What the hell happened? You look really pissed off” Jupei said

Eiji stood on the top level of the building, looking down on his forming group. “We're not going to be taken lightly any more!! No more feeling weak!! We're going to take back this city! We're going to take control!! We'll make everyone pay for ever treating us like worthless tools”Eiji clenched his fist as he said the next part quieter “And we're going to start with you. Izaya”

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Two month later

Eiji smirked as he hung up the phone and address the group “It seems as though we're going to gain some help quicker then we thought”

“From the same person who refused to help us in the first place?” Mayu said

“Exactly”
Hirou held his hand up “Remind me how we're doing that again?”

Jupei approached his brother “Yeah. I mean I know you've got some guy telling you a lot of stuff. When are you going to tell us who your source is? If it's not Izaya, then who is it? Who got hold of the Crimson drug for us anyway?”

“You'll know eventually. All you need to know is that we're finally going to push back. He assured me that we'd need Izaya, the *old* Izaya”

“I get that. But are we even sure this is going to work? And why do we have to fucking mess with Shizuo too?”

“Because. He said that if we want to get Izaya back and on our side, Shizuo would need to be out of the way too. I don't think anyone here has a problem with that, right!?”

The group of people cheered out, yelling with some bursts of anger. “Allow me to go over the plan with you. Shizuo often goes to a certain bar after work, Mayu, that'll be where you can discreetly get him, slip the drug in his drink and leave quickly. Hirou will go with you, along with someone else, I don't care who. Wait around the corner. According to my guy, Shizuo has been shot once before. Seems like we need to help the drug along a bit. By the time he wakes up, that'll be the last thing he remembers”

“Is getting shot the first time? So like, just over a year of memory wiped?” Hirou confirmed

“It's perfect. As for Izaya, he was stabbed by a guy whom he gave some information to and it really didn't go down well. That was about a year ago. Gok is in prison but was very willing to give his part of information over if it meant that Izaya would suffer. I'll be dealing with him, along with Jupei, he won't put up a fight since he'll be drugged out of his mind. He should be easy enough to beat”

“How the hell are you going to convince him to meet with you again?” Mayu asked

“Not me. That'd be too suspicious. According to my guy, he's going to meet with someone at a high rise café in Shinjuku”

“Damn. You really have got this all figured out”
“Time to fuck shit up” Eiji smirked sinisterly

Shizuo forced himself to his feet for the third time, he had to stay awake, if he succumbed to the drug.... Izaya wasn't answering his phone, that panic alone was the only thing keeping him from falling unconscious. Shit, he wished he'd asked Izaya where the hell he was meeting that Acquaintance of his. It just seemed all too coincidental all of a sudden. He knew he should have trusted his judgement today, he had a bad feeling and he was right! There were voices again, louder still. Shizuo stumbled, vision swimming, threatening to pull him down. “Who's there!?” he shouted. He got no reply. “I'll fucking kill you!” Still no reply, then.......

Three loud shots rang out, the sound echoing around the alley walls, ricocheting off the pipes. Shizuo blinked, pain suspended him from moving, his vision did him no good. He coughed, blood seeping through his wounds quickly. Izaya.....it was the last thought that entered through his mind as he collapsed to the ground, the last thing he heard was footsteps running off. Shizuo faded into unconsciousness, hadn't he had something like this happen to him before? But it felt worse, maybe it was the drug.....god it fucking hurt. I'm sorry.....Izaya.....please be ok.....please. Darkness succumbed to him, blood pooling around his body as he tried desperately to hold onto his memories.

“By the way” he heard one of them speak, at least, he thought so. His body held against the wall by an arm. In a last ditch effort, he reached into his pocket, there! His flick-blade was still in his pocket. “Gok sends his regards” Izaya froze. Gok? Did he hear that right? He felt his feet touch the ground for a moment, then suddenly a sharp pain entered his body, bigger then that of his other injuries that had been inflicted on him. Izaya's throat closed around the blood that etched it's way up as he choked out a strangled cry of pain. He collapsed to the ground, hearing faint laughter and then nothing.

“This had better work, otherwise, we could have some serious trouble coming our way” Jupei said as they reached-what had been their home for the last four months. He rubbed his knuckles, it wasn't like he hadn't been in fights before, but he hadn't expected to full on beat the crap out of someone. “Don't you think we went a little over board? What if he fucking dies, what then?”

“He won't. He's a survivor. He'll live”
“I hope you're right. And Shizuo?”

“Neither of them will remember a thing. Ikebukuro and Shinjuku won't know what hit em”
“Izaya, can you hear me?” Shinra spoke with a low tone as he carefully lifted his friend up and over onto his back. He assessed the visual damage with his eyes, carefully cradling Izaya's body so as not to cause him any more pain. Celty stood beside them, keeping a watch for anyone that might come by. “Izaya?” Shinra grabbed some gauze padding from his case and quickly placed pressure on his abdomen. It was too dark to see the full extent of the damage, he'd have to work blindly until they could get him back to their apartment. Shinra's main concern was that Izaya hadn't woken at all since they got there.

Celty turned to them [Is he ok?]

Shinra sighed and somewhat shrugged “I have no idea just how badly he's hurt right now, I can only see the wound that's bleeding. It looks like a stab wound”

Celty typed more quickly and more aggressively [Again!?]

Shinra nodded, how the hell had this happened again? He was so confused, but he had a vague idea that his friend had obviously been drugged and then most likely been attacked immediately after-or during-which seemed more plausible. Something told him that when Izaya did wake up, he wasn't going to be the same. “Ok. I think I've stopped the bleeding, we're safe to move him now. Celty? Heh, you're a lot stronger then me, would you mind giving me a hand?”

Celty seemed as if she hesitated for a few seconds, she then knelt down and scooped Izaya up into her arms, like the way a mother would carry a child. 'He's really light' she thought. Shinra couldn't help but smile at her kind aura as he followed after her toward the entrance of the alley way. Shinra got into the awaiting carriage of the transformed bike, Celty then placed Izaya in with him and then mounted her horse.

Eiji tightened his grip on his stolen cell phone, he growled into the speaker, “So I went a little overboard, you said it yourself he was tough. Don't go giving me orders, I orchestrated this ordeal, you just gave me the details. Don't tell me how to do anything, when you didn't even have the guts to do it yourself. Besides, the knife wound wasn't that deep, I'm sure he'll recover just fine. I know what I'm fucking doing” Eiji hung up and placed his phone in his pocket. “Dick head”

“What's going on?” Hirou asked “Are you sure this is the way we wanna play things?” Hirou asked “Cause ever since that guy- whoever he is-came to you, it seems we're no longer in charge of things”
“We control everything. He wouldn't have gotten even this far without us”

“If you say so. But he is the one that got us the drug in the first place”

“Whose side are you fucking on!? It doesn’t matter who got the drug. We need Izaya on our side, not that ass hole. Once we get dig our heels in, everything will fall into place. No one will touch us. This is just the beginning”

Hirou sighed and then turned to his other siblings. They didn't seem all that bothered either way. So he simply shrugged and let them get on with it.

“I don't understand why Heiwajima had to live! We could have had our chance to do away with the strongest guy in the city! What the hell was the point in keeping him alive?” someone from the group shouted, this caused a few others to protest the same thing with gained confidence.

Eiji’s eyes widened in what looked like forced controlled anger. *Are they right? Have I made a mistake by letting Shizuo live? I’m beginning to doubt that letting even Izaya live was the best move. No! How dare they question me! They’re all nothing without a leader.* Eiji’s siblings could tell that the pressure was already getting to him. They’d only been in this city four months and so much had already happened. They were slowly falling victim to the evil presence of manipulation, and it had nothing to do with them. “Don't ever question me” Eiji spoke softly but with malice, he reached into his jacket, slowly. “I will not be made a fool of any more” Eiji’s expression grew into an evil smirk and he pulled the trigger without hesitation. Most of the group flinched in fear, a few let out a low scream of protest. Mayu simply stood there dumbfounded. It was one thing to shoot Shizuo—because it was necessary, because it was part of the plan—but now, she just wondered what their brother was becoming. Sure, they knew Eiji was a psycho, but even Mayu wasn’t sure if she could calm him down now.

“I hope he doesn't make that a habit. Took us this long to group this many, I don't think we can get much more” Jupei said, as if what Eiji just did hadn't fazed him at all, Mayu looked at him, it probably hadn't.

There was silence among the group now, they half focused on Eiji—nobody else dare speak a word out of line—the other half of their focus was on the now dead guy with a bullet in his skull.

Tom smiled as he walked his date to her door, they stopped at the porch, she turned to smile at him. “I had a wonderful evening. Would you like to come inside?”
Score! Tom thought excitedly “Sure” he replied more politely out loud. Just as she turned the key in the lock, the sound of a phone ringing interrupted her. Tom cursed in embarrassment and fumbled in his pocket to get to his cell phone. “Shit. Sorry”

“It's ok” she replied as she leaned against the door to wait for him.

Tom looked at the caller ID. Shizuo knew he was on a date, why the hell was he calling him? *He better not be drunk* Tom answered the call with a little humour in his voice “You better be dying man” he joked. Like anyone could kill him anyway. He knew Shizuo wouldn't call him unless it really was an emergency. As soon as Tom listened to the voice on the other end, he knew something was wrong. “Who is this?”

“Hey. Tom? Listen, it's Jude. There's been an incident, I really need you to come to the bar man”

Tom grew concerned, if Shizuo was drunk, Jude wouldn't go to the trouble of calling him, he'd have just shoved him in a taxi and sent him home. “What's going on? Did he start a fight? If that's the case, you might be better off calling Izaya”

“Yeah. I know. But that's just it- I found him unconscious while taking the trash out in the alley. I hate to worry you, but I think he's been shot-at least three times”

*shot? Again? “Shit. Is he ok?”*

“Well. He's awake. Kind of. He said he was going to make his way to a friend of his, a doctor I'm guessing. But I said there was no way I was letting him walk out of here in his condition”

“Believe it or not, he's done that before. But I get that you don't want anything to affect your business. I'll be there in ten minutes”

“Ok. Good. But listen, I wouldn't call him if I were you”

“Izaya? Why not? Think it's kind of mandatory now don't you?”
“I know. But, something isn't right. Shizuo doesn't remember being in the bar earlier, he has no recollection of someone buying him a drink, when I asked him what the last thing he did remember was, he just kind of laughed and said I got shot. Something about Masaomi Kida was to blame, cause that's the name his attackers shouted before running off.

What? “Are you with him now?”

“Yeah. Well, I left him on one of the tables, I'm just in the back getting the first aid kit. He's bleeding pretty bad, but I made him swear not to move, told him I'd call you. Something is wrong here right? I mean, he hasn't mentioned Izaya once, you'd think with a situation like this, he'd be worried”

Tom sighed. This didn't sound good, he couldn't be a hundred percent certain, but he had a feeling Shizuo might have had an encounter with that damn drug. It couldn't be. Of all people?

“I'm on my way. Do me a favour? Just encase, I need you to delete Izaya's number from his phone while you have it, I don't know what name it's under, but I'm pretty sure it has a heart next to it”

“Ok sure. I took his ring off, only to clean, but I think I should hang on to it until you get here”

“Good idea” Tom hung up, giving his date an apologetic smile. “I have to go. My friends' in trouble, he's hurt, they think he's been shot”

“Oh no! Then go, go help your friend. I understand”

“Sorry about all this” Tom gave her a quick peck on the cheek and ran off, leaving her at the door. Well, at least I walked her home, damn Shizuo, why'd ya have to get shot at a time like this.

..........................

[How is he?] Celty asked as Shinra finally made his way out of the guest room, he'd been in there for almost two hours.

Shinra stretched his arms up above his head and let out a yawn, before making his way to sit next to her on the couch. “Whoever attacked him wanted him to live. The knife wound was superficial, so the wound itself wasn't that deep, that was my main concern at the time”
“Outside I couldn't see the extent of his other injuries. Someone was really out to get him though. The knife wound is the least of the problem”

“How bad?”

“He'll be ok. I mean, he hasn't woken up yet if that's what you mean. It's hard to tell whether they were pretty strong or if the drug-if that's the case here-made Izaya a lot weaker. Several of his ribs are broken, there's a lot of bruising around his abdomen leading to his lower back”

“I'm more concerned about his memory Shinra. What are we going to do if it is? The drug I mean. He's most likely not going to remember anything to do with Shizuo, or how much progress he's made in becoming a better person”

Shinra looked down at the floor, smiling sadly. “I don't know. We won't know anything until he wakes up. We can't risk calling Shizuo until we know the situation”

“But won't he be looking for him soon? When he realises he can't get hold of him, or when he doesn't come home.....he's going to flip”

“Until I know what state Izaya's mind is in, there's no point. I don't want to worry him with Izaya's injuries, just for him to come barrelling over here to find out the damn idiot has no clue who he is”

“Wait. Are you saying Izaya might not even remember anything?”

“No. I meant, he'll know Shizuo. But he won't remember what he means to him”

“This is bad. Really bad. Shinra, what are we going to do?”

“I don't know”

“What about your dad? Have you heard from him?”
“It’s been at least a month. Not a peep”

[He’s hiding something]

“You really think he’s the sole creator of the drug, don’t you?”

[I’m sure of it! You said it yourself that the name sounded like something he was working on]

“I don’t doubt you. But what I don’t believe is the current use of the drug. He maybe a weirdo, but I don’t think this is what he intended]

[Shinra. He erased my memories before]

“I know. But this is different. This has effected a much larger scale of people’’

[You’re right. That doesn’t make sense. So it’s probably true that the drug was leaked, or stolen]

Shinra nodded. “The last person my dad spoke to, other then me, was Izaya”

Celty slumped. Great. [Who most likely now won’t remember that]

“It’s hard to know exactly what he’ll remember”

...........................................

Shinra changed out the bag of fluids and added a new drip, he looked down at his friend when he heard a soft groan. “Izaya?” Izaya's eyes fluttered open, his head was pounding, like he was waking up from a bad hangover—not that he would know what that felt like. More importantly, his body felt as though he had been hit by a bus. “Hey. I was beginning to think you weren’t ever going to wake
Izaya gave him a weak grin “Sorry....to disappoint you”

Shinra pushed his glasses up and then sat on the edge of the bed “How do you feel?”

Izaya tried to sit up but Shinra placed his hand gently on his chest. Izaya hissed when pain shot through his left arm up and through to his upper shoulder blade. “Broken...” he finally replied as he collapsed back to the bed with another moan of pain.

“You were pretty beat up you know....” Izaya looked up at the ceiling, when had that happened? He didn’t recall them getting that much of an upper hand. “I haven't seen you this roughed up since high school” Shinra laughed

*Since high school?* Izaya looked over at him “What's that suppose to mean?”

Shinra blinked, there was no humour in Izaya's voice and Shinra wondered whether he'd taken what he'd said out of context. “Nothing. You know, just that I haven't had to treat you for this many-”

“Shinra” Izaya called his name sternly, his eyes burrowing into Shinra's.

“It's really nothing”

“You're lying. I know you called Shizu-chan, I bet that monster looked for any excuse to finish me off”

“Wait. What?”

“While I was dying in the alley way. He probably got in quite a few good blows-”

Shinra looked at him with a surprised expression *He thinks Shizuo beat him up while he was unconscious?* Shinra frowned then “Izaya. What's the last thing you remember?”
“Getting stabbed. I don't remember anything else”

“Ok. What do you remember before that?”

Izaya chuckled “Don't worry. I won't get you involved”

“I need to know. Just wanna rule out concussion”

Izaya raised his eyebrow, then he decided to humour him, he did have a headache after all. “I was completing a job for someone, he didn't like the outcome”

“Could you be a little more specific?”

“Gok Arasaki. The info was for him. He needed to find out whether his partner Kenji was cheating” Izaya grinned then. “Info delivered. I can't help the fact that I'm so good at it”

Shinra rolled his eyes, then sighed. Well, I guess that answers our question, the drug seems to have effected his memory, just like everyone else. “Shizuo didn't cause your other injuries Izaya. Even you should know that he wouldn't attack someone who was already unconscious”

“Whatever” Shinra wondered whether there was a small possibility that the Izaya they now knew was still there somewhere. But he refused to get his hopes up, so far, there hadn't been any kind of reports on the news that anyone who had taken the drug had begun to remember anything. “While you think Shizu-chan might not beat someone whose already been injured and therefore unconscious; and while that might be true for most people, I don't count, he wouldn't think twice about finishing me off”

Shinra placed his hands in his lab coat. “Shouldn't that be kind of your first clue then? You probably wouldn't be alive if he were the one to find you” Izaya closed his mouth, he couldn't think of a reply good enough, and he was too pain stricken to argue any more. “It's more evident that the guys who stabbed you were responsible for your other injuries too” Shinra didn't wait for a reply, he simply walked out of the room, leaving his friend to his rest and his thoughts.

Shinra and Celty sat in the living room, she was sat next to him on the couch, he'd been silent since
he'd come back from the room; that was the second time now. He sipped at his coffee, she looked at him, he seemed to be deep in thought. She couldn't take it any more. She typed on her pad and shoved it in front of him, so that he had no choice but to pay attention. [Shinra]

Shinra looked up, blinking at the sudden object in his view line. “Sorry. Did I space out?”

[You've been quiet for sometime]

“Oh. I didn't mean to ignore you”

Her shoulders slumped a little, indicating that she might have sighed. [That isn't what I was getting at] [It looked like something was bothering you]

Shinra laughed lightly “You mean besides the awkward situation we're facing at the moment?” Shinra smiled and then looked down into his half empty mug. “I was just thinking about something Izaya said”

[Did he remember something?]

Shinra snorted “We should be so lucky. No, Izaya thinks that Shizuo caused his other injuries. That he beat him after he was already unconscious”

The shadow that seeped out of her neck pulsed thickly for a few seconds, showing that she was annoyed. [That's crazy! Shizuo isn't that sort of person. Not to mention that if he had found him, he'd have called you or brought Izaya here himself]

“I know that. But, what if Shizuo came into contact with this drug too?”

[I don't want to believe that's the case. A-and even if it was, Shizuo still wouldn't hurt someone that couldn't defend themselves!]

“I don't mean to doubt him. But Izaya has a fractioned glenoid-the part of the upper arm that connects to the shoulder blade. That's a very rare bone to break, a lot of power must have gone into that blow. Too bad Izaya's left handed”
“Someone of Shizuo's strength you mean?”

“Yeah. But his strength is one of a kind. No one could ever match that, the only one capable of going against him is Izaya, I'm pretty sure he couldn't have done that himself”

“Think about what you're saying!”

Shinra sighed “I am. It kind of makes me want to hurl. I just don't know where to go from here”

“They're suppose to be engaged! They're suppose to be a couple!”

Shinra laughed lightly. “A year or so ago, the idea of that made you queasy”

“I know. But. I know how happy they were, look how much they both sacrificed, Izaya changed nobody ever thought that would happen, ever!”

Shinra turned and covered both of Celty's hands with his own, she began to breath heavily. “It's ok. Celty. It will be ok, we'll figure this all out. I promise, I'm not about to give up on them now” In a way. Izaya's and Shizuo's relationship didn't just change them, it effected many of their friends, in all sorts of ways. It made Celty appreciate her life more, if that were possible. She could see the changes-though minor-in Shinra too, like he was finally happy because his only two friends were getting along. Why? What gave someone the right to screw with someone's mind like that? Celty placed her forehead against Shinra's, neither willing to pull away. The sound of the doorbell ringing loudly startled them both. They pulled away and gave each other a questioning look. “I'll get it”

“I'm coming with you. It's late. We can't take any chances] Shinra smiled and they made their way out into the corridor. Just as they reached the door, Celty pulled on his arm. “I'll go first”

Shinra stepped to the side, it wasn't like her to be this worried about someone knocking on their door so late. But given the circumstances, she had a right to be cautious. Shinra watched her hesitate slightly before she opened the door, slowly. He waited for her reaction, she stepped backwards and then Shinra saw them. “Shizuo? Tom?”

Tom and Shizuo walked into the corridor, Shizuo was leaning against him with his arm draped over
his shoulders, somewhat struggling to stand. “Hey. Sorry it's late, but we were kind of at a loss of where to go” Tom said.

[What happened!?] Celty then draped Shizuo's other arm around her shoulder and helped Tom take him into their living room. Shinra shook himself out of his shock and followed after them. They sat him on the long coffee table and Shinra immediately went to retrieve his kit. [What's the last thing you remember?]

Shizuo looked at her PDA and let out a short laugh “What's with that? Why do people keep asking me that? I got shot. I'm sure I was on my way home. But then some guys approached me, I didn't get much time to react. I realised there was blood and that I was bleeding, that's when I thought 'oh I've been shot' the bastards ran off before I could get to my feet”

Celty looked at Tom who shook his head in defeat, as if telling her that he didn't remember anything. It doesn't make sense. This isn't right. It's not fair. But why is Shizuo's memory further back then Izaya's?

“Well. It's not everyday you get shot” Shinra said as he made his way back into the living room. He knelt down in front of his friend and began removing his equipment from his bag.

“I don't need the fuss. Just fix me up. I need to kill the bastard that ordered this hit”

Shinra shuddered, it felt like the room had literally shifted him back in time, except everything that happened that day was different. “And that would be?” of course he knew what Shizuo was going to say, but he also wondered who actually had ordered it, because he didn't believe back then that it was that kid. But he hadn't really dwelled on it. He couldn't comprehend why- if Shizuo and Izaya
were given the drug almost at the same time-why were their current memories different? Shizuo's was at least two-three months before Izaya's.

Celty poured out three mugs of coffee and then poured tea into the forth. Tom looked down, he knew that Celty didn't need any fluids of that kind. “Hey. There's four cups here. I thought you didn't need to drink”

Celty's shoulders slumped and then she typed [Izaya is here]

Tom's eyes widened and then he lowered his voice to a whisper. “What? Where?”

[Guest room. He called us earlier. He's pretty beat up and he was stabbed]

“What the fuck? We can't let Shizuo see him, not while his memory is faulty”

[It's more of a problem then that]

“He's ok though, right?” Tom then laughed a little “Who knew there'd come a day when I’d be worried about him”

[Shinra said he'll heal. But the same can't be said for his mind right now]

Tom pulled a sour face “Don't tell me. You're kidding right?” Celty didn't need to reply, Tom already knew by the sad aura she was giving off. “Damn. This is not looking good. Now we really can't let em see each other” he pulled out a ring from his pocket. “Even the barman thought something was up. He only took the ring from Shizuo to clean. Then when he woke up, he didn't dare give it back, it must have been obvious that Shizuo's memory was fuzzy”

[Let me hold onto that]

“Sure” Tom handed the ring to her and she covered it with shadow, who knew where she stored it. “Have we any idea who's behind all this? I mean, it's a little bit of a coincidence that both of them happen to get their memories wiped” Tom wasn't even sure that was the case “Isn't it?
[I don't know. We don't know what happened. When Izaya called us, he was normal, then he woke up and he was the old Izaya]

Tom sighed “Great”

Shinra pinched the bullet within Shizuo's leg and pulled the metal out, setting it down onto the tray with the other two. “That's all of them”

“Could have sworn there were more shots”

“Some of them probably missed. You're lucky”

“Yeah. They're luckier”

Shinra gave him a small smile and then got to work on wrapping the wounds in several bandages. The door behind them slid open quietly.

“Shinra....have you got my-” Izaya froze in the door way. Shinra stiffened and whipped his head round. His heart began to thud in his chest.

Shizuo's head snapped up, immediately his eyes fell on his enemy. He stood up quickly, almost knocking Shinra over. “What the fuck are you doing here!!?”

“Shizu-chan....” Izaya breathed out in shock, he didn't know what to do, he could hardly stand on his feet let alone run away. Shit He clutched the door frame with his good arm, the other currently now in a sling. He had no idea where his switch blade was, he was like a deer caught in headlights.

“Izaya! What the hell are you even doing out of bed!!? You shouldn't even be walking around” Shinra shouted

“Shinra! You didn't tell me that fucking flea was here!” Shizuo grabbed the coffee table, raising it above his head. Izaya's eyes widen, he was so screwed; he stepped to the side, grabbing a vase as his
only means of defence. “I'm gonna kill him!”

Shinra stood up, trying to get between the two. “Wait. You're both injured. A-and this is my apartment”

Tom and Celty come running through the living room when they heard the commotion. “Oh great” Tom said when he saw what had Shizuo's blood boiling. Celty immediately got in the middle, her shadows making a shield between the small gap of them. Shizuo took a few steps closer.

“Dead! Dead! Dead!”

[Calm down! Izaya was already here before you showed up. We didn't know you'd be here. I'm sorry. Please calm down. You shouldn't exert yourself. You're both hurt, try to relax]

Shizuo growled, clenching his hold around the table, he shuddered with anger, trying his hardest to calm himself down.

Izaya thought, though he put the vase back when Shizuo finally put the table down. Celty's shadows then disappeared, Izaya let out a shaky breath, his ribs constricting with the effort, he was sure that he was going to collapse pretty soon. But he had no idea Shizuo was in the apartment, and there was no way that he was going to show that kind of weakness to his sworn enemy.

“Look” Shinra said “I'll just finish bandaging your injuries and then you can leave ok?”

“Do it fast. My body is on a very-short-fuse. I'm so pissed off...” Shizuo's fists clenched at his sides as he sat down.

Izaya watched intently, never once letting Shizuo out of his sight, he couldn't risk letting his guard down. Celty approached him. [You feeling ok? You should be resting]

Izaya glanced away long enough to read her message and then focused ahead of him. “It's not like you to worry about me” Izaya huffed a laugh. “I'm not moving until he's out of my sight. He won't hesitate to take the opportunity”
Shizuo growled again “Like I can stand the fucking sight of you either flea! You're just lucky I'm not at my best right now. I'd snap you like a twig!”

“You mean despite my inability to defend myself?” Izaya grinned “How very you”

[Don't goad him!] Celty typed angrily [That's not the person he is!]

Izaya chuckled “Of course it is. Look how easy it was to pick up that table. Had you not have stopped him, he would not have hesitated”

Shizuo clenched his fists tighter “You don't know me flea! Shut up, before I really fucking kill you”

“Are you saying I'm wrong? That you would have backed down on your own?”

Tom placed his hand on Shizuo's shoulder “Don't listen Shizuo. We know you better”

Izaya laughed, he hadn't seen Shizuo show restraint like this since high school, he wondered how far he could push. “Congratulations to the ones that took you down. I ought to give them a prize”

Shinra tensed, was Izaya really that stupid? Was he really pushing him on purpose right now? He really wanted to go over there and give him a piece of his mind. He should have known they'd cross paths when Shizuo showed up, but he really didn't think Izaya would be able to come out of his room. I should have sedated him Shinra thought

“As if you don't already know. Somehow you're probably involved, that is easier to believe; instead of some guy named Masaomi Kida, who I've never met”

Izaya tilted his head and then laughed when he realised what Shizuo was on about “That was almost three months ago. Did you get shot again?”

Shizuo stood up, Shinra sighed at the second time of being interrupted. “I've never been shot! Don't mess with my head flea! I just bet you do know something about this”
Izaya backed himself against the wall, his body was merely working on adrenaline alone. “Maybe I do. Or maybe it's that 1% situation again, hm?”

Shizuo picked up a mug, at first Izaya thought he was going to lob it at him, but it smashed in his hand. “Like hell! There's never been a 1% situation! You're always causing shit!”

Celty remained where she was, if they ever did get their memories back, she didn't think Shizuo would forgive himself if he did any harm to Izaya. They had to keep them from fighting, even if that meant she had to protect Izaya from Shizuo, or the other way around, she'd do it.

“So that warning phone call was something of a temporary relapse? Against your better judgement?”

“What the fuck are you talking about!? I wouldn't warn you of anything! I'd quite happily tell whoever wanted you dead where to find you!”

“Or. Having wanted to kill me yourself, you waited and then struck me while I was already dying in the alley way”

Shizuo was so confused, what warning? How the hell would he have known Izaya was even injured? He thought about what his friends said. Would he have really attacked someone while they were unconscious? Even if that someone was Izaya? Shizuo gritted his teeth and let out a half hearted laugh. “You know. I don't care what you think. I don't care about you or your pathetic attempts to goad me or get me killed. Had I been the one to find you, I wouldn't have unleashed any further injury on you. Not out of pity, not because I'd feel any kind of obligation to do the right thing, but merely to prove to everyone that I'm not a monster” Shizuo glared up at him “Like you”

Izaya leaned against the wall “Tst. Unpredictable as ever. I fucking hate you”

Shizuo laughed “The feeling is more then mutual. Though that doesn't mean I won't shake the hand of whoever did get one up on you”

Shinra eventually finished wrapping the rest of Shizuo's wounds, it was a really awkward situation to be in, Shinra didn't quite know how to handle it. They could try to explain to them about a certain drug and what had happened and their current lives, but somehow, he doubted that would go over too well. But how would you explain the missing time? He didn't think that Izaya would buy the whole 'you were in a coma for about a year' story, the man was too smart for that. Shizuo might have
bought that story, he wasn't always aware of the days and months anyway.

Izaya and Shizuo were still glaring at each other, the tension in the room was almost as thick as Celty's shadows. “Let's go Shizuo. I know you'd rather not hang around” Tom said

Shizuo snorted, took one last threatening look at Izaya and then nodded at Shinra “Cheers for the fix up”

“Sure. No problem....” Shinra then had a thought, what if Shizuo tried to go home? He didn't even have that apartment any more because he lived with Izaya, and speaking of that, there'd be a lot of evidence that someone else lived there, he was pretty certain that the bartender outfits would be a dead give away of whom. “Wait. Shizuo. Erm, you know you shouldn't be on your own while your wounds heal”

Shizuo turned and laughed “Don't need a baby sitter. Did you forget that my body heals pretty fast?”

_Lucky you_ Izaya thought bitterly while trying to remain conscious, he was sure his body was just waiting for Shizuo's exit so it could collapse.

Shinra looked at Tom, hoping he'd get the silent plea, the hidden message. Tom knew exactly what Shinra was thinking, even though the two were bound to notice that something wasn't right eventually, they needed to do all they could to lessen the confusion. “You know. The Doc is right, and Jude was pretty worried. And I don't want you going home, passing out and shit. Plus, I'm your boss, gotta take care of you”

“Appreciate that. But I seriously don't need the help. I'll be fine, it's really nothing”

“I won't take no for an answer. Besides, you'll have to take a bit of time off, I'm gonna make sure that happens” Tom was only grateful that the block of apartments that Shizuo used to live at, most of them had the same kind of layout. He just hoped there was one available, and hoped he wouldn't question it too much.

“Not like you to be this concerned. You know me Tom, come on”

“Not this time. You're staying with me, for at least a week” _that should give me some time_
“Seriously? You're not kidding are you?” Tom shook his head “Guess I won't argue then”

Izaya huffed a laugh “Sucks for you”

Shizuo clenched his fists, he turned to glare at Izaya “Show your face in Ikebukuro, I'll make sure you die” Izaya gave him a half smirk, he then wiggled his fingers at him in a goodbye manner. Shizuo turned his attention to Tom and said through gritted teeth “I need to leave, now”

Tom nodded, he motioned for Shizuo to go first and then looked at Shinra, he nodded and then followed his friend out of the apartment.

Shinra turned to Izaya, hands in his lab coat “That goes for you too. You should probably stay here for a few days”

Feeling a little more at ease now that Shizuo wasn't glaring at him, Izaya said “Think so?”

“Doctors orders. I'll strap you to the bed if I have to”

“Am I that untrustworthy?” Izaya grinned at him, Shinra rolled his eyes, like he needed to answer that.

“Go. Rest. Don't make me sedate you”

“Aren't you a bore” Izaya pushed away from the wall with a small grin, hoping to hide the pain he was in, even he knew that it was a miracle he was even standing right now. He placed the back of his hand over his mouth as he tried to muffle a cough, the sudden movement of his chest muscles caused more pressure around his ribs as pain danced through him. “Nghh...” Izaya’s legs soon buckled under him and he collapsed to his knees, spots of blood decorated his hand when he coughed again. Shinra ran over to him, he grabbed his good shoulder and leaned him up against the wall. Izaya curled against him, not even caring about the open display of weakness. “Can't breathe....make it stop....Shinra....”

Shinra bit his lip as his hand fell against Izaya’s, squeezing it to try and reassure him—of what exactly—he didn’t know. That he would be ok? That he was here for him? That he understood and wouldn’t
think any less of him? “Celty. Grab my bag!”

Celty simply froze, she didn’t know what to think, her mind was still clouded over what they were going to do to handle the situation they’d found themselves in. Knowing that Shizuo was now effected too, it just made everything ten times worse. If it were only one, things would have been easier. But as luck would have it, they were both under the effects of the drug. *What if the drug has permanent effects?*

“Celty!”

Shinra’s loud tone snapped her out of it, she took a breath, feeling guilty that she’d zoned out so much. She quickly grabbed the bag from the coffee table and ran over to the two. Shinra moved from his position just enough so that he could prep some pain relief.

Izaya gritted his teeth as he cradled his abdomen, tears prickling at the corners as he in-took short sharp breaths. Shinra glanced at him, Sweat was trickling from Izaya’s face. “Izaya, I’m going to give you a strong dose of morphine, it’s going to knock you out for a while, it’ll help you sleep” Shinra wasn’t even sure Izaya had heard him over his breathing. He looked at his face, he’d gone tremendously pale in such a short time. “Bowl” This time, Celty didn’t need to be told twice, she quickly headed for the kitchen, grabbed their metal mixing bowl and dashed back into the living room. “Izaya? Can you hear me?”

Izaya curled on his side, the pain was causing a great deal of nausea, he felt dizzy and just wanted everything to stop; but he knew that if he was sick, it was just going to make the pain worse. “Sh-shinra...” Izaya cradled his arm around his stomach more tightly. “Sick....” Shinra reached for the bowl and helped support his body. Izaya wretched and pain clutched around his chest as a mixture of bile and blood spewed from his mouth. He spat and gasped as tears fell over his cheeks, he coughed again to try and clear the contents from his throat. “Fuck....”

Shinra tightened his hold, even though he knew how embarrassed his friend would be once he was feeling better. “It’s ok” Izaya spat again, hissing through clenched teeth at the constriction of his breathing. “Take slow breaths. You need to calm down Izaya”

Izaya’s body shook, he could barely process what Shinra was saying, let alone act on it. Celty wasn’t a doctor, but she didn’t need to be to know fear when she saw it. It wasn’t as though Izaya was verbally admitting to being scared, but his body language was certainly portraying the signs. She knelt down beside her fiancé and then took her shadowy glove off and placed her hand in Izaya’s.

Shinra blinked in surprise, he looked at Celty and then smiled warmly when Izaya began to calm
down. His hand matched Celty’s tight grip as he started to take slower breaths, shuddering every so often. Shinra took the opportunity to then insert the needle’s contents into Izaya’s arm. The informant soon relaxed completely as the strong dose of morphine worked its magic. “Shizu-chan.....” was the last thing Izaya whispered before succumbing to sedation.

Shinra huffed a laugh “Did you hear that?” He didn’t want to get his hopes up, given their last encounter, that could have meant anything. He sighed heavily and together, he and Celty placed him back into the guest room. Shinra made sure he’d be comfortable and then they left the room. “We could embarrass him with some details when he wakes up, but we best not tell him anything” Shinra said as they collapsed into the comforts of the couch.

[He said his name!]

Shinra smiled sadly “I know. But given the circumstances, they could have meant anything. We can’t get our hopes up yet, ok?”

[I don’t wanna see him like that again]

Shinra’s hand covered her own “You might not have realised it happening, but you get this strong maternal instinct when it comes to those two”

[That’s ridiculous!] [They’re grown men!]

“Given how long you’ve lived for, they’re practically babies compared to you”

[Shut up. Don’t make fun]

“I’m not. I actually think it’s kind of adorable. You were practically looking out for them since high school, always trying to keep them from fighting. They’re basically like children anyway”

[At least, one of them is]

“And, it makes me think what a great mum you might make....if it were possible”
Celty stiffened, her heart fluttered. *Shinra*

Shinra laughed and shook his head. “Anyway. We should come up with a plan, don’t you think?”

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Shinra and Celty spent the next few days making arrangements with practically everyone they knew. Out of pure luck, Tom at least managed to rent out an apartment from Shizuo's old block on the same floor as his old one. It took a bit of convincing to get Namie on board with their plan, but with the help of Izaya's sisters and Kadota, they were able to move anything that belonged to Shizuo out of Izaya's apartment and into Shizuo's “new” one. It was frustrating that they simply could not try and explain to the two what was happening to them, but it wasn't exactly a straight forward subject. To explain to Izaya and Shizuo—who thought each other enemies—that they were suppose to be lovers and engaged, it was simply suicidal. They were extremely grateful that everyone was willing to help in some way or another, it was like turning back time on the whole city. They would have to literally act like nothing had changed from the time in which their two friend's memories stemmed from.

In the next week that Izaya and Shizuo were recovering at their friend's apartments, they remained unaware of the effort everyone was putting into making sure nothing seemed out of place. Shinra changed the date on Izaya's phone—despite knowing he'd probably find out eventually—but it would buy them some time. Namie did the same on his laptops and all his other cell phones he had stashed about on his desk. She grumbled about not getting any extra payment for her efforts, but dealing with this was a lot better then dealing with the fallout. Shinra allowed Izaya as little contact within the internet and the tv as possible for the duration of his stay, he had to change his wifi password at least five times since Izaya would always hack it within a day or so.

Shizuo was a lot easier to deal with, since he rarely used the internet or his phone, he barely paid any attention to much else either. Tom had informed their boss on the situation and he was very understanding, to which the brown haired man was grateful for. He had been hoping for any kind of sign that Shizuo remembered something, anything that would suggest his other memories were still there somewhere—just buried. There was no questions on Shizuo's part, though maybe it was too early for any indication that the effects of the drug might wear off—if that ever was the case. Tom was beginning to worry, there had been at least six other cases since the two had become effected, he hadn't seen such drastic changes in the city before, everyone was on edge. The most annoying part, was that there wasn't a whole great deal they could do when even some of their clients had been effected, saying they couldn't remember ever borrowing money. Tom suspected a few were just making it up, it was rather easy tell which ones were fake and which ones were genuine. It wasn't the best idea, but when they had two clients in a row telling them they couldn't remember, Tom had to explain to Shizuo about the drug that was slowly effecting the cities. “What a load of shit. Just excuses” he had said, it wasn't very reassuring if and when they decided to try and get them back to
It was another two weeks until either Izaya or Shizuo moved back into their “rightful” homes. Shinra refused to let Izaya go until he was sure the man was at least able to take care of himself without collapsing every few hours. Izaya too was a fast healer—though not as much so as Shizuo—so Shinra wasn’t too surprised that by week three, most of Izaya’s bruises and his knife wound had healed. He still had a little trouble with his ribs and his shoulder was still stiff in movement, but Shinra suspected that those would heal fully also in the next few days.

Shizuo seemed to believe that his apartment had been closed off for fumigating, it was the perfect excuse, since it took a while to get the new rented apartment ready. Tom took care of the paperwork, making sure it was in Shizuo’s name, even the landlord that owned the building was surprisingly considerate, he was even willing to play along with the fumigating story that Tom had told Shizuo. Apparently, despite his extremely short temper and violent outbursts, the blond had been the landlord’s best tenant.

Namie turned her attention to the door when she heard it click open. She placed her hand on her hip and glared at Izaya as he walked into the apartment. “How nice of you to show yourself. Three fucking weeks! Do you know how much crap I’ve had to deal with while you’ve been gone?”

Izaya rolled his eyes and then laughed as he made his way over to his desk. “Nice to see you too. I’m fine by the way, not that I expected any kind of visit from you”

Namie snorted “Like hell”

“Say what you wish. I know you missed me really” Izaya grinned at her

“Ha!” Namie sat on the opposite desk chair to the left “By the way. You should pay me double since I had to do all your work” In truth, there wasn’t a whole lot of work to do while Izaya had been gone, as if dealing with the drug’s effects was more important, though she was surprised that no one had contacted him to ask if he knew anything.

“Is that so?” Did Shinra divert all my calls while I was there? Izaya looked to the left of his desk “Namie”

“What?”
“What happened to my plant?”

Shit! “I took it upon myself to take a week off while your idiotic self healed. I didn’t realise it was real, it died” well, it wasn’t a complete lie, since it had been her fault that the plant had withered anyway.

Izaya pouted a little “You’re so inattentive. And I should pay you double because?”

“Because if I were anyone else, you’d be dead already. You’re lucky I put up with your freakishly unimaginable personality”

Izaya laughed “How long have you been sitting on that one? See, you act like I’m so annoying, but secretly-” Izaya stretched and sighed dramatically “You missed it”

“Did anyone ever tell you that you have selective hearing?”

Izaya grinned at her from his chair, linking his fingers “Did anyone ever tell you that incest is wrong?” Namie clenched her fists and stood up, tensing with the sudden urge to punch him in the face. “Something I said?” Namie bared her teeth at him and walked away, grabbing her coat as she left the apartment, if she didn’t leave she might have really killed him. Izaya laughed and span around on his chair as he pumped his fists into the air. “I’m back! I didn’t think I’d miss this apartment so much. Nothing appears to have changed at all. I guess life does continue on without my interference” Izaya glanced over to where his plant used to be “Most things haven’t changed. Namie owes me a plant” Izaya switched his computer and his laptop on “Since Shinra practically forbid me from the using the internet, I’ll just have to spend a couple of days catching up on what I’ve missed. Gok Arasaki. Let’s start with you” Izaya grabbed his cell phone and then scrolled down the list of names, he frowned “I could have sworn I had his number on here” Izaya opened up the second draw and checked two of his other cell phones that he used for work. “Nothing” Izaya leaned back in his chair, he then opened up the web browser and was greeted with an explanation mark and a 'No internet connection' message. Izaya sighed and then double clicked on the wifi symbol to be connected, he was then greeted with a prompt for the password. Getting a little frustrated now, he typed in his usual password and the prompt box shook and re-asked for the code. He tried again and received the same result. “Are you kidding me?” Izaya couldn’t work to his full potential without the internet, half of his life revolved around logging on to sites. It was also half the reason why he was so good at his job. He grabbed his phone again and sneered as he phoned Namie.

The phone connected within a few seconds of hearing a ringing tone. “What?”

“Oh. You picked up”
“What do you want?”

“You didn't happen to change the wifi password while I've been away did you?”

Namie grinned to herself “Yes. I did”

Izaya pulled a sour face as he stood up and leaned on his desk, not that she could see his threatening posture “Mind telling me just what that is? I do have a lot of information to catch up on”

“So you want the new wifi password?”

Izaya closed his eyes, he knew she was getting him back for his little remark about her love interest earlier, but taking away his ability to work was just cruel. “I want the password. And I need you to send me Gok’s number, it’s not in my phones and I know you had it too”

Namie blanched a little Well I can't expect to remember everything from over a year ago she then snorted. “I'm not giving you the password until I get an apology. Secondly, Gok and his little minions are in prison” well, he was going to find that out anyway. Namie hung up on him and continued walking through the shopping centre, shopping always did cheer her up, at least, that is when she couldn't see Seiji. Truth was, she had to change the password anyway, since it had gotten changed when Shizuo moved in as the blonde needed something easy to remember. She couldn't remember the old password so she made one up, whose to say that she couldn't have a little fun while doing so, knowing Izaya would never get it.

Izaya had tried at least three passwords since Namie had hung up on him Seiji Yagiri/IloveSeiji/MyloveforSeiji he soon received a text from Namie

:By the way, the password has nothing to do with Seiji

Izaya banged his forehead lightly on the desk “What an evil woman she is” his second cell phone began to ring, he grabbed it in annoyance and answered the call that appeared on his screen as unknown. “Orihara”
In the warehouse in which the Tainted group resided in, Eiji grinned when Izaya's voice came through over the speaker, he turned to his siblings and said “He answered. Looks like he's alive after all”

Izaya rolled his eyes “You know. I can still hear you”

Eiji cringed, whoops “Oh! Sorry about that, I just heard through the grapevine about your attack, I must say, quite a relief to hear that you're ok”

Izaya raised an eyebrow “And you are?”

“Just call me Tainted for now”

“Uh huh. And is that suppose to be a reference to something?”

Of course, he couldn't risk telling Izaya his actual name, for fear that it might trigger a memory. Since they still had no idea just how the drug really worked, and with someone as clever as Izaya, his memories may still be in his subconscious somewhere. He was taking a huge risk by telling him their group name and his seemingly reliable source had become not so reliable any more, Eiji hadn't heard from him in at least two weeks. “I'm just dying to meet you in person, I've heard a lot about you, your reputation proceeds you, you're somewhat of a legend”

“Was that your best at flattery Mr Tainted?”

Eiji laughed “It's true. I definitely need your expertise to help me reach my goals”

“And what kind of goals do kids your age have in mind these days hm?”

“Did my voice give me away?”

“More like the way you perceive yourself. I've met twelve year olds more mature sounding then you”
Eiji clenched his fist “I'm not a child Mr Orihara, I'm seventeen”

Izaya laughed “No need to get defensive. Your age doesn't really matter to me. It's your goals that matter the most, whether they're worth my time or not” What I can gain out of it is what counts. Izaya thought with a grin.

“Oh. I think they're very worth your time. I can pay you of course, just to confirm that little detail before we continue”

Izaya chuckled, no one ever realised that with Izaya, it wasn't all just about the money. Their misfortune was his real payment. “Why don't you enlighten me with your objectives then?”

“It would make things a lot easier if we were able to meet in person”

Izaya grinned So naïve “It'd be a lot better for you if we didn't. Assuming you're not alone of course, that you have others working with you, it might not be wise for our paths to cross so soon”

It was clear that the drug had worked, even merely talking on the phone, Eiji could tell the difference between the Izaya he'd spoken to on the street, and the one he was currently conversing with now. It was almost creepy, how could something so small cause such a drastic change. “So you're that kind of informant”

“You'll find that most informants are different to one another, each has their own way of getting the job done. But out of experience, you may have a bunch of people on your side now, but in the end, all it ever comes down to is you. Are you the type to drop those around you for the sake of your own gain?” Eiji's eyes widened as he tried not to shake. Despite the differences, the informant ignited that same cold fear he felt when he'd first met him, drugged or not. “Should I take your silence as a yes?”

Eiji glanced at the large group of people within the factory, they had at least twenty within their midst now. He then glanced at his siblings, ever since they'd completed their first task of getting Shizuo and Izaya's memories erased, they'd been a little judgemental. He knew they were beginning to lose their faith again, especially since their other source of help had appeared to have abandoned them. That didn't matter now, because now they had Izaya, he was all Eiji had been interested in since he'd learned of him four months ago. He turned his back on the group and said-as he realised he had yet to reply- “It's like you already know me” Eiji grinned

“It doesn't make you all that special though. After all, you wouldn't be the first to abandon their so
called friends for an easier way out” It just makes you predictable

Hence the name Tainted, I know exactly what to say and do to get what I want, I've learned a lot in four months. People will do anything for revenge, without even knowing just how much they're being used. Once I'm in full control of these cities, you will be the first to go Izaya Orihara, You're not that special either. “I think we're going to get along just fine”

You just carry on thinking that, it'll make my own plans that much more effortless

“I'll be in touch”

Izaya grinned as they both disconnected their phones. “Looking forward to it” Namie walked into the apartment, Izaya watched her hang up her coat and then silently make her way to her desk with her laptop. She switched it on without a word or even an acknowledged glance his way. “Silent treatment? I thought only couples did that, are we a couple Namie?” Namie knew he was teasing her, but she wouldn't take the bait, knowing that he disliked being yelled at, but also disliked the silent treatment too; memory loss or not, somethings remained the same either way. “But I suppose close friends might often give one another the silent treatment if annoyed enough. Perhaps that makes us friends then?”

Certainly not while you're this way, and over my rotting corpse would we ever be a couple. My heart and body belongs to Seiji.

Izaya huffed and double clicked on the web browsing symbol out of habit, forgetting momentarily that he was still locked out. He pulled a sour face and sighed dramatically as he leaned away from his computer.

Namie grinned to herself when she saw what he was trying to do. Izaya was right, it was sometimes fun to mess with people, especially when that person was him. She decided to see just how long she could keep this going for, wondered just how long it would take for Izaya to actually get mad. “My love for Seiji is real” she finally said

Izaya turned his attention to her “I never said it wasn't now did I? I simply said it was wrong”

“So you're saying that love is wrong?”
Izaya laughed “My opinions on love is on a whole entirely different level then yours. I love humans. But there’s a difference between love and in love”

“To say you love something or someone, there's no different context in my opinion. Surely you must have heard the Japanese Myth about the union birthing two gods”

Izaya laughed again “Are you kidding?”

“It states that the union birthed two god Izanagi and Izanami, the two wedded each other and mated to create the country of Japan. This caused a lot of people to believe that our country was built on incest”

“It's not surprising that you are one of those who would believe in such a myth. Perhaps maybe the other similar myth is true”

“Similar myth?”

Izaya grinned inwardly “I personally think if people have to believe in mythological love to prove to themselves that their own love is real, then it really isn't love is it?”

Namie glared at him “Just tell me about the myth”

“Just that some star-crossed lovers are reborn as siblings. Maybe it's fate keeping them together but actively apart”

Namie became surprised by this information, it seemed as if-to her at least- it described her and Seiji’s situation perfectly, just knowing that they were lovers in a previous life was enough for her for now. Her cheeks become tinted “I think I like that myth better” Izaya raised an eyebrow, it wasn't like her to be so openly grateful, especially about something he said. “Thank you”

“It wasn't suppose to be of any help to you. I was teasing you. But take it however you wish” Izaya smirked smugly “Always happy to help” he leaned forward, his elbows supporting his chin as they touched the desk. “Now can I have the password?”
Namie smiled a rather innocent smile at him and then replied with “No” as she continued working.

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Namie sighed as she watched the news, they were suppose to be trying to keep Izaya and Shizuo away from each other. It was easy enough when the two were confined only to their friends’ apartments. She knew it wasn't going to be long before they would run into one another eventually. Their plans weren't going over too well it seemed, they barely had any new information about the drug in order to help; believe it or not, Namie was concerned that the longer they remained the way they were, the harder it was going to be to get them back. She looked at the file she had placed on the coffee table, a job that he'd already completed she'd managed to re-put together, but he wouldn't know that. It would certainly keep him occupied for a little while, even if he came up with dead ends, it would keep him away from Shizuo and away from that damn Tainted. She hadn't heard of them until recently, he'd never mentioned them to her before he'd gotten his memories erased. It might just be that he didn't know of them before, but Namie had this bad feeling that this Tainted group might have had something to do with Izaya's and Shizuo's attacks.

Izaya entered his apartment, Namie stared over at him as he closed the door and made his way over to his desk. “Causing chaos again?” She asked as she switched the TV off after seeing the news.

“What gave you the impression that I have?”

“It's all people talk about when you and that Heiwajima guy go at it”

Izaya shrugged. “What can I say? People just love good entertainment. They'll soon get bored of that within a couple of days”

“You know. You could just not go to Ikebukuro”

“As much as he likes to think so. Shizu-chan doesn't own the city, I go wherever I please. Besides, a lot of my clients tend to reside there”

Namie rolled her eyes “Gee. What a coincidence”
Izaya laughed “I thought that you didn’t believe in coincidences?”

“Where you’re concerned. “coincidences” just happen” she got up from the couch, taking a file off the coffee table as she walked over to him and placed it in front of him. “I have to make a phone call”

“What's this?”

“Some kind of request for info. I haven't had time to read it properly”

“You know. You can be a poor excuse of a secretary sometimes” Izaya pouted slightly.

“And you can be an obnoxious, irritating, weirdo of a boss. So I guess we're both screwed” Namie then left the apartment.

Namie called upon Shinra, she needed to keep him and Tom informed most of all. “I take it you saw the news?”

Shinra sighed, she took that as a yes “You were suppose to keep Izaya busy”

“I am. I mean, I was. I didn't know he'd even gone to Ikebukuro today. He's been preoccupied with some group called Tainted lately”

“What's Tainted?”

“I don't know much. If you ask me, it's just another Yellow Scarves/dollars incident waiting to happen”

“Really? That doesn't sound good. This is the first you've heard of them? Since Izaya's change I mean”
“Yes. I didn't think much of it at first, but I have this weird feeling about them, someone like them calling Izaya up within a mere few weeks of his memories disappearing is just way too much of a coincidence for me. Or am I just over thinking this?”

“I don't know. It does sound sketchy, are you saying that they might have something to do with all this?”

“Maybe not the drug itself. From what I can gather, they're pretty naïve”

“I haven't heard anything new from my end, my dad still hasn't been in contact. Never thought I'd say this, but I'm starting to get a little worried”

Namie rolled her eyes, she didn't care that much about his problems, but they needed each others help to resolve a mutual issue in their lives. It seemed incomprehensible, but Namie had begun to see Izaya as a friend—maybe even an annoying brother, one that she hadn't fallen for. She wanted him to be safe at least. “Anyway. That isn't why I called. I've given Izaya an old job he worked on a few months back. It should keep him occupied for a little while”

“Didn't Shizuo help him rescue a kid? She's with the Awakusu now isn't she?”

“Yes. But he doesn't know that, he'll probably take a different route to getting the information, though he'll most likely come up with dead ends”

“And if he questions it?”

“I'll think of something” Namie hung up, only to receive a message in the group chat they had all formed into when things went wrong.

TT: Taking Shizuo out of town for a while, buying time keeping him away from Izaya, he thinks we're going to collect debt from a client that skipped town. probably might head Yamata way since it's not too far out, more believable.

SK: Good idea! Keep us informed
MO: that’s good. We can't let them fight like that again! We have to get them back!

NY: Izaya is working on an old job, he'll be occupied for a little while

S: Do I need to be on standby for this?

NY: Most certainly, he'll probably contact you

S: No problem

KO: I hope that works

NY: Me too, I better go

Namie came back into the apartment, she saw the already opened file on the desk and then watched Izaya as he typed away, eyes flickering across the monitors, completely tuned out to his surroundings. Sometimes, just sometimes, she admired his work ethic, despite his intentions most of time-and the people always got more then they bargained for-Izaya always put a hundred percent into his work. He'd have made a great ally in her and her uncle's company. She sat on the other side of the other desk. “That sure didn't take you long”

Izaya typed a message on one computer and browsed on another. “Multiple jobs on the go is better. You never know when two may link together”

“Like your involvements with the yellow scarves and the dollars?”

Izaya chuckled “Implying something there Namie?”

“Jobs only seem to link, when something you do coincidently forces them to”

Izaya huffed a laughed “You make it sound like I do that all the time”
Namie rolled her eyes “One of these days. Karma is going to come, how are you not dead yet?”

“Waiting patiently for it’s arrival my dear secretary”

“How you've managed to avoid it at all for so long is beyond me”

“I just know the right and wrong buttons to push, that’s all, I’m too careful”

“The problem with you is that you tend to push the wrong buttons more so then the right ones”

Izaya laughed as he got up from his desk, looking at his phone and then said “That's a matter of opinion. Don't you think?” he walked around the desk and headed for his jacket, that was hanging on the hook by the door.

“Where are you going?”

“The file is oddly specific, it’s a little strange that the parents of the girl refused to contact the police over such a feeble matter. Why go to a highly regarded informant to find the child if there just wasn’t something they didn't want anyone to know about”

“Why don't you just stick to the job they asked of you. You don't know this Washiba family, snooping around behind their backs is probably not a good idea”

Izaya smirked and then shrugged as he placed his jacket on “Though fake as it maybe-I appreciate your concern Namie. One day you'll learn not to underestimate me. I don't 'snoop' until I have all the facts”

“That so you can cover your own ass if you get caught”

“I'm never caught, Namie, there in lies your underestimation”

“Whatever. I don't particularly care what or how you do your job. What about Tainted?”
“They can wait. There’s not much I can really do for them. All I can do is nudge them in the right direction” Izaya grinned

“And by ‘right’ direction you mean the way you want them to?”

“Well at least we’re on the right page there. I knew you wouldn’t have a hard time following me”

“And where exactly does your ‘lead’ take you now?”

“Why so curious? Assuming we’re talking about the missing girl now?”

Namie leaned back on her chair “I am your secretary. Don’t you think I ought to know at least some of your ploys?” Izaya shrugged with a grin Oh, how fucking helpful you are Izaya she thought with an annoyed frown, that she clearly let show on her face.

“There’s nothing about the girl that’s suspicious. So I think I’ll start with the parents”

“Why?”

“Because. If nothing about the girl is suspicious, then it’s something about them that they don’t want being found out”

“Which by the way. Is why they went to you in the first place”

“True. You just can’t trust anyone these days”

“I only asked the location of your lead to help. I don’t have much to do right now”

Izaya eyed her with a little suspicion, she was never quite this demanding to know what he was up to-if ever. “Why don’t you get on the Tainted case if you’re that concerned about that job. Talk to their so called leader, ask him what kind of targets they had in mind”
“You mean they haven't told you yet?”

“They're a sloppy group. But they're a cautious one. Amateurish at best. What stroke of luck that they have me to guide them” Izaya said with a smirk

“How long are you going to be?”

“An hour. Tops. The place isn't that far from here. A few train stops and a cab ride. Nothing too out of the way. Does that satisfy your odd curiosity?”

Namie huffed and leaned on her palm “Not really” Izaya laughed and then he was out the door before Namie could say another word. “Shit”

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“Oh? Really? That's- ok, well not really-no we haven't even left yet-well, thanks for the heads up I guess” Tom hung up

“Something wrong?”

“Well, throw your suspicions to the wind my friend. Turns out one of our guys just made a mistake, our client didn't skip town after all”

Shizuo slammed his hand against the wall, making it crack slightly “Damn! Can't they be a little more considerate! I mean we could have just gone all that way for nothing!” he kicked out at a two way sign.

Tom laughed nervously “Why don't we head back to the office. Better check with the boss man, so we don't make the same mistake”

Shizuo breathed deeply to calm himself “Ok. Let's go”
Tom sighed in relief. He knew Shizuo would be pretty pissed. He was just glad that he'd gotten the phone call in time, they could have very well run into Izaya.

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Izaya frowned as he made his way back down the street. Heading back to his apartment. There was no way in hell that Shizuo was with him! It wasn't possible! She had to have been mistaken. Izaya grinned After all, Shizu-chan is only a monster, I doubt anyone could love him enough to marry him, or ever love him at all. If that is the case, then I truly pity them.

“It also seemed like he was pretty protective of you, since he would barely leave your side. It was kind of cute” “If I didn't know any better, I'd have said the one he was getting married to was you”

Izaya shuddered. She was clearly insane. That's what Izaya was going to put her absurd observations down to. That, and her lack of memory. Not that he was one to talk right now. But she was wrong about one thing, Shizuo was not with him that day, it just wouldn't happen!

Celty opened the door to their apartment, she was greeted by Izaya's sisters and stood to the side, shutting the door as they passed through. She made her way into the living room, Shinra looked up with a smile “Who was it?”

She typed quickly but Mairu and Kururi appeared from behind her. [Well. Izaya's sisters are here]

“Hey you two. What's up?” Celty left the room, leaving the three to talk

Mairu and Kururi stepped more into the room, Mairu spoke up first “Just checking in”

“We were just wondering if you know how Izaya is doing”

Shinra smiled “You know. You can actually go and see him, it's not like he doesn't know that you're
his sisters”

“Yeah we know” Mairu said “But if we're suppose to act like nothing has changed, we can't exactly start visiting him like we care and all that” her hands fell on her hips as she gave an annoyed expression. “He was pretty insufferable back then”

Shinra laughed “I'd agree with you there”

“Mairu misses him” Kururi said bluntly

Mairu gasped in shock “You do too!”

Shinra chuckled “Not that you're not welcome here, I was just wondering why you're really here”

The two girls sat crossed legged on the rug by the table, Celty came back into the room with a tray of beverages and cookies. [What did I miss?]

“Did anyone ever approach you two asking about Izaya? Or Shizuo maybe?” Mairu asked

Shinra gave a thoughtful expression and then shook his head “No. I generally don't wander around the city that much”

“Celty?”

[No. Why'd you ask?]

“Well, I think it about three and a half-maybe four months ago, we got approached by some girl that was about two years older then us. She said she was new to the city and she'd come here, along with her brothers. Get this! They're-”

“They're quadruplets” Kururi interrupted
“Naw! I wanted to tell that part!” Mairu huffed “Anyway. She started asking about the city at first. Which wasn't a problem, you know, cause we love it anyway. But….well, sorry Celty, we did kind of ramble about you a bit. Nothing specific! Just like, the legendary part of you mostly”

[Don't worry. A lot of people talk about me like that, it's not uncommon any more]

Mairu sighed in relief that Celty wasn't mad “We introduced ourselves naturally of course, we didn't even mention we had a brother nor did his name cross our lips. But one of them must have found out about him somehow, whatever information they found out, it didn't take them long to make the connection between us and Izaya, because a few days later; she approached us again asking about him”

Shinra reached for one of the mugs from the tray, blowing on the liquid before replying “That sounds eerie, did you tell Izaya all this at the time?”

“Yeah! He was all like “What did you do?” and we were all like “Why do you assume we've done something” and then he was like-” Mairu's voice became muffled when her sister placed her hand over her mouth.

“He didn't say much, but I could tell he was already looking into it”

Mairu's mouth was still moving, like her sisters hand wasn't even there, Kururi removed her hand- “And then he hung up on me! And I was like “I'm going to punch him in the face next time I see him” and Kururi was all like “No you won't” and I was like “Oh yes I will” I mean who hangs up on someone when they're trying to help anyway! Then Kururi kissed me and then I felt better” Mairu sighed as she finally took a breath.

Shinra blinked, waiting to make sure the two were done with their story before replying “Did they mention anything to you about something called Tainted?”

Mairu tilted her head in thought “No. I don't think so, I would have remembered a corny name like that”

“Why?” Kururi asked

“Just something Namie told me earlier today. Izaya's been working with something or someone, or
several people—I'm not too sure on the details, but they're called Tainted anyways. Namie has her suspicions that they could be responsible for the attack on your brother and Shizuo”

“Wait!” Mairu shouted “Are you saying that those quadruplet weirdos might be Tainted?”

“Well, I wouldn't quite say that, but it's beginning to feel like there are a lot of coincidences revolving around that situation”

“So all this time, they could be responsible for all this?”

[Hold on. We know that Shinra's dad most likely created the drug]

Shinra replied “Yes. But this only happened after the drug was already leaked and effecting people”

[Oh. Right]

“So they were right under our noses! Those bastards need to die!” Mairu stood up, pumping her fist in the air, only to be pulled back down to the carpet by her sister.

“Calm down” Kururi said quietly

“But they're responsible for what's happened! They nearly killed him!”

“He's ok”

“But he's not ok. His mind is all messed up”

Shinra chuckled lightly. “To be fair. His mind was always a little messed up”

Mairu sighed “I thought he'd dealt with it, we didn't run into that girl since we'd called him”
Shinra looked upon the tray, something out of place sat beside the cookies. “Hey Celty. What's that?”

Celty's body reacted with surprise. “Oh! I almost forgot” Celty picked up the circular disc and showed it to Shinra. “I found it in the back of the cupboard where we keep the mugs.”

Shinra took the disc from her. “Huh. Why would something like this be in there?”

Kururi took a cookie from the tray and said, “Maybe it was an easier place to remember to store something important.”

Shinra hmm'd as he turned the disc around in his hands, he then noticed that there were three letters written on the front. **SOS** Shinra blanched instantly. He began to shake a little.

[Shinra] [What's wrong?]

“Whoa. You're really pale all of a sudden” Mairu said

“I- I think I know what this is”

[What?]

Shinra gulped, how had he forgotten something so important? He stood up and switched on their television and placed the disc inside the player. “Please don't kill me guys”

“What are you talking about?” Mairu said as they turned their attention to the screen.

By the end of the disc, none of them could move, their mouths open like fish. Mairu happened to find her voice first. “No way! No fucking way!”
Celty typed quickly. [We have to show this to Shizuo and Izaya!]
Shinra scanned over the conversation, leaning over Celty's shoulder “Involved in what?”

Celty nearly jumped out of her seat. She typed on her pad and shoved it at him [You scared me! Don't do that!]

“Sorry. Anything I can help with? You look kind of freaked”

[That's because you just gave me a heart attack!]

“How's that?”

[figure of speech! You know what I mean!]

“Well. Besides that, why were you just biting Kanra's-or rather-Izaya's head off?”

Celty's shoulders slumped [Something to do with a new drug he's been hearing about. It's being abused among the streets and it's taking away peoples memories]

Shinra sat in the chair next to her “Let me guess, he asked if I was involved?”
“Not directly. He just asked if you knew anything”

“Oh Celty! I love how you care so much!”

[Shut up]

Shinra laughed and then asked “What's the drug called anyway? Does Izaya know?”

[Crimson, apparently. He said it's been mentioned on the news, though the stories vary]

“Crimson huh? You know. Come to think of it. I once heard my dad mention something about a drug he'd been working on. Pretty sure he said Crimson-or it could have been Cremson-or maybe it was Crimbon? Hmmm...”

[Your dad!?]

“It's really not that surprising. But as freaky as my dad is, I doubt he intended to use it to “Attack” people”

[What if it got stolen?]

“I'll give him a call in the morning”

Celty slumped again, Shinra sympathised. [Guess I better tell him. Damn I hate it when he's right]

Shinra laughed “He's mostly always right”

[I know]
Pm to Kanra

Setton: Shinra thinks his Dad may have actually been the one to create this new drug you spoke of

Kanra: You mean, I was right?

Setton: Don't act modest. You know you were

Kanra: On the contrary! I only had a hunch, it was only a small thought process after all. I only found out about the drug through the news and social media. Honest

Setton: So you had nothing to do with this at all?

Kanra: Are you asking me if I stole the drug?

Setton: N-no....No, of course not

Izaya bit his bottom lip, he didn't need their trust, he didn't. But he'd thought that after almost a year being with Shizuo, that they at least knew that wasn't the kind of shit he pulled any more. Ok, so maybe that was asking for their trust, he understood if that remark had come from Tom or Simon maybe, but to hear it from whom was suppose to be a close friend of the family.....

Celty watched Kanra log out of the Pm chat and then out of the chat log without saying a word. She slumped, feeling guilt instantly creep up her spine, she hadn't meant for it to come out like that. Shinra glanced over at her as he came back into the room, sliding the door shut behind him. “Why have you gone sad?”

Celty turned to him [I feel awful now. I think I said something to Izaya and he might have taken it the wrong way]

Shinra tilted his head “What do you mean?”
[We were talking about the drug. I think I unintentionally made him think that I thought he had something to do with all this]

Shinra sat down on the opposite chair “What, like he stole the drug or something?”

Celty hunched her shoulders [I didn't say that! But] [He thought that's what I meant]

Shinra smiled sadly at her “I wouldn't worry about it too much, he’ll be fine, he might have expected a question like that given his history”

[That doesn't make me feel any better about the situation. After everything that's happened, he deserves our full trust, right?]

Shinra’s smile never faded, in fact, it brightened, he grew more in love with Celty everyday. “Why don't you go and see him? You can explain some thing’s better in person”

[I'll stop by tomorrow. It's getting kind of late now, he should be with Shizuo anyway, if anyone could make him feel better nowadays, it's him] without a word, Shinra hugged her tightly, she hesitated to return the hug out of shock from the randomness. They pulled away and she typed again. [What was that for?]

Shinra kept on smiling “I just love you”

Celty shivered with embarrassment, Shinra could tell by the way her shadows puffed slowly that she might have been blushing. [I- I love you too.....]

Shizuo could tell by the quickness of 'Kanra's' log outs that something had been said that bothered him. He couldn't see anything on the chat logs, so he figured it had to have been through a private message. He got up from the couch and stood beside Izaya, he placed his hand on the smaller man's shoulder, it wouldn't be obvious to anyone else, but Shizuo knew when something upset him. “What happened?”
Izaya straightened, instantly replacing his gloomy face with a happy façade. Though it didn't bother him as much as it used to—that Shizuo could read his emotions—but that didn't mean he wasn't going to fight him mentally on it. “Nothing. I don't know what you're talking about”

Shizuo snorted, he hated it when Izaya put up his walls, even after a year, they still had this problem. That didn't mean Shizuo wasn't going to be there, he simply let Izaya know that he was here by lightly squeezing his shoulder. Izaya watched him walk out of the apartment from the corner of his eye, no doubt he was going for a smoke. Though the blonde didn't smoke as much as he used to, Izaya still hated it, but he didn't want to be that kind of partner that told him what to do. There were couples out there that argued over the littlest habits, Izaya didn't want to be part of that group. He and Shizuo were different then most, Izaya liked it that way, it kept their relationship strong, and because they were so different from the average human, it made them all the more stronger. He supposed it was the same for Shinra's relationship. Izaya sighed, when had he become that person, caring about another person's feelings, wanting to make a difference, wanting to try. Never had he wanted to fight so much to keep someone close before, he didn't ever think he'd get into a relationship, it was so-normal.

Izaya shut off his computers just as Shizuo was coming back into the apartment. He managed to smile at him as he stood and walked toward the kitchen. “Hey-” Shizuo called after him, Izaya stopped and turned to hear what Shizuo wanted to say. “Celty text”

Well fuck. God dammit “And?” whether it was the poor way in which Izaya was trying to hide the hurt or that Shizuo had gotten too good at noticing now, it seemed not to matter. Shizuo walked over to him, Izaya's first instinct was to step back, even if the previous statements were true, he wasn't going to make it any easier on the other man. Izaya's heart picked up a few beats faster as Shizuo pulled him close into his arms, at first, Izaya didn't move, just allowed Shizuo to hold him while his arms remained stubbornly at his sides.

“Izaya. You are not that person any more. Don't ever think for a moment that I don't trust you. I don't want you to ever believe that I have doubts. You're different now and that's ok, you can be an ass hole and that's ok, not everyone is going to trust you and that's ok too. The important thing to remember, is that I do, so don't get anything into your head, nothing anyone says will make you lose me. Ever” Izaya tensed, his hand coming up between them to clutch at Shizuo's chest, a fist gripping the fabric. Tears pricked at his eyelids, his body began to shake, suddenly overcome with emotion. He really didn't deserve this man, this damn caring overprotective man, who seemed to think he was worth something. Tears began to run faintly down his cheeks now, Shizuo just held him tighter.

“I idiot…” Izaya whispered as he lightly thuddled his other fist against Shizuo's back as that too came around and clutched at him. “Idiot” he repeated “Why'd you have to go and say something like that for”
Shizuo chuckled quietly “Because it's true”

“I hate you.....” Izaya replied, only half heartedly of course.

“Yeah?....Well, you're stuck with me anyway”

Izaya smiled through his tears, burying his face so he could hide himself, even though it was probably obvious by now that he was crying. Damn you Shizu-chan Shizuo's hand came up and rested on the back of Izaya's head.

“It's ok. It's ok, I won't ever leave you. Izaya”


Izaya sat on the couch as he waited for the person on the other end of the phone to answer. He found himself grinning a little, he had been feeling somewhat conflicted since his little break down yesterday. He almost started to doubt who he actually was for a moment there, but with Shizuo, any nagging doubts always flickered and merely burnt out.

“Ah. Izaya. I was wondering when I'd receive your call” the person spoke clearly with an almost expectant tone.

“Is that so? Doctor Kishitani”

“With something so out there, being on the news, it figures you'd be interested in any information I might have on the matter. Of course, that is to say, that you're calling about the drug?”

Izaya leaned forward on the couch “Merely out of curiosity then anything”

“Oh?” it was as if he'd momentarily forgotten about Izaya's change of ways. “Oh, of course” the doctor laughed “Who'd have thought that it'd be Shizuo of all people. Shinra always said there was
good in you somewhere, I always found that hard to believe”

Izaya's hand tightened around his phone for a moment, he gritted his teeth a little. It was strange really, Izaya had never been one to anger easily, or hardly ever, Shizuo had brought out such new emotions in him. “So. I suppose I'm right in thinking that the drug was leaked, or rather, stolen?” Izaya's grin returned when he didn't hear an instant reply. “Something wrong?”

The doctor coughed “No. I mean, yes, the drug was stolen right out from the lab. Of course, I'm no fool, I kept copy samples”

“What exactly was this drug for?”

“You sound like a cop. Have you switched professions too?”

Izaya snorted, in his personal opinion, being compared to a cop was kind of insulting, though he often couldn't blame whoever did. “If I were a cop, you'd be out of a job by now” they both knew it was an empty threat, but given how much Izaya already knew about Shingen's work, the doctor could not afford to take him lightly. “Not going to tell me? You don't have to, but I could be of some help to you, that is of course if you don't want everyone knowing that it was you that created the drug”

“Does this mean you're going to blackmail me? You're going to out me?”

Izaya huffed a laugh, if Shingen didn't firmly believe in his changes, then he was sure as hell going to act like nothing had. “I wouldn't put it that way, but I suppose it does sound like that, doesn't it?” Izaya smirked

“Some thing's never change, it seems”

Izaya knew it wouldn't take much convincing of the man, he grimaced a little, that same doubt almost creeping it's way back inside him. “Indeed”

“Ok. Izaya. Maybe you want the information for self gain, or maybe you really do want the info, because you want to protect the ones you are likely to care about. Either way, I think you are the best person to tell”
Izaya ignored the feeling of being lied to just so he could be used for his work skills. “Ok” Izaya crossed his leg over his knee as he leaned back.

Shingen sighed “Unfortunately, there's not a whole lot I can tell you, the drug was a prototype, you know? It wasn't meant to be used in any way. Not until it had been properly tested”

“What was it suppose to do?” Izaya repeated his earlier question

“To tell you the truth, it was designed to erase memory, that was suppose to be the main objective”

“So it is actually fulfilling its purpose?”

“Yes. In a way. But I didn't want it to be abused in such a way. You see, my wife was the one that came up with the initial idea, it's designed to help those with a serious case of PTSD”

Izaya chuckled “Are you telling me you created something that was suppose to genuinely help people? All because your second wife got it into your head?” Izaya found it rather amusing

“Like you're one to talk, coming from the one that took a bullet-for Shizuo of all people”

Izaya narrowed his eyes, he was never going to live that down, then he realised who he was talking to “How did you-”

“Shinra told me all about it, how much you've changed and how it's made your friendship stronger, he's actually really happy”

Izaya sighed inwardly Note to self, kill Shinra “We're not talking about me. So you designed this drug, let's say for arguments sake, out of the goodness of whatever heart you have. If it was that important, why wasn't it kept secure?”

“It was! I don't know who stole it, or how they did it, but it happened”
“Camera's?”

Shingen sighed again “Disabled”

Izaya snorted “Some security”

“But everything has a password, they're all different too. No one outside of the lab would have gotten in. Not all of my employees have access to some of the rooms either”

Izaya gasped in surprise “Are you saying it was someone who worked or works for you?”

“Maybe. Seems more likely doesn't it? But there's another option I should consider, that you should know. A few days after I finished the prototype, right before word spread about the drug being on the streets. I got a call from the pharmaceutical company”

Izaya's eyes widened “Let me guess. They wanted to buy you out? It would make their lives a lot easier of course, now that Shinra refuses to help in any kind of way that deals with memory loss. I suppose Celty had something to do with that”

“Naturally. But yes, they offered me a large chunk of money in exchange for the prototype and my complete co-operation for the completed drug. Not to mention total credit for my work afterwards”

“Hm. That's rather a lot of requests, they must have offered you quite a bit”

“Yes. But, as I said, it was my wife's idea, I couldn't let her down”

Izaya was surprised, for as long as he'd known him, the man was always somewhat strange and selfish. Not that he was any different, though their interests were what set their personalities apart. Izaya heard a knock on his door, he stood up with a hand on his hip. “I might be able to help you. It sounds like you have a spy, if that's what you would call someone like that in your line of work. Someone who works for you and pharmaceuticals, how else would the pharmaceutical company even find out about it?”

“I kind of came to the same conclusion myself. But, how might you go about helping me?”
“Leave that to me, you need not know about how. But email me a list of all your employees, I can have info on the lot of them within two weeks”

“Izaya....”

“What? Surprised? I am an informant”

“It's not that. You know, this helping someone thing you got going, despite however you may go about it, it suits you”

Izaya smiled a little, he wouldn't admit it, but it felt good to be praised rather then scolded. “I can't say that I can say the same to you”

Shingen laughed “Maybe you're right, but some people need change, I suppose”

Izaya snorted “Whatever. You produce that list, I'll see what I can find out”

“It might take me a while, I've had to tighten a lot of security, everything is more discreet now”

“Of course. Had you have been that much to begin with....” Izaya smirked. Shingen growled, the doctor hung up, Izaya looked at the phone “Ass hole” hearing the repeated knock, Izaya wandered over to the door. Living with Shizuo had made him more cautious then he was before, always checking through the spy hole before greeting the one on the other side. He rolled his eyes when he saw that it was Celty. He opened the door, she stood there for a moment, looking a little embarrassed-or guilty-Izaya couldn't tell. He couldn't read the woman's emotions through her body language like his friend could. Sometimes that annoyed him, he thought he could figure anyone out-Dullahan not withstanding. All of a sudden, he was enveloped in an awkward hug, his arms froze by his sides. When did he become this fucking huggable being? Why did they suddenly feel the need to just embrace him all the time? “You know. I know we're suppose to be friends now, but it really doesn't make this any less-weird”

Celty instantly pulled away, her shoulders hunching slightly [I just. I needed to come here]

Izaya moved to close the door and then led her to sit on the large couch. “Trouble in paradise?” Izaya
Izaya smirked teasingly

[Jerk] Izaya chuckled [I needed to come here, to apologise] [I feel really bad]

Izaya had to think about what she was referring to “Oh” oh yeah. Shizuo's words, turning him into a small bundle of emotions yesterday. He hadn't really expected Celty to come all the way here just to apologise, after talking to Shizuo, he felt fine, so he didn't continue to dwell on it.

[I'm sorry. I know how hard you've worked to gain people's trust, especially Shizuo's and mine. I shouldn't have asked you what I did yesterday. It wasn't meant to come out like that]

Izaya held his hand up with a smile “It's all right, I should expect that question from time to time. I can't expect everyone to completely trust me”

[I should!] [You have my full trust Izaya. You're my friend, it's different now, you're different now]

Izaya found it easier to hide his emotions around friends, more so then Shizuo, and thank god. “It's appreciated. An apology wasn't really necessary though”

[It was. I couldn't sleep much, I felt guilty]

“It's fine, I really didn't lose any of my sleep over it” Izaya joked, he wouldn't tell Celty that her words did hurt, he could at least tell that she did feel bad about what she had said. Why else would she come all the way here? I wonder if I should tell her about what I found out from Shinra's dad? Probably not, I know he freaks her out.

[I better go. I'm suppose to get some shopping for dinner tonight, and I still have to pick up a package for a woman at some local hospital]

Izaya nodded “It's always weird, you don't eat, yet you go to all that trouble to cook dinner for Shinra, just to watch him eat it”

Celty stood [Well, when you're- um, you know]
He did now. Izaya tilted his head with a half smirk “In love?”

[Well, yes. I suppose so. You do crazy things]

“Well, if cooking for someone you love defines as crazy in your books, I’d hate to know what you'd really do” Izaya laughed, he stood then, placing a hand on her arm “Seriously though. It's ok”

She would have smiled if she could, instead, she reached up and lightly closed her hand over his and then Izaya walked her to the door. *I should tell her about the conversation, she and Shinra do have a right to know* Before Izaya could think about bringing it up, Celty was already out of the door. Izaya moved into the bedroom, he didn't want to be the one to worry, but this drug had him on edge. From what he could gather, Shingen hadn't developed a cure for his creation, no kind of reversal antidote, and why would he? If it was meant to help PTSD sufferers, why would it need one? Shingen did have prototype copies though, and now that he knew the drug actually worked for it's intended purpose, he could in fact create one. He'd need to, the drug was being abused and used on innocent civilians, who knows what could happen if left to fester. The thing that worried Izaya the most, was if he or Shizuo ended up being forced into taking the drug. There were still so many out there with intentions to hurt them, holding a grudge, more so for Izaya then Shizuo. Whose to say someone wouldn't get the idea to use it on them? It was obvious that the drug had become more then available throughout the city. Izaya didn't think he could handle it. If someone forced the drug on Shizuo, he wouldn't be able to handle loving someone when all they wanted to do was kill him. Izaya was pretty sure that Shizuo wouldn't be able to remember anything that they had shared over the last year. He couldn't be certain on how the blonde would cope, were it the other way around, though he found himself smirking, he'd probably do anything in his power to make him listen, make him see, probably even get him to fall in love all over again-he was just that stubborn. Plus, Izaya could listen without being blinded by rage, unlike Shizuo.

Izaya opened the wardrobe and reached up onto the top shelf, pulling out a video camera. He hadn't really ever used it before, always using his phone or his ipad to record anything. He knelt down and fished out the tripod stand from behind his clothes, it probably wasn't necessary, but he felt more at ease with the reassurance that if something were to happen, whether it was likely or not-they had some back up. There was also that little nagging feeling at the back of his head, that if something did happen, would this idea even work? He tried to think back to how he and Shizuo used to be, he found it almost unlikely either one would believe it if they were to be shown back then. Izaya shook his head, it didn't matter, he was going to do it anyway, he couldn't think of anything else to do until Shingen got that list for him.

Izaya was just finishing setting up the camera as Shizuo walked through the door. Izaya turned to
him, giving him a half wave and then turned back to adjusting the tripod. Shizuo toed off his shoes and then walked toward the couch, he raised his eyebrow questioningly. “Oi. I know you said to Shinra about recording our next- you know- but I thought that was a joke”

Izaya stiffened, he snorted and turned to glare at him-tried to glare- because he couldn't help the blush that begun to spread over his cheeks. “Shut up”

Shizuo chuckled as he walked around the couch and flopped onto the soft cushions. “All right. So what's with the camera then?” Izaya clicked his tongue, turning away from the blonde, it was always him to embarrass Shizuo, not the other way around. Shizuo smirked and got up, Izaya jumped a little when he felt Shizuo's arms wrap around his waist. “What's with you?”

“Idiot” Izaya couldn't even look at him

Shizuo laughed then, realising his previous comment seemed to have caught his lover off guard. “Did that fluster you?”

Izaya elbowed him in the ribs, almost playfully, Shizuo merely grunted but continued to laugh. “Just shut up”

“Ok. So you gonna tell me what this is for?”

Izaya turned and pushed him back onto the couch, he let out a small squeak when Shizuo pulled him with him. He didn't have much of a choice but to straddle Shizuo's lap, his hands resting on either side of his head. “Shizu-chan...”

“Hey” Izaya leaned down to capture his lips in a hard desperate kiss, he could never resist Shizuo's subtle advances. He moaned when hands found their way to his slender hips and moved down to grab him from behind. “Izaya...” Shizuo groaned into their kiss causing Izaya to slowly grind against him. Shizuo bucked lightly in response.

Izaya's hands moved down Shizuo's chest and scraped his short nails down the fabric until they reached underneath the hem to start tugging the item off.

The door suddenly opened “I forgot my bag” Namie's voice rang out across the apartment.
“Shit” Shizuo muttered loudly, he panicked and Izaya yelped when he was thrown from the couch.

Namie looked over when she heard a thud, she raised an eyebrow, hand on her hip. From her angle, she could only see Shizuo, she grimaced in disgust. “Haven't you ever heard of privacy within the bedroom?”

Shizuo could only assume what she thought he was doing, though he didn't dare stand up right now. He looked down at the floor, Izaya was glaring at him, Shizuo wanted to laugh at him but he bit his lip, keeping him from doing so. Izaya then pushed himself up and stood, rubbing the back of his head that had collided with the coffee table. He looked up to see Namie, who now had a look of shock and embarrassment on her face. “Get that thought out of your head. It's not what it looks like” Izaya said as he continued to rub his sore head.

Shizuo raised an eyebrow at him as if to question him “It's not?” he mumbled quietly. Izaya kicked him in the shin.

“I don't want to know. It's your apartment. Just do me a favour and try to at least make it to the bedroom, I really would rather not walk in on you two”

Izaya gave her a sideward smirk “Don't forget your belongings and you wouldn't have that problem” Namie bared her teeth at him and then stormed out quickly with her bag. Izaya laughed as the door slammed shut. “I don't think we'll see her for a couple of days”

Shizuo leaned forward and then watched as Izaya flinched when he touched the back of his head. “Sorry about that”

Izaya rolled his eyes, he looked at his fingers, well, at least he wasn't bleeding. Though there was no doubt a little bruise forming. “Right. Your face looked very sympathetic just now”

Shizuo huffed a laugh “I panicked”

“Just like you panicked at the hospital when Shinra walked in on us?”

Shizuo laughed then “Automatic reaction”
“To give your lover concussion?”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “Don't be dramatic, you're fine” Izaya pouted and then picked up a pillow, he smacked Shizuo over the head with it. “Mood gone?”

Izaya gave him a smirk “A little. But I'm not the one with the discomfort right now” Shizuo growled low in his throat. “This camera thing is kind of important though”

Shizuo stood up “Yeah. You still haven't told me why though. I'll get a shower, if we're not going to-”

“Naww. Don't worry, we'll play later”

Shizuo shook his head and shoved him good naturedly as he passed him. Izaya smiled and then flopped onto the couch, flinching again when his fingers brushed against his bruised head. “Stupid protozoan”

“I heard that!” Shizuo called from the bathroom doorway

Izaya laughed “With love intended Shizu-chan!”

“Sure it was!”

..........................................

Izaya moaned against Shizuo's lips as the blonde tweaked his nipples from underneath his shirt. Shizuo then slid his hands down so that he could tug at the fabric, Izaya shifted up and quickly raised his arms and the shirt was removed. He flopped back against the covers, grinning as Shizuo removed his own shirt, Izaya's hands instantly sliding up onto hard muscled abs. Shizuo straddled him and
Izaya's hands wound their way around to his back as Shizuo leaned down, pressing his lips back to his lover's. Shizuo began to grind himself against Izaya's small frame, Izaya bucked lightly, moaning louder. He trailed kisses down Izaya's neck and sucked against the skin where his pulse throbbed, gently nipping and then sucking again at raised skin. *Great, a Hickey* Izaya thought with a little irritation, though he hardly had time to dwell on it as Shizuo's skilful tongue ran rings around his already hardened nipples. *Damn you and your hot mouth Shizu-chan* Shizuo lowered and began to undo Izaya's belt and then slid his pants down, Izaya lightly kicked out and lifted his legs to aid Shizuo in removing them from his ankles. Shizuo almost grinned down as Izaya's cock throbbed under the fabric of his boxers. He closed his mouth over the top with a little hum, Izaya could feel hot air surrounding him in that instance and he fisted his hands underneath the pillows. Izaya opened his eyes when one of his hands brushed against something, he pulled out the item and raised an eyebrow, shifting up onto his elbow. Shizuo didn't seem to notice his shift of weight, Izaya almost lost his thoughts when he felt Shizuo's tongue lick against him through the fabric. “Um....Shizu-chan...” Izaya tried to focus on what he wanted to say, he really wished the blonde didn't distract him so much, his damn lover had gotten way too good at this.

“Izaya.....” Shizuo hummed his name against him and for a moment, Izaya had to clench his eyes shut, letting out a slow moan-filled breath.

When Shizuo gave him a breather, he was able to come back to his senses a little, he pulled a little at Shizuo's hair to get his attention. “Oi. Shizuo”

Hearing his name pronounced correctly drew him away, Izaya only said his proper name when he was annoyed or distressed. Shizuo looked at him and he instantly blushed when he saw what Izaya had found.

“What's this?”

Shizuo sat back on his heels, feeling like he was being scolded all of a sudden. “Yeah....I um, picked them up yesterday...., it's- it's something new....thought we might give it a try....maybe”

Izaya tilted his head, Shizuo didn't look him in the face, clearly embarrassed. “I'm up for trying something new Shizu-chan-” Izaya looked at the item, he grimaced a little “Does it have to be handcuffs?”

Shizuo rested his hands on his thighs, unsure what to do at this point, it was kind of rare for the two to stop and just randomly have a conversation in the middle of their sexual activities. “Well. They had rope, but....I thought that might hurt...., you know, rope burns”
He really is an innocent idiot Izaya sat up a little, Shizuo seemed to have forgotten something about his past, he hated to have to remind him. “Shizu-chan. I- erm, remember when we first came together?” Izaya cringed and then grinned a little “Poor choice of words. Sorry about that”

Shizuo chuckled “I know what you mean. Our first time, right?” Izaya watched as Shizuo blanched in recognition of something, something he'd remembered. “Oh” Shizuo covered his face with one hand, his other clenching into a fist. “Shit. Aoki. Damn it, Izaya I'm sorry, I forgot all about that”

Izaya smiled, leaning up and moving Shizuo's hand away from his face “I know. And I know the way he used them wasn't- in a playful way, I know that you wouldn't ever do that to me, leave me like that.....but I still-”

“I know. I didn't think. For some reason, I just wanted to try something new, for you. I know you like- different stuff”

Izaya chuckled “Was that just a lucky guess?”

Shizuo huffed a laugh in response “Probably. You are more open about our sexual-stuff”

Izaya grinned, that was true. He shrugged a little “I'm not mad. You just had to ask me”

Shizuo nodded “Sorry” he mumbled

Even though Shizuo was feeling guilty, Izaya could also see a little disappointment in his eyes, who knew his shy lover was a little kinky. Izaya then had an idea. While he was against the idea of handcuffs, he wasn't fully against the whole bondage idea altogether. If that was what Shizuo was implying here, nothing drastic obviously, but a little spike to their pleasure. He threw the handcuffs across the room and then reached into the top draw of their night stand He picked out a black ball and grinned. “We can use socks. If you want”

Shizuo blinked at him in surprise “W-what? You mean you-”

“I'm not against the idea at all. No handcuffs. But we can use socks”
A sudden rush of excitement shot up Shizuo's spine for a moment, he shook the images from his head and leaned down to kiss Izaya's lips. “You sure?”

“Just don't cut off my circulation” Izaya joked

Shizuo chuckled and then took the ball from Izaya's hand, unravelling them. He slid one of Izaya's hands gently toward the bars of the headboard, the informant watched him quietly tie his wrist to the bar and then Shizuo switched angles and repeated the action with his other wrist. “Ok?” Shizuo asked as he leant back and looked down at him.

“I'm in your hands now, Shizu-chan” that statement seemed to elicit a small spark of tension within him, but he didn't want to back out.

“You sure about this?” Izaya nodded, trying to hide his worry, he trusted Shizuo—but they had never done something like this before, whenever they had sex, they'd always had full control over each other, over their actions. Now, Izaya could do nothing more then leave himself in Shizuo's complete control. He was just happy that he could still move his legs. Shizuo brought his lips back to his, for a moment, Izaya tugged against the socks. Shizuo trailed kisses down in his neck and chest, repeating the action from before, he could feel the informant beneath him tense the lower he got. “Relax. I won't hurt you”

Izaya took a deep breath, he knew that, he should know that. It was just a little-different, Izaya berated himself, he wasn't even blindfolded. “I know” he said aloud, realising he hadn't actually answered him yet. Despite being worried, he throbbed with need, it was a mixture of anxiousness and excitement. As Shizuo's mouth neared his covered member, excitement began to take over.

Shizuo felt Izaya's tension fade, he was glad, he wasn't willing to continue if he noticed any kind of discomfort from the other man. Shizuo tugged the boxers down and slid them off from Izaya's ankles. Izaya sighed as his restriction was freed. Shizuo curled his hand around him and slowly began to lick the head. Izaya instantly bucked, trying to fist fabric, momentarily forgetting about his bound hands. Shizuo's mouth closed over the head and sucked gently, Izaya whimpered as he took a shuddery breath. Shizuo lowered his mouth, taking Izaya's cock half way and then back up, he circled his tongue, dipping the tip against the leaking head. Izaya's eyes rolled back, gasping with pleasurable moans.

“Fuck....” Izaya had no choice but to grip the bars of the head board as Shizuo continued going down on him with skilful practised speed. He remembered when Shizuo first went down on him, how awkward it was for both of them, but now, damn....Shizuo could turn him into mush with just his mouth, when it came to the bedroom, the blonde was a very fast learner. He'd pay attention to all the things that got Izaya's blood going, the signs and body language that indicated what caused reactions. Izaya almost felt bad that he couldn't return the favour, it just wasn't his style, but right
now- he really didn't care. Izaya moaned, bucking his hips when Shizuo picked up his speed, swirling his tongue and sucking harder. "Shit! ah...." Izaya's wrists pulled against his bonds as he hissed "Yessss...." when Shizuo grazed his teeth slowly up from the bottom, Izaya gasped as he arched his back. When Shizuo hummed, Izaya couldn't help but let out a loud strangled cry of pleasure. "S-shizu-chan.....make me come...." Shizuo ignored this request for a moment and as he lowered his mouth down on him again, he let his free hand slither down and Izaya dug his heel into the mattress. “Wait. Lube. Shizu-chan...” Izaya let out breathlessly.

“Shit. Yeah. Sorry”

Izaya closed his eyes, using the opportunity to catch his breath, he was so close, so damn close. “Bastard...”

Shizuo stared up at him as he opened the cap “What?” when he realised what Izaya meant, he chuckled a little. _Oh._ “I wanna come with you”

Izaya opened his eyes, half lidded, “Then hurry up already. You can't just leave me like this. It's cruel” Shizuo could tell Izaya was joking with him, though his eyes bore into him hungrily. He then tugged at the material that bound his hands. “You know. I could easily get out of these”

Shizuo smiled knowingly at him “I know”

Izaya smiled back, Shizuo had obviously thought it through, they were tight enough to work, but loose enough encase he felt too restricted, that he could easily break free if he needed to. This man was too good to him, he wondered how he'd ever gotten such an incredible partner by his side. Shizuo moved between Izaya's thighs, grasping his cock with one hand and, with his other, slid two digits into his entrance. Izaya's head snapped back, vaguely remembering hitting his head the first time Shizuo surprised him like this, he smiled inwardly at the memory. Izaya gasped loudly as Shizuo's fingers slid inside him, his other hand unmoving around his cock. Was he deliberately stopping his release? Ass hole A third finger was added and Izaya felt them curl against him, barely scraping against his sensitive spot. “Ngh....fuuck” Shizuo stretched him, panting a little himself, his cock ached so much to be inside.

“Izaya.....”

Izaya knew it was a question, whether Shizuo knew he did or not, the blonde always asked, always making sure he was ready, it was sweetly strange in a way. “I want you....now” Shizuo removed his fingers and positioned himself, Izaya's legs wound around his back, it was the best he could do since his hands were out of commission. Shizuo pushed into him, slowly, always slowly. Sometimes,
Izaya hoped he'd be a little rougher, just for that extra friction, but he wouldn't dare tell him that. He knew Shizuo wouldn't go for it, merely because of his strength, he was always careful, they both knew it was dangerous to exceed each other's expectations. If Shizuo lost control because he wasn't focused enough, it would most likely be Izaya that would pay the price. Izaya lost his train of thought as Shizuo pushed deeper inside him, making his back arch, Shizuo pounded against him in that instance. Izaya grunted and curled his hands around the fabric, evidently tightening the bonds, but he didn't care, if he arched any higher at the same time as Shizuo's thrusts, he was going to snap him in half. Izaya leaned forward slightly, moaning again when Shizuo thrust up into him deeply slow.

“Gooooood”

Shizuo panted “Are you-Are you ok?”

Oh, you know, just about nearly snapped my spine, but I'm good. Izaya thought, irritated with his stupidity, Shizuo would have a heart attack if he knew that had almost just happened. Izaya began to feel the pressure on his wrists, he needed to level them up somehow. “Shizu-chan....ngh...fuck....” Izaya could barely focus his words, Shizuo was relentless, he pushed himself deeper with harder thrusts. Izaya gasped as Shizuo picked up his speed, pounding into him will full hard movements. Of all the times, he picks now to become rougher. Izaya winced as Shizuo's hands gripped his hips, his fingers digging into his skin. Shit. “Shizu-chan....let up a little” Izaya's voice was quiet, Shizuo wouldn't be able to hear him, he wasn't sure what to do, there was pain, but there was also constant pleasure. Izaya bit his lip, curling his hands tighter around the fabric, he was pretty sure he was stopping some of the blood flowing through his wrists by now. Izaya moaned loudly when Shizuo finally hit his spot, though he could barely tell which was more prominent, the pain in his hips or the pleasure inside him. A jolt of pleasure swept over them both when Shizuo pounded his spot, once, twice....three times.... four. “fuuuuck! Coming!”

Shizuo pushed harder against him, panting heavily, he was close....so close. “Come for me.....Izaya”

“Ngh....oh god....” Izaya's orgasm exploded, blinding white flashed across his vision as he released himself....finally. “Ah....” as he rode his orgasm, Shizuo continued his pace until he himself came hard inside. Izaya let out a louder hiss then he intended to, as Shizuo's fingers gripped him tighter for a few moments as he twitched and thrust until he was sated. Izaya sighed as Shizuo's tension faded, removing the pressure from his hips, Izaya relaxed his hands too, the feeling coming back into his wrists. Shizuo almost collapsed on him, sheer exhaustion taking over, he pulled out gently and moved to the right. He flopped onto his back, trying to catch his breath. Izaya took heavy breaths himself, that was certainly one of their more extreme sessions. He didn't regret it though, he never did. Izaya looked down at himself, he grimaced slightly, he really didn't want Shizuo to see that.

“Shizu-chan, wanna untie me now?” he chuckled.

Shizuo took a couple more deep breaths and huffed out a laugh “Yeah. Sure” he leaned up, untying the first wrist, he suddenly froze. “Izaya....”
Izaya thought he was probably sporting a little burn on his wrists. “It's only friction. My fault, I should have used the bars” Shizuo pulled his hands back, Izaya used his now free hand to sit himself up, subtly covering himself up at the waist. He looked over at Shizuo, wondering what had him so freaked. Izaya peered at Shizuo's hands and then cringed. Shit

There was dark spots that seemed to decorate under his short nails, Shizuo couldn't be sure, but it looked like scrapings of skin there, just between them. “Izaya....., what did I do?”

Izaya saw horror etch upon his face, he winced as he moved to comfort him, he realised he couldn't move any further when his left hand tugged him back. He turned around with a light hiss at the pull of heavy bruises and untied his other wrist. He then sat up, kneeling in front of Shizuo, pulling him closer. “It's ok. I'm ok, see?”

Shizuo shook against him “Why didn't you say something....?”

“I kind of tried to” Izaya gave him a sidewards smirk “Pleasure seemed to overcome my rational thoughts”

Shizuo growled a little “It's not funny. Damn it. I- shouldn't lose control. I never lose control, not when we're- not even when we're arguing, not around you”

Izaya rolled his eyes, he then frowned a little “Shizu-chan. You used to throw fucking vending machines at me, vending machines! And benches, and trash cans....and-”

“Shut up. I get it. That's not the same. It hasn't been for a long time”

Izaya sighed “My point is. I'm not as fragile as you think. If I can handle that kind of violence. I can handle a little rough sex in the bedroom”

Shizuo snorted at the crudeness “I just- I hate this. I hate- hurting you”

Izaya's face softened as Shizuo blinked back tears, he'd never really seen Shizuo cry before, not really. He grazed a thumb over his cheek and kissed him. “You never will. They're just bruises. Shows how passionate we've become. Nothing to get angry about”
Shizuo sighed. “Sorry” Izaya kissed him again “Let me see....”

Izaya huffed, he wasn't going to hear the end of it if he didn't indulge him. Izaya moved back against the pillows, Shizuo took the hint and pulled back the cover. Dark purple finger prints painted Izaya's hips, with red grazed fingernail marks within their depths. When he saw his fingers, he feared worse, though what he did see did little to help his guilt. “They're tender now, but given a soak in the tub, I'll be fine”

Shizuo gently ran his fingertips over them, it stung a little, but Izaya let him. “If this happens again-”

“Stop worrying. Don't apologise. It was rather-” Izaya grinned “Erotic”

Shizuo laughed “Well thanks. But I was going to say- if this happens again, feel free to punch me-or whatever”

“Noted. Though I don't see how that was possible this time around”

“Oh. Right. Ya could have kicked me off”

Izaya laughed, though he was blushing now. “I- I didn't want to. I was too close...heh”

Shizuo rolled his eyes, trust Izaya to work with the pain in order to get what he wanted. “Sadist”

Izaya shrugged, it was true, but it wasn't like he really wanted the pain, he just wanted the pleasure more, so he had to work with both. That hardly made him a sadist, right? “Like you wouldn't do the same thing” Izaya reached up and grazed his nails down Shizuo's back with just enough pressure to leave faint marks. Shizuo arched with a low growl. Izaya raised an eyebrow. “Seriously?”

Shizuo looked at him lustfully “What?”

“Your sex drive is relentless, you know that?”

Shizuo chuckled and moved to capture his lips, Izaya touched his fingers to them with a grin. “Play
with yourself, I'm sore” Izaya moved off the bed, ignoring the stinging of his hips and the pleasant tingling in his ass. “Though you're more then welcome to join me in the tub” Shizuo glared at his retreating form, ignoring the light throbbing between his thighs.

“Sadist” Shizuo repeated again

“Love you too Shizu-chan!” Izaya called back as he shut the door behind him.

Shizuo's frown disappeared and he let out a low chuckle. “Damn it I love that idiot” he said quietly as he got off the bed and began to change their sheets. Izaya had a thing about that. Unless they instantly fell asleep afterwards, he liked clean sheets every time.

Izaya stirred awake, rolling over onto his back, memories of last night flickered in his mind and he smiled. He moved his hand to the other side of the bed and shifted onto his elbow. He looked over when he realised the space was empty, he sat up and stretched, combing a hand through his bed hair. He swung his legs over the bed and removed the covers to inspect his bruises. They were slightly faded, though still dark, and the nail marks had left little spots of clotted blood in their wake. Izaya shrugged, they didn't hurt as much as last night, the soak in the bath had eased the swelling. “He better not be sulking” Izaya muttered to himself as he grabbed his towel from the radiator and made his way into the bathroom to shower. The room was already full of steam, which meant that Shizuo had already showered and was fully ready for the day. It rarely happened, Izaya was always the first up out of the two. “Something has him determined today” he shut the door and then noticed the little message on the mirror. 'I love you xxx’ “Tst. What a sap he is”

After getting ready himself, he began checking his phone for messages, flicking through the dozen newest ones that always seemed to fill his phone through the night. It was then he noticed the date. “Oh” Izaya smirked, well, that explains a lot.

Izaya walked into the kitchen and poured himself a tea, he heard the door open and then shut again. Shizuo walked into the kitchen, Izaya grinned at him. “Where'd you get off to in such a hurry?”

Shizuo hunched his shoulders “No where” he muttered
“Uh-huh. Sure. Just needed a smoke that badly, that early, hm?”

Shizuo clenched his fist “Yes”

Izaya raised an eyebrow, he found it funny, Shizuo sucked at discretion. “If you say so”

Shizuo hadn’t said a word since he’d returned, and by the time they were setting off to leave, Izaya decided to let him know that he’d figured it out.

Izaya leaned up and kissed Shizuo hard on the lips as he neared the door. Shizuo moaned against him and then they pulled away. “What was that for?”

Izaya grinned “Happy Anniversary”

“Shit!”

“Forgot?”

“Um....well, I didn't think we- you know, counted”

“I'm not exactly a fan of counting how many days one remains together, but- I just wanted to see the look on your face when you realised that I remembered. You're the romantic out of the two of us”

“Are you sure about that? Because I seem to recall you booking us a table at Crista for Christmas”

“That was different, and-” Izaya yanked the hidden item that Shizuo had behind his back. “I know you didn't really forget” Izaya showed him the red rose, lightly hitting Shizuo on the nose with it, grinning.

Shizuo blushed, hand coming to rub the back of his neck shyly. “Heh. I didn't think you'd notice”
“Like I didn't notice the little 'I love you' on the bathroom mirror this morning? Or the heavily erotic sex-”

“All right!” Shizuo blushed again “So you noticed”

“You really do suck at subtleness Shizu-chan”

“Shut up”

Izaya wrapped his arms around his neck “I love you too” Izaya plopped the rose into the long empty vase-like glass. At that point, Namie decided to enter the apartment, she scrunched her nose up.

“I just had my breakfast” She held her stomach to add to the effect of her disgust. Izaya grinned at her.

“She's just jealous because the only one she will ever love and except that love from is with another girl”

“Argh! You rat!” Namie was about to throw her bag at him, but Izaya laughed and ran out the door. Shizuo followed him out, he didn't overly like Namie, she kind of creeped him out, so he tried not to converse with her.

Izaya and Shizuo stood outside their building, ready to part ways for the day. “Given what happened last night, you're in a pretty good mood, so I trust you might take it easy on the clients today ne?” Izaya said, giving Shizuo a playful shove.

Shizuo clicked his tongue. “I could be in the best mood ever, the clients will still piss me off”

Izaya chuckled “Lookout, Shizuo Heiwajima is on the loose!”

“Shut up. Where are you going today anyway?”
Izaya shrugged “Observing around the city mostly. Then I'm meeting with an old acquaintance of mine later. He's in a bit of bind”

“Do I wanna know?”

“Probably not” Izaya grinned

Shizuo snorted “Figures” he squeezed the tips of Izaya's fingers, something didn't feel right all of a sudden. He got this twinge in his heart, like something bad was going to happen. He wondered, if maybe things were going so well in his life now, that he was just expecting something bad to happen. Izaya noticed Shizuo hadn't let him go yet.

“You know. You need to let go of my hand so that I can actually go” Izaya teased.

Shizuo let him go then “Sorry”

Izaya noticed the worried look in his eyes “What's with you all of a sudden?”

“Nothing. Just be careful, I guess”

Izaya wasn't convinced, but he decided to let it go. He'd question him about it later. “See you tonight” Shizuo watched Izaya walk away, the twinge in his heart coming back again. What was wrong? Something felt off.....it used to be that way back in the day, when the two were enemies, he'd somehow be able to sense the damn informant's presence. But they were lovers now, had been for quite sometime, hell, they were fucking engaged. So why did his heart feel constricted, watching Izaya walk away, like it was the last time.

“Izaya!” Izaya turned around, smiling at him, damn he was fucking beautiful. “Ya liublyoo tibya”

Shizuo spoke the words Izaya had taught him, about the only Russian phrase he knew, but it was enough.

Izaya's smile simply widened a little. “Ya tozhe tibya liublyoo” he replied and then continued to walk away.
Present day

[Shinra! How could you forget about something like this!??]

“I don't know! I really don't! You know me, something this important, I wouldn't have-”

[It doesn't matter right now. The important thing is showing this to Shizuo and Izaya]

Mairu tilted her head in thought “They're gonna have to see this at the same time”

Kururi looked over at her sister “How do you propose we get them both in the same room without them trying to kill each other?”

Mairu folded her arms “We send them a message, telling them both they're needed at Shinra's apartment, of course, without letting them know that the other will be here”

“That's your big plan? They're still going to kill each other”

“It will have to do, they'll have to be civil. At least long enough to hear us out and watch the damn disc”

Shinra smiled nervously “Did you just say- Shizuo and Izaya, and civil, in the same sentence?”

Mairu pouted “They used to be! We just have to get them back” Mairu lowered her head “We have to try”

Celty elbowed Shinra in the chest and then knelt on the floor beside the girls. [We will]
Shinra nodded “I just meant that after their last encounter, the only thing stopping Shizuo from pounding Izaya to a pulp, was that he was already injured” Celty turned to him, as if to glare “Oh. And Celty of course, they're hero” Shinra smiled

[Idiot] she then turned back to the girls [How are we going to get them both here?]  

Mairu tapped her chin in thought “Well. You're pretty good friends with Shizuo anyway-regardless of memory loss, so maybe you could just tell him you need his advice and that you wanna talk, maybe you could tell a little white lie, tell him you're in a little trouble or something-he'll come running”

[I don't want to lie to him]  

“Well. He needs to be here, so if the advice thing doesn't work right away, then you're going to have to”

[Right] [What about Izaya?]  

“Hmm. He's a little harder to convince. He'll be more suspicious, Shinra is probably the only one he'll listen to”

“He barely listened to me before he lost his memory” Shinra piped up

“Tell him you need his help, that you're in trouble or whatever”

“I don't think that will work. He knows I won't ask for his help”

“Then tell him you need to check up on him, that you wanna make sure his injuries are gone”

“Why can't you get him here? You are his sister’

“You're Izaya's best friend. You know that he won't come here if I text him, me being here will really seem suspicions”
Shinra sighed, she had a point, before he and Shizuo got together, Izaya and his sisters weren't that close. “I'm sure I'll think of something”

“Good. This better work”

[It has to! This is the best chance we have]

Celty sighed as she sent out a text to Shizuo.

: Shizuo. Can we talk? I need your advice

Celty thought he might be working late, so she was surprised when he text back so quickly.

: What's up? Are you ok?

: Yeah. Just feeling a little low. Shinra's at a job, so I can't talk to him.

: Is this about your head?

: No. not really. Can you come over?

: Um. Sure. I guess, are you sure you're ok? You don't wanna meet me out?

: I'd rather just stay here. If you don't mind

: Not at all. I'm kind of pissed off anyways, so we can rant together
Celty slumped [He's coming] she said to Mairu

Mairu clapped her hands in excitement “Great!”

“Good work” Kururi told her

[I hate lying to people]

“It'll be fine. Once he remembers, he'll thank you” Mairu said

[You really think this will help get their memories back?]

Mairu shrugged “It's been the best chance we've had. We might as well give it a shot”

Kururi looked over, peering into the glass sliding door of the other room and said “I wonder how much luck Shinra is having at convincing Izaya to come here?” Judging from the desperate look that was crossing the man's features, she'd have to guess that he wasn't having the best of luck.

“He better get his butt here. It makes more sense for them to see the disc together”

[I'm still a bit weary about that] I literally had to stop Shizuo with my shadows last time. I don't know if I'll be able to do that again, there was resistance only because he didn't want to harm an already injured man]

“Well” Mairu began “You can always just wrap them both up in shadow. Bound their limbs so neither one can resist”
“The easiest thing to do is just adjust to the situation as it happens” Kururi said

[Ok. I'll trust you both know what you're doing]

Shinra came out of the room, he seemed like he was a little exhausted “Remind me again why I'm friends with that man?” he slumped onto the couch

[Is he coming?]  

“It took some convincing. He's way too suspicions, even of me sometimes, we've been friends for ages, you'd think he'd at least trust me to a certain degree”

[Given everything that's happened. It seems right that he'd be suspicions]

“Which is exactly why he'll likely believe what we show him” Mairu said “Suspicions or not. I know Izaya doesn't dismiss the impossible at first glance”

Shinra nodded “That's true actually. He likes the idea of mystery, of mythology and cryptic mishaps”

“Shizuo on the other hand-” Kururi said, her voice laced with doubt

Mairu sighed and then grinned a little “He'll be a little hypocritical if he thinks he's all realistic and stuff. What with his unnatural super human strength. And, his best friend is a headless mythological fairy who talks, breaths and rides around on a equally headless horse”

[Hey!]

Mairu looked over a her “True no?”

[Well. Yes. But, still. Easy]
Shinra chuckled. “We'll just have to wait to see what happens when they both get here”

“Ugh. The things we do for those two idiots” Mairu said with annoyance, though everyone could tell she was nervous, she didn't want her brother getting hurt any more then he had previously been. Damn, it was so much easier when they didn't care so much.

……………………

Shizuo made his way up the steps of his friend's apartment, he was a little worried about her. She sounded sad, in the way she was texting him. He felt anger throbbing through him, whoever pissed off his friend, needed to die. He pushed his hands into his pockets to try and quell his shaking fists. It could be she was just bored and lonely, she had said Shinra was out on a job, maybe she just wanted to hangout, though she had said she needed his advice. “I wonder what's up” he muttered to himself as he opened the door that led to the corridor toward the apartment.

“Shinra. You can quit your whining. I'm here like you asked”

Shizuo froze, he was looking at the floor when he heard the voice, but there was no mistaking that tone. Shizuo gritted his teeth as he glared up, only to confirm his suspicions correct. “Izaya!”

Izaya's eyes widened in surprise, his hand clenching around the handle of the door. Crap. What the hell is he doing here? Izaya wouldn't show any evidence of his shock to Shizuo, his face formed into a grin. “Shizu-chan. What are you doing off your leash?”

Shizuo clenched his fists, stalking up to his enemy with long strides. Oh he was so going to kill him. “Izaya! You fucking louse! Just what the hell are you doing here!?”

Izaya's grip didn't loosen on the handle, he discreetly tried to open the door, hoping they'd left it unlocked. No such luck on his part. If I can quickly skim past him, I can get away. Izaya's heartbeat quickened as Shizuo darted toward him.

“You're dead!”
Izaya managed to duck Shizuo's punch, he was even surprised himself, this was a rather narrow corridor. His hand reached into his pocket as he knelt and quickly side stepped to avoid colliding with the stronger man. As he flicked his blade outwards, Shizuo turned to him, Izaya span around to slice his chest. They were too close to one another for either of their efforts to work in their favour. Shizuo tried to jump back from Izaya's knife, he was caught in the shoulder, he hissed but at the same time grabbed a fist full of Izaya's shirt and they ended up toppling. Izaya fell forward and as Shizuo's back hit the ground, Izaya gained his advantage by placing a surprisingly strong hold against Shizuo's arm with one of his knees, the other lay at his right, trapping his hip as he held the knife at Shizuo's throat. Shizuo bared his teeth up at him, hatred burning in his brown eyes. “What now? Brute”

Shizuo growled, he dare not move his other arm, with the blade so close to his throat, he wasn't that stupid. “Flea. You better use that knife of yours, before I beat you to a pulp”

Izaya smirked down at him “I hardly see how you're in a position to do that right now”

“You underestimate me too much monster”

Izaya's smirk faded somewhat, rarely did Shizuo cause such an angry reaction in him, he never let Shizuo get to him. “We both know who the real monster is here. You oughta be locked up, beast”

“That seemed to strike a nerve, flea”

Izaya pushed the blade a little bit harder to Shizuo's skin, causing the blonde to still any movement. “Don't test me, monster. I'll gut you like a fish”

Shizuo found himself smirking “Do it then. But I know you won't, you're a coward Izaya, you're never willing to get your hands dirty. Always someone else to that for you”

Izaya narrowed his eyes, Shizuo hadn't seen that look on him before, it was strangely unnerving. For some reason though, it didn't make him feel good, though he could hardly explain why the hell that was. “Flea-”

“Izaya” the informant gritted out, never once loosening his hold
Shizuo snorted “You're a flea. That's all you'll ever be. Blood sucking parasite that no one ever wants around”

Izaya lowered himself, putting pressure on Shizuo's arm as his face closed the gap between them. “Shizu-chan. I hope you know that is a bigger insult right? You know as well as I do that it's reserved for a close friend or lover. I call you that because you'll never hear that honorific from either one of those, no one could ever love a monster like you. At the very least, I'm human” Shizuo growled low in his throat, a twist of hurt aching it's way into his heart. He grew angry and in a blinding flash, knife to his throat or not, Shizuo threw his head up and clocked Izaya in the face as hard as he could. “Fuck!” off guard by the sudden pain, Izaya dropped his knife, Shizuo used the distraction and pushed up, Izaya toppled backwards. Shizuo growled and now towered over the smaller man, a hand wrapping around his throat. For the first time, Izaya looked at him with fear, a hand grabbing at Shizuo's wrist while the other felt around for his knife. It was odd, Shizuo hadn't realised it until now, that Izaya was the only one, aside from a select few, that never showed any fear toward him. He didn't know he was grateful for at least that, it was the only thing he ever liked about him, though he never admitted that aloud to anyone, barely even himself. Now, he didn't even have that, seeing the evidence of that clearly shown in Izaya's face. It made him angry, his hold tightening ever so slightly on the man's neck, more angry with himself. He thought he'd be glad, that the cocky informant was finally afraid of him. It was the exact opposite though, intentional or not, it was the only thing Izaya had ever given him, acknowledgement that not everyone was afraid of him, regardless of him constantly referring to him as a monster. Shizuo raised his fist, feeling anything toward Izaya other then hate pissed him off the most. Izaya clenched his eyes shut, where the hell was his knife? It couldn't have fallen far. Shit

“Izaya!!”

Those occupying the apartment heard the bellow of a familiar voice as they looked toward the door. Shinra smiled nervously “W-was that—”

[Shizuo!]

Celty got up from the couch and ran toward the door. The others following after her.

Izaya waited for the impact until he heard a shout from the door way. “Shizuo! Don't!”

Shizuo stopped inches from Izaya's face, he turned to see his friends at the door, wait.... why was- “Mairu? Kururi?”

“Don't hurt him....” Mairu said almost in whisper
Izaya couldn't turn his head, but there was no doubt in his mind that his sisters were there. But why? And since when did they care what happened to him?

Shizuo growled, it wouldn't do him any good to hurt Izaya now, especially while everyone was staring at him, in front of his younger sisters. He looked at them, something akin to worry that he'd never seen them express for their brother etched on their faces. “Damn it!” Izaya tensed as Shizuo's fist came down, he clenched his eyes and his teeth, but again, no pain came. Instead, he heard a crack against the ground beside his head. Shizuo had managed to control himself enough to hit the floor and for once, Izaya wasn't going to tease him about it.

Izaya breathed heavily, eyes wide in shock, that Shizuo had refrained from actually hitting him. He felt Shizuo's hand loosen around his neck, finally able to take a breath, Shizuo stepped off him quickly as if he was burning. Izaya pushed up onto his elbows, he looked to his right, ah, there was his flick-blade. He was about to reach for it when someone else spoke. “Don't even think about it!” that was Shinra. Izaya looked over at him, the man knew him too well.

Shizuo clenched his fists, how the hell had he managed to restrain himself? When it came to Izaya, hardly anyone was able to get through to him, not even Celty. Then again, he did have somewhat of a soft spot for Izaya's sisters, he would even consider them as friends, which was ironic, since he loathed their brother. He watched Izaya get to his feet, glaring at him but unable to shake the image of his fearful look from a moment ago. “Izaya” he managed to grit out

Izaya stared at him, the fear was gone, replaced by the remaining surprise that crossed his face when Shizuo slammed his fist against the floor instead of his face. Shizuo wasn't sure he liked that look much better. “Shizuo” Izaya gritted out just as bitterly. “You finally manage to catch me off guard and defenceless, yet you- you didn't take the opportunity. Why? Are you evolving?” Izaya grinned for a moment before it flickered back to confusion. “Don't tell me it's because my sisters are here. We both know they couldn't give a damn what happens to me. So why?”

Mairu was about to say something, but Kururi stopped her, she could tell that Izaya's words had hurt. Kururi grasped her hand. Mairu looked away for a moment, before frowning back at them.

Shizuo snorted “Don't go getting the wrong idea flea. I can't stand the sight of you, but beating you now in front of mutual friends wouldn't do me any good, and I'll be damned if I ever let you win”

Izaya grinned darkly “Maybe you have a point” Izaya bent down and pocketed his knife “Though I'd hardly call them mutual friends”
“Hey!” Shinra barked in a hurtful tone

Izaya chuckled “Who knew the monster could be so civil” Shizuo clenched his fists again, but seeing the purple mark that was forming on Izaya's neck, reminded him just how close he'd been to killing him. He always said that though, always threatening to kill him, but when he'd been given the chance-he couldn't understand why he'd hesitated, even for a second, it couldn't have been just because of the others.

“Believe it or not flea. As much as you think I have a one track mind when it comes to you. I wasn't here to fight with you, I didn't even know you were here”

Izaya rolled his eyes, like he really believed that. But then again- “I was only in Ikebukuro to see Shinra, since his pathetic desperate whining was giving me a headache. I had no intention to seek you out to annoy you this time”

Shizuo glared at him, when did Izaya ever tell the truth to anyone, let alone him. “Don't be surprised when I say that you're full of shit. I was only here because Celty said she needed someone to talk to and that she wanted company because-” then it dawned on him. He stared over at Shinra “Shinra was out on a job...” Shizuo looked pissed

Celty looked at him guiltily, Shinra hid slightly behind her, not willing to look Izaya in the face as the informant took a step forward. “Funny. That's exactly what Shinra told me. If I didn't know any better, I'd say they were trying to set us up”

Shizuo snorted “You'd know all about that, wouldn't you flea?”

Izaya turned without thinking and landed a well placed punch against Shizuo's jaw. Shizuo tilted his head, grinning when he heard something crack. Izaya's eyes widen and he grimaced as he crouched, holding his hand to his body. “Fuck!” Izaya winced as he tried to flex his fingers, he glared when he heard that Shizuo was laughing, the bastard was actually laughing. “I hate you”

“Now that. Was funny. Looks like I hurt you after all, and I didn't have to lift a finger”

Izaya stepped back from him, cradling his hand “Protzoan” he muttered

“If it makes you feel any better. Your punch was pretty impressive, had I have been normal I might
have been floored”

“Fuck you. I don't need any reconciliation from the likes of you”

Shizuo's laugh had died off, but he was still chuckling. “Drink more milk. Or maybe if you weren't so scrawny, your fingers wouldn't have broke”

Shinra sighed “All right that's enough you two. We don't want to have to lug you both to the hospital” Shinra placed a hand on Izaya's shoulder and the informant yanked away from him.

“Don't touch me. I'm mad at you, are you trying to kill me? What kind of possible reason could you have for getting me and Shizu-chan in the same room?”

Shizuo stared over at Celty, he had never been annoyed with her before, she knew better then anyone then to pull a stunt like this. “Celty?”

“It's not their fault Izaya!” Mairu exclaimed loudly, causing both men to turn their attention to her. “It was my idea”

Izaya somewhat frowned and then grinned “That makes more sense. That I believe”

“If you wanted your brother dead, why'd you stop me from hitting him?” Shizuo asked

Mairu placed her hands on her hips “I didn't get you both here so you could kill each other”

Shizuo grunted, he'd had enough of this crap, he placed his hands in his pockets. “I'm outta here. I'll let you go this time Izaya. But just because I'm more pissed off at them. Just get out of Ikebukuro now and I won't break your skull”

Izaya clicked his tongue “How considerate of you”

Celty ran and pulled on Shizuo's arm, he halted but didn't turn around. Izaya half wondered if Shizuo was going to push her away. “I didn't think you would betray me”
Celty let his arm go, she was about to let him walk away, but determination got the better of her when the images of the disc flashed in her mind. She circled him until she was facing him. [I didn't betray you! But I'm sorry I lied to you! I really am! Don't hate me. There really is something I need to talk to you about]

Shinra turned to place his hand on Izaya’s arm, getting his attention. “Sorry if it seemed like I was setting you up. I know you two don’t get along. I wouldn't get you both here if I didn't have a good reason. Mairu and Kururi planned this with us. It's really important that we show you something-but unfortunately, you both have to see it together”

Izaya stared at him, trying to find any kind of deceit in his friend's face. “Why didn't you just say that? I would have at least known Shizuo was going to be here” he then glared at the blonde “I know how to be civil”

“Shut up flea!” Shizuo yelled without turning round “What Shinra said. Does that answer for you too?”

Celty placed a hand on his arm [Yes. We just wanted to get you both here. It really is important]

Shizuo sighed “I don't like it. But it's nice to know that you didn't do it to hurt me”

[I would never do that! I'm sorry if you thought otherwise]

“I didn't mean to get angry with you. But you know, if you told me that Izaya was going to be here, that you couldn't show me this important thing without his annoying presence. I could have at least prepared myself, I might have had more control over my anger”

“Pft. Yeah right. Don't delude yourself monster” Izaya snapped back

“Shut up! You're lucky I don't snap you like a twig right now!”

“Brute”
“Flea!”

Mairu threw her arms up “Both of you shut up! Geez! Now that we got you both on a somewhat civilised level. Get into that apartment, sit down and don't say a word until this is over, got it?”

For once, Izaya and Shizuo didn't say anything, they simply stared at her, mentally thinking how scary she looked then. Izaya moved first, still trying to flex his fingers as he made his way into the apartment. Shinra and Celty followed after him. Shizuo moved to do the same, but he was stopped by the girls. “Lay one finger on Izaya, and I swear, we will be the ones to kill you” Mairu said sternly, but she had a grin on her face. Shizuo had never believed in those words so much before, from someone so small no less. “Once you see this, you'll regret it if you do hurt him”

Shizuo huffed a laugh but was slightly disturbed by her serious tone. Him? Regret for harming Izaya? He didn't think that was even possible. Then again, he had felt some form of guilt when he saw the bruising finger marks on his neck, caused by his hand.

“Let's go, Shizu-chan” Mairu mocked as she and Kururi walked into the apartment.

Izaya and Shizuo made a point of sitting as far away from each other as possible. Shizuo sat on the edge of the couch one side, while Izaya sat across the room on one of the stools, his hand outstretched as Shinra bandaged it up. Celty turned to Shizuo as she was sat beside him. [Just try not to freak out. It's important you see this all the way through]

Shizuo laughed lightly “Now you got me worried” he joked

Izaya seemed to be trying to kill Shizuo with his glare, he obviously wasn't having any luck. “Don't try anything stupid Izaya” Shinra gave his fingers a squeeze as a warning

“OW! The hell Shinra!” Izaya yanked his hand away, pouting at his friend

“Pipe down you baby, it's your own fault” Shizuo commented

“Shut up. Don't talk to me”
“Like I want to anyway!”

Mairu slapped the coffee table to silence them “Enough already! Just shut up and watch”

Despite the strange situation, Izaya and Shizuo really were acting like kids, maybe they should have tried this years ago—forcing them into the same room that is—two people that claimed to loath one another were now just acting like childish idiots.

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Shizuo tilted his head as Izaya adjusted the camera and then sat down beside him. “Ok. Let's go over everything that's happened in the last year or so. We can't leave anything out, so get your thinking cap on Shizu-chan”

“Where shall we start?”

“The beginning?”

Shizuo shoved him “I know that! You know what I meant—damn it”

Izaya laughed “All right. Why don't I start us off” Izaya made a point of talking directly to the camera, speaking as if he was literally talking to himself. “Let's see. Gok and his merry crew are in prison. You got stabbed and ended up in hospital, courtesy of Shinra of course, whom you contacted when it happened. You left the hospital whilst still recovering and was eventually chased by Shizu-chan”

“Naturally” Shizuo commented, Izaya elbowed him

“This caused your stitches to open and you passed out”

Taking his queue Shizuo piped in, following Izaya's example by looking into the camera's direct view. “You found him unconscious and hauled his idiotic ass into a cab and took him back to the
hospital. Merely to prove to yourself that you weren't who people thought you were”

“Once recovered, you paid your debts by telling the police the truth for once, that it wasn't Shizu-chan's fault that you got injured and the matter was dropped. Later on—”

“Wait. Maybe I should tell this part, you know, I doubt whatever happened next I'd believe if it didn't come from me”

“Hmm. Good point”

“Later on, you went on a date with a girl called Sakura—”

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“I know you're probably thinking that this is all a hoax, but who is clever enough to impersonate the likes of us?” Izaya said

“It's true. You ended up falling for this idiot, it took a lot of time and patience—”

“On both sides” Izaya grinned

“Yeah. But the feelings aren't one sided. You both fell in love. That might sound crazy, but given everything we've said, whatever has happened to you since, might begin to make sense”

“And if none of that has you convinced—” Izaya shifted on the couch and pulled Shizuo toward him, their lips crashing together, Shizuo wrapped his arms around Izaya's back, pulling him closer. Izaya pulled away after a minute, grinning at him. He then turned to the camera “Don't be an idiot. You know better then anyone that this isn't the kind of stunt even you would pull”

Shizuo grasped Izaya's hand in his own “Get all the facts first before you freak out, don't let the temper get the better of you”
Shizuo could barely move, what the hell had he just witnessed? “What-the-hell” that was the last thing he ever expected to see. He would never be able to look at Izaya the same way again. A slight tinge of red crept over his cheeks. He'd been outed—by none other then himself-only to find that the very person he hated, seemed to be the one he had fallen in love with, at least that was what he had seen. This couldn't be real, it couldn't be, it had to be a trick, Izaya's fucking plan. He dared to look at the other man, Izaya looked just as in shock as he was, in fact, he was white as a sheet. So much for his so called scheme.

“Um. Izaya? You ok there?” Shinra asked

Izaya seemed to snap out of it, this wasn't possible, no way. How could he—he loved humans, nothing of his being suggested he'd ever love an individual, in that way. And if he did, it would not be Shizuo! No way! Izaya tried to process it all, even for him that was a hell of a lot of information to take in. The worst part, was some of the things that his—other self—claimed to have happened, made a hell of a lot of sense now. The house in Yamata was a big give-away No wonder that man knew who he was when he himself didn't have a clue. No wonder Namie had been acting so strange around him, why Celty was acting like they were friends, why his sisters seem to suddenly care about him. Why he couldn't find Gok's number stored anywhere. Which brought up the reasons why Shinra and Namie banned him from the internet for so long. The only other thing that bothered him—other then just witnessing himself kissing his most hated enemy—was that in all of this crazy nonsense, he had never got any kind of knowledge about this so called drug. He was the best at what he did, he would have known about this, it was too big for him to miss.

Celty tapped Shizuo on the shoulder [Are you ok?]

Shizuo let out a shaky breath “I have no idea. I just watched myself kiss someone I fucking hate. I don't know whether I'm confused or nauseous”

Izaya snorted “The feeling is mutual brute”

Shizuo ignored him, making Izaya click his tongue. Shizuo ran a hand through his hair, feeling overwhelmed. “Tom told me about the drug”

Izaya stared at him Wait, Shizuo knew about the drug? Izaya couldn't bring himself to even use the nickname after what he saw, it didn't sit right with him all of a sudden How the hell did he know
“He explained that he didn't want me to worry. But he had to tell me cause some of our clients seem to somehow forget that they owed debts. Like they'd lost their memory, didn't even know who we were”

Izaya stiffened, something seemed to register with him Shizuo knew, and I didn't.... Izaya got up from the stool and strode angrily over to where Shizuo sat.

“Izaya?” Mairu called

Izaya bent down and grabbed Shizuo's shirt with his good hand and pulled him toward him. “What the hell did you do to me?”

Shizuo blinked up at him, he then realised what Izaya was thinking “You think I had something to do with this!? Why the fuck would I drug you and myself for that matter? Are you seriously asking me that? After what we just saw? If I wanted to erase my own memory, I'd have wiped you completely out of my mind for good”

“Don't lie to me. You fucking drugged me just so you could-” nope, Izaya couldn't even finish that sentence. Even he knew Shizuo wasn't that cruel. He knew him enough to know that wasn't his style in anyway shape or form, he'd even openly admit that. Shizuo hated his guts anyway, why would he use a drug to be with him. Izaya sighed, letting him go. “I suppose that doesn't make sense....”

Shizuo couldn't be sure, but he could have sworn he'd heard a mumbled apology come out of Izaya's mouth. He gritted his teeth, that disc was screwing with his mind, maybe their friends were trying to hypnotise them into becoming friends-or rather- lovers. Shizuo almost shuddered, but he couldn't help but stare at his lips, at the possible thought of what it must be like, to kiss him-instead of trying to punch him.

It was as if Izaya knew exactly what Shizuo was thinking “Don't even think about it”

Shizuo blushed. He couldn't help himself “Like I'd even touch you!”

Izaya had to look away, he was so confused, none of it made sense, but at the same time. Everything made sense.
“It’s all true you know” Shinra said “No one was more shocked then we were. But. Believe us or not, you two. You're great together”

Izaya cringed, he and Shizuo were not a great anything. “You make me sick” it wasn't clear who Izaya directed that insult toward, so no one said anything.

“This is ridiculous. It's- it's insane” Shizuo said

Izaya placed his hands in his pockets, his good hand clenching around his knife. Why the hell was Shizuo acting the calmest? Like he'd already gotten used to the idea? Since fucking when could the blonde stand to be near him, in the same room, let alone-to even think about him like that....Izaya suddenly felt singled out, like there was no one else in the room apart from the two of them, he felt-what did he feel? Confused? A little flattered? Maybe even slightly violated. But he remembered the way his other self-that was going to be his reference for now, maybe there was another reality somewhere out there, a reality in which he and Shizuo were- anyway, Izaya trailed off from his thoughts. He remembered the way he looked as he watched the screen. He looked-happy, like not a chaos causing plan happy, truly happy. With-Shizuo. Izaya shook his head. Fuck this! He had to get out of this apartment, before his thoughts suffocated him, before Shizuo got any ideas.

“Izaya?” Izaya didn't need to know who called his name, he would know that voice from far off distances. He didn't turn around, he couldn't, he didn't want to see anything on Shizuo's face-other then hatred-directed at him. “What do you think? About all this I mean, kind of- wrong right?”

So fucking calm! *He's seriously asking what I think?* Izaya wanted to punch him until he bled out, but he wanted at least one working hand. *Maybe I could just slit his throat and run, end this whole ridiculous scenario for both of us.* Before Izaya could stop himself, he span around and drew his flick-blade, lunging at Shizuo. Before the blonde could react-grabbing Izaya's wrist-Celty intervened and dark shadows curled around his arm, stopping his hand inches from Shizuo's face.

Shizuo glared at him, still unable to shake his anger for the man before him, he fucking hated him. Izaya glared back, the feeling was clearly mutual, but something else was there, it was anger, but it was as if it was directed inwards instead of out.

[I know this is a lot to handle. For the both of you. Please try and calm down. We're here to help]

Celty showed the message to both of them, letting them know she considered each of their friendships to be of high value. Shizuo saw the surprise on Izaya's face, it was somewhat of a shock to him too, he didn't think Celty and Izaya even got along. Judging by the informant's face, the feeling was clearly one sided at the moment. The more he witnessed their friend's reactions, the more
he was beginning to think what he saw was true. It seemed strange, that Izaya was having more trouble believing it then he was, if anything, Shizuo should be the one to blame Izaya for this, not the other way around.

Izaya sighed in defeat then “You can let me go. I'm leaving, I won't lash out”

Celty released her hold but placed her hand on his arm and then typed [You can't leave! You need to stay here. You were a target. What if something happens?]

Izaya laughed “Real or not. Your concern is appreciated. But I can take care of myself”

Shizuo snorted, Izaya ignored him, he turned to leave; and just as Shizuo got up to stop him—for reasons he couldn't fathom. The door burst open, revealing Shinra's dad.

The man startled them and then shouted “I have the cure!”
Love thy enemy

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait everyone, I really hope you enjoy this chapter, I'm sorry it's long, but there's so many things to cover. :) I do hope this solves more of the confusing questions that have been asked over the previous chapters. Enjoy!

“I have the cure!” Shingen shouted in surprise, the group of people in front of him stared blankly. Shinra stood up and stepped in front, a confused look upon his face. “Shinra? What's wrong?”

“Just where the hell have you been? I haven't heard from you in months!” Shinra replied

Shingen scratched his temple “I've been just a tad busy you know. It's been complicated. Didn't Izaya fill you in on what we were working on?”

Izaya raised his eyebrow as everyone looked over at him, Shinra sighed and then turned back to his dad and said “Not exactly. Don't you know what happened?”

“Well. I've been cooped up most of the time, working in secret, it's been rough” Shingen then turned to Izaya “Izaya, I've been sidetracked lately. But did you send me any information, about-you know”

Izaya rolled his eyes, wondering how long they were going to keep the façade up. “I don't know what everyone's goal is here. But I'm far too intelligent for your manipulative games. I don't know why all of a sudden there's this need to make us believe that me and Shizu-ch-” Izaya frowned, he just couldn't say it any more “Shizuo” he corrected himself “That we'd be or ever were anything more than enemies”

Shizuo clenched his fists “Are you fucking kidding me!? You still think this is a lie, after what we saw?”

Izaya laughed “I honestly can't believe you of all people are pondering the possibility. But then again, you always were pretty gullible”
Shizuo growled, he was about to reach for Izaya's shirt, wanting to deck him.

Mairu stood up then, her own hands clenching into fists “Are you really suggesting that we faked that camera footage? Are you that idiotic? Or is it that you'd rather not believe it?”

Izaya laughed again, placing his hand on Mairu's head “You shouldn't care that much. It's not natural, you and I both know you hate me, so why are you playing along? I'm fine with our sibling relationship as it is” Mairu batted his hand away, if Shizuo wasn't going to deck him, she would.

“What's going on here?” Shingen asked

Shinra sighed, he looked at Izaya and then at Shizuo, whom looked about ready to tear this apartment to pieces. “Isn't it obvious?”

Shingen looked at the two men for a moment, Shizuo ground his teeth, shoving his hands in his pockets before he did something stupid. Izaya grinned and then shrugged, he gave them all a back handed wave and said “Well, this was fun, but I'm leaving now” Shingen soon realised what had happened, he wasn't going to let Izaya walk out of the building without doing something about it.

“Wait! Perhaps if you listen to what I have to say will help you understand”

Izaya placed his hands in his jacket “Looks like more people are involved in this then I thought”

“What?”

Shizuo snorted and then said “He thinks everyone's faking the stories to manipulate us”

Izaya turned to him “Us?” Izaya laughed “You're as delusional as they are, no need to use the term us”

Shizuo's widened as he finally snapped, he grabbed Izaya's shirt and pulled him forward, raising his fist. Izaya grabbed his wrist but winced when the pressure on his broken fingers caused him to weaken his grip. Celty reacted immediately, remembering her promise to herself, she'd protect them both from each other if she had to. Her shadows spurted forth and wrapped tightly around Shizuo's fist, Izaya grinned but soon found that he was unable to move his other hand-the one that was concealing his knife at his side. Celty walked toward them, typing fiercely on her pad [Stop this!
We're telling you the truth. Please, this is traumatic for us as it is for you. Though I'm sure for different reasons]

Izaya huffed, narrowing his eyes as Shizuo released him and then the shadows disappeared “It does pose the question as to why you would protect me. Or maybe you're just that good of an actor”

[It's not an act. I think Shizuo would know I wouldn't even fake being nice to you, if I didn't care. I'd gladly let him pummel you if we weren't friends. It's not exactly something I'd lie about, even you I hope would know that]

Shizuo laughed lightly “Have to agree with you there. Seen as I know you hate his guts”

[I used to. But he's changed. At least, for the most part. I wouldn't make that up]

Izaya rolled his eyes and placed his hands in his jacket “I've never killed anyone, beaten anyone senseless, nor am I considered to be a bringer of death. I'm the bad guy?”

Shizuo growled “I've never killed anyone either louse!”

Celty's shoulders shook and before she could get her word in, Shinra stood beside her, frowning “Izaya. You're my friend, I'd always help you out. But what you said about Celty is uncalled for, she hasn't been that way for years and you know it, don't use her past in any comparison with the crap you've done”

Izaya tensed under Shinra's gaze, he and Celty were the only ones that truly knew about what Izaya had done over time. Even Shizuo didn't know the half of it. “Tst. It doesn't matter. Neither one of them are human, maybe that's an automatic pass to allow them to be granted forgiveness” by the time he realised what he'd said, it was too late to take it back. He couldn't think of anything off hand to say to counteract his impulsive admittance. Shit All eyes were on him, he shuffled a little and then turned for the door. “Whatever. I'm leaving now” Once again Shingen stood in front of him, Izaya smirked, showing his teeth. “I'm confident Shinra nor Celty cares much what happens to you” Izaya drew his switch-blade and pointed it toward the now shivering man. “Now if you don't want to receive a scar that matches Shizuo's, it's probably best you don't stand in my way any more”

Shingen put up his hands “Just listen to me for a moment won't you? I thought you would want to know how I came up with the cure”
“No. I don't”

Shinra then piped in “Don't you get it dad? Izaya and Shizuo are victims of your drug, whatever conversations or plans you and Izaya had, he doesn't have a clue what you're talking about. They're both back to their former selves”

Shingen sighed in defeat, he was kind of half hoping they were just playing a trick on him “I see now. Yes. Well, I apologise Izaya. I didn't know it had gotten out to the public so much, I didn't think it would get used on you and Shizuo”

“Whatever. Just let me passed. I'm done here”

Shingen stepped to the side, he didn't want to be on Izaya's bad side, it was pretty obvious that Izaya didn't care what had happened nor did he even believe it. The group watched the raven haired man walk toward the door.

Mairu and Kururi stared after him with sadness in their eyes, Mairu reached a hand out, as if it would reach him from where she still sat on the floor. “Izaya....don't go”

Izaya gave them a back handed wave and left the apartment with a slight chuckle. Celty stepped in front of Shizuo, he was staring blankly at the door, unsure whether he should be extremely pissed off or really confused, or both. Seen as he was always pissed off with Izaya anyway, the confusion was new, though he had no idea what he was most confused about. Even before they were shown the video, there was something definitely off about his encounter with his enemy. Izaya was still alive, that was a major improvement in his books. He hadn't injured him once during that whole ordeal, at least, not intentionally, though watching Izaya break his own fingers trying to hurt him was extremely hilarious. Shizuo side stepped his friend, walked to the balcony and stepped out into the crisp air, he needed a cigarette, he needed to think. He knew his friends wouldn't follow after him, they weren't that stupid.

He thought back to that fear he saw, never imagining he'd ever see that fear from Izaya, he didn't even think he had ever seen him afraid of anything, but it was directed at him. Shizuo clenched his fists, he hated him, he truly did, didn't he? But the only thing he had, that he ever liked about Izaya, was that he wasn't afraid of him, now he didn't even have that. He remembered how that other form of himself, the one on the video, he remembered how he'd looked. They were happy, they weren't enemies, they were lovers, it was mutual love that he saw in their eyes. He saw no sign of deceit in Izaya's, like he thought there might have been, all the way through that video, he was looking for it but found none. His body shook with so many emotions, since when did he associate any kind of other emotion toward Izaya other then anger and spiteful hatred. It didn't make sense to him, there had to be some kind of plot here, some sick joke he wasn't getting. He knew it didn't have anything to do with Izaya this time, he knew that for a fact, the man was just as shocked as he was, possibly
Even the flea isn't that good of an actor deep down, Shizuo knew it wasn't a joke, something like what he just watched couldn't be faked. Something happened to their memories, something happened to the two of them, something bad. He had so many questions, but his friends were clearly upset by this whole thing too, why would they act this way if this was fake? Shizuo shook his head, it was unnerving, but he and Izaya hadn't spent that much time in a room together since high school, at least, not without trying to kill each other. He wondered then, that maybe what they had come to be, was still there somewhere, buried within their subconscious. Ever since that day he'd got shot and his friend had taken him to Shinra to get help, he'd felt something off back then. It really couldn't have been a coincidence that Izaya too was injured and receiving treatment from their mutual friend also. Shizuo didn't dwell on it at the time, because he was simply pissed off just from the sight of him being there. Now, after everything that they had been shown, it did make a lot of sense. Shizuo remembered something else that had crossed his mind when Izaya was practically blaming him for this whole thing. How he had stared at those lips, that mouth that spewed words to hurt and annoy people, especially him. That mouth that grinned at him when they fought, that bared teeth at him on the rare occasion Shizuo cornered him. The very same mouth that let the venomous word “Monster” pass his lips without so much as a hint of remorse. So why the hell had he looked at that mouth and wanted nothing more then to press his own against it. Never had he ever thought of him that way, looked at him that way. Maybe it was true, maybe their feelings were buried somewhere.

“Tst. It doesn't matter. Neither one of them are human, maybe that's an automatic pass to allow them to be granted forgiveness”

Shizuo frowned at the door, as if Izaya was still there-maybe he was, maybe he was just leaning against the frame, with the same conflicting and confusing thoughts as him. Shizuo snorted inwardly, he highly doubted it, he doubted Izaya would ponder on this for no more then a couple of seconds. What Izaya had said though, he could tell by the surprised expression that no one was meant to hear something like that. It was the most honest thing he'd ever heard come from the same one that deceived and manipulated on a daily basis, his arch enemy. Since when did he care about forgiveness anyway? I always imagined he liked being an ass hole to people, why the hell would he care what people thought when he enjoys pissing people off in the first place? Is that his twisted way of seeking some kind of redemption? Hadn't Shizuo been seeking that very same thing from others for himself? He knew he wasn't normal, he knew people were afraid of him, that in some way, Izaya was right. His violent outbursts and ridiculous strength made him a monster in the eyes of those around him. The difference between the two though, was that Shizuo hated himself for it, for causing people to react that way. Where as Izaya, intentionally did those things on purpose, just to get a fucking reaction. The very thought of that, is what set them so far apart, yet they were still hated but many. His thoughts kept drifting back to the video and how much effort their friends seemed to be making for them. What if Izaya really had changed? Changed because of Shizuo, because all of a sudden the two of them sought out the other, for comfort, for forgiveness, for understanding or simply for something else to do other then fight. Maybe the two of them hadn't meant to fall in love, maybe it was one of them chemistry-attraction-hate things he sometimes heard about. It would make sense in their case, but Shizuo knew it in himself at least, that he wasn't the one night stand type. Shizuo knew he'd never have someone for himself, someone he could share any kind of passion
with, but that didn't mean he would seek out pleasure from even Izaya just for an evening of company.

What he saw on the screen, wasn't just a pleasure thrill gone wrong, what he saw was a lot of effort and trust building. What he saw was what must have been months of work. He imagined that neither one was completely willing to trust the other to begin with. He imagined that it was most likely him to seek out a proper relationship, he could hardly see Izaya being that kind of person. Even though it was a lot to take in, from what he remembered of everything their other selves had said, the two had been through a great deal of stress and pain to keep each other. He imagined he himself was rather protective of Izaya once the two had gotten used to the relationship. He always had been protective of his friends, so it would make sense that he'd be even more so of his partner, especially knowing what Izaya did for a living.

Shizuo sighed, he had a headache, his thoughts were so jumbled. This was Izaya, someone who he had hated since the beginning of their first day of high school. He couldn't just- not hate him any more- right? His friends couldn't expect that from him. It was clear that their relationship was built up from that over time. He just didn't think he had the patience, or whether he even wanted to. It was like one of those films he tried to watch that always had him confused in the end. The ones where something screwed up the future and some hero was left with the task to go back in time to fix it. Like how they say that if you travel back in time, you're not suppose to change anything because it effects the future. He had no idea what it was that was suppose to be and what wasn't. Maybe this was the future, maybe this was suppose to be what was right all along. Every time that thought entered his head, he could see his other self, smiling happily, living a life other then the angry violent repetitive one he was living now. A happier one, one where he and Izaya weren't trying to kill each other, one where they were safe as long as they had each other.....Shizuo froze then. Something stirred in his memory, deep in his memory, something he couldn't quite place, something that was said-that came from his very lips. He growled, he couldn't remember, but it was important, it filled him with warmth- whatever it was. Shizuo sighed again, at least he felt calmer now. He stepped back into the apartment, he looked down at the twins, they had barely said anything, he felt sorry for them, he could tell that their love for Izaya had changed from what he remembered. He knelt down and placed each of his hands on one of their shoulders.

“Don't worry. Now that I know someone actually cares about his existence, I won't kill him, I might beat him to a pulp, but I won't kill him” it was intended to be a joke, because he could never really catch Izaya anyway, but because of them, and other reasons he dare not explore, he no longer wanted to kill the damn louse. That was some kind of improvement, right? Mairu and Kururi couldn't hold their emotions in any more, they reached up and hauled themselves into Shizuo's unsuspecting arms. Shizuo sat there, having no clue what happened, it really was meant to be a joke in all honesty. He wrapped his arms around their small shaking forms. “I'm sorry. I don't know what you're really going through. But I know you must be feeling pretty low. I just don't know how to fix it’

The twins looked up at him through their tears, Mairu placed her hand over his. “Just. Love him. Like before”
She said it so calmly, so casually. “I don’t- I really don’t think that’ll happen. Besides, it’s really not that easy. I imagine he was extremely difficult to fall for the first time. Now, after what's happened, he'd be damn near impossible” Shizuo replied

“There's doubt though right? Doubt that it isn't impossible. You must feel something. Anything. Something that's telling you that you and him are right”

Shizuo couldn't help himself, he had to laugh “Sorry. I know it must mean something to you. But to me, it just sounds wrong and completely ridiculous” Shizuo stood up “I won't break my word though. He obviously means something to you both. I won't kill him”

Shinra tugged on Celty's arm, she turned to him and he whispered “If Shizuo takes the cure, his thoughts will change, if we can at least get him back, things will be a lot easier. He seems to have reacted better then Izaya has”

Celty nodded [I know. But I don't want to force it on him. I want him to make up his own mind]

“I know. But I'm worried. The longer we leave it, the worse this will get. Whoever attacked them before, might still want to do so. What if Izaya is in danger now?”

[I doubt it. Whoever did this, clearly wanted the old Izaya back. I just don't know why or who]

“Maybe you're right. But still. I can't help but feel something bad is going to happen. We're all involved now, whoever these tainted are, they'd go after any of us if they knew”

[I don't see how they could know. They couldn't know about the cure, and they sure as hell couldn't know about the video if you couldn't even remember it]

Shinra pouted “Yeah. I know. You know, I was pretty whacked out from jobs at the time. I think I remember Izaya coming over, giving me the disk....can't remember much after”

[You don't think he-he gave you a small little bit of that drug do you?]

“No” Shinra laughed “If it could be portioned that way, I wouldn't have remembered the disk at all, even when you gave it to me”
Shingen coughed to get everyone's attention. “Excuse me” they looked over at him, he'd been so quiet that they actually forgot he was still there. “I'd really like to explain my side of the story. It's vital to fill in some gaps.”

“So you and Izaya were working together?” Shinra asked, he was somewhat surprised by that. “He never mentioned anything.”

“No, neither of us wanted to involve anyone else. Not even yourself nor Shizuo.” Shingen waved his hand. “No need for that suspicious look, Shizuo. My son can tell you, that you and Izaya probably told each other mostly everything.”

Shizuo growled, though he felt his cheeks heat up. “I don't need to know that.”

“Anyway. We both agreed that until we got more information on who was behind this, we wasn't going to involve anyone.”

“So it was you that created the drug. Just not for the reasons we thought.” Shinra said.

Shingen laughed. “I bet you thought that I was planning some freaky maniac experiment right?”

Shinra blinked and then shrugged. “Well. Yeah.”

Celty walked in front of him. “I'll be the first to admit. I had my suspicions about you. But I can see that this wasn't intentionally your fault.”

“How very thoughtful of you, Celty.” Shingen sat on the stall and crossed his leg over his knee. “So, while Izaya worked on the list I conjured up for him to see which one of my employees was a spy, I worked on the cure. It wasn't easy, there wasn't much of the samples left. It was designed to
eliminate traumatic events from someone's life, the bigger the dose, the more they forgot”

“Huh. So I was right. Its portioned to the amount of time” Shinra said

“Right. So, for something that happened a month ago, one would only need say ten millilitres”

Mairu tilted her head, that was oddly specific “It's really that accurate?”

“I did test it a few times. But yes, something equivalent to ten millilitres is about a month”

“That doesn't explain why a lot of people have been waking up with next to two years of their memory gone” Shinra said

“Come on. Think about it. The ordinary people that were stupid enough to take this drug, wouldn't have known that”

“What about the people that were forced?” Shizuo asked, he couldn't help it, he needed to know

“Even those forced into taking the drug, those that distributed it to their foes, still wouldn't have really known what to really do with it. How to use it properly, they just saw a good opportunity to get revenge” Shingen stood then, his tone more serious “However. Those that attacked you and Izaya, knew exactly what they were doing. Knew exactly how much they needed to use in order to carry out whatever plans they have” he turned to Shinra “When they came to, what was the last thing they remembered?”

Shinra tilted his head “Well, the last thing Shizuo remembered was being shot. The last thing Izaya remembered was getting stabbed. The two weren't all that far apart. About three months”

“Not really relevant. But if you think about the significance, they obviously wanted their memory to go back enough that they wouldn't remember anything related to their relationship at all”

“So their attacks was necessary. Like a trigger. They recreated those real events in order for them to be the last thing Izaya and Shizuo would remember”
“The drug doesn't really work specifically with a trigger, but it would certainly help it in that direction”

Shizuo growled and slammed his foot down hard on the floor. “So whoever that spy of yours was, took what he learned, stole the damn thing and used it on us?”

Shingen “That's pretty much what we could come up with. Unfortunately, I heard nothing else back from him after that. Of course I was too consumed in creating a cure to pay attention. I didn't even know that the reason for his lack of communication was because of the very same reason he was trying to avoid”

“What do you mean?” Kururi asked

“Did he know that this was going to happen?” Mairu asked

“No. not really, it was more of the case that he suspected. You must know that your brother probably made a lot of enemies”

“But he changed!”

“Yes that’s true. Whose to say though, that one didn't just cruel out from the ground and try his luck”

“I guess the past just couldn't leave him alone” Mairu sighed, Shizuo looked down at them, had Izaya really changed as much as they had said? That nagging memory was back, he didn't know what it was, but for some reason, he felt it's presence strongly. It was full of promise and- and love. Shizuo clenched his fists, he just couldn't get his head around that, such feelings should never be associated with Izaya-ever!

Shinra folded his arms “When Izaya called me the night he was attacked....it sounded like he already knew what was happening to him”

“That's because he probably suspected that was the case. Many people can often tell when they've been drugged, especially someone as smart as he is” Shingen looked over at Shizuo “You probably might have realised it too”

Shizuo shrugged “Maybe. I don't remember. But I imagine I’d know if I was being drugged”
Shingen nodded “You both might have tried to contact the other. Tried to remain awake as long as possible”

“I didn't see any missed calls when I woke up”

“I don't think Izaya had the chance to call you” Shinra said “If he thought that they had already gotten to you, calling you wouldn't have done any good. He called me.....I could- I could hear the panic in his voice” Shinra took a deep breath, wondering whether now was the right time to tell Shizuo all this, he didn't even think Shizuo would want to know. He walked toward his friend and stopped in front of him. “He was scared Shizuo. He told me. He knew. He was going to lose you, whether it be because of his memory or yours, or both. I tried to keep him talking, keep him awake. He lost consciousness but- he told me, he told me to tell you. To tell you that he's sorry, that he tried to fight it, I think he knew that if he lost his memory-he'd go back to how he used to be.....”

No one knew what to say after that, Shizuo simply stared at him, he didn't know how to deal with that information. But he knew that Shinra wasn't lying, his face was serious, it held sorrow too. **Izaya.** He wondered if he'd done the same thing, thought the same thoughts, trying to fight the drug, try to contact him, try to make sure he was ok...... **Damn it, I hate this, I don't want to feel these things**

Celty turned to Shinra [You didn't tell me that!]

“I didn't think it was something that Izaya really wanted to share with everyone. I honestly don't know why I just told Shizuo. But, I thought he might want to know” Celty couldn't imagine what the two must have gone through in the midst of their attack. What must have gone through their heads, losing your memory was an awful feeling, she would know that better then anyone. But, she couldn't imagine losing someone you love like that, they weren't dead-but, it must have felt that way. Until she saw what Izaya was like for herself, she hadn't pictured him being so vulnerable, so lost and scared, not until she witnessed it here in their own apartment. The night he was injured, he was so worried that Shizuo was going to attack him, that he had relied on adrenaline to keep him standing. She held him then, she didn't care if he knew, but she knew he needed them. “So you still don't know who the spy is?” Shinra's voice snapped her from her thoughts

“No. Only Izaya would know, if of course he managed to figure it out” Shingen replied.

Celty slumped and typed on her pad and then showed it to Shizuo [Are you ok?]
Shizuo ran a hand over his hair “I don’t know. This just seems like complete craziness to me”

[I know. But you know it's true, don't you? I can see it]

“I hate him”

[Maybe now. But you know, you know it can't be like this. He needs you, trust me]

Shizuo snorted “That flea bag doesn't need anyone. Least of all me. Feeling is mutual” what he said and what he felt though, were two different things. “Promising not to kill him is about as far as I go. I can't be friends with him and I sure as hell can't love him”

Shinra was about to say something but his cell phone rang, followed by Celty's and then the twins.

Shizuo stared in confusion, was it the dollars message board? But wouldn't his phone have gone off too?

“It's Satoshi” Shinra said

“Who?” Shizuo asked

“Heh. You could say, he ended up becoming a family friend. He's a good cop. He and Izaya had a respected mutual trust. They shared information. They became good friends once you and him got together”

“If you say so”

Shinra laughed and dialled the cop's number “I'll give him a call. It sounds a little urgent”

“Put him on speaker” Mairu said
“Hey Satoshi. What’s up? It’s Shinra, you're on speaker with myself, Celty, the twins, my dad, oh- and Shizuo”

“Shizuo? Is he like- he back to normal?”

“Nooot exactly, we found this video that Izaya had made before everything went wrong. Seems like he suspected something might happen. It’s basically got their whole story on it, him and Shizuo made it together”

“Why does that not surprise me. That man is always thinking way too far ahead”

“In this case, it was a good thing. It didn’t exactly work the way we hoped. Izaya kind of left, I think he might have been a little freaked out, but far be it from him to show it. Shizuo is still here though, not sure if that shows promise or not”

“Shut up” Shizuo growled at him

Shinra chuckled “Anyway. Did you want to talk about something?”

“I’ve been meaning to talk to you guys about it for a while I just haven't found the right time, then when I heard what happened, I didn't think it would matter any more”

“Of course it matters!” Mairu shouted “They're not going to stay this way forever you know!”

“Right. Sorry. So, if Shinra's dad is there, does that mean he's figured out a cure?”

“How did you know I was-” Shingen cut himself off, how did this cop even know it was him who created the drug?

“Izaya told me. I think it might have something to do with what he found out. Izaya called me around two months ago, March 15th I think it was”
“That’s the day before he got attacked” Shinra said

“Well. He called me and told me he had some information about what he found out. He didn’t say anything specific. He told me about what he knew of the drug and that he was working on finding out who was behind the leak and that it was your dad’s and his wife’s creation. That the doc was working on an antidote. He was suppose to meet me the next evening with full details. He wanted to talk about something else, something he believed that was connected to this whole thing”

“This thing wouldn’t happen to be Tainted, would it?”

“Yes! How did-“

“Namie said Izaya has been conspiring with them. But Mairu and Kururi might be able to tell you more”

“Girls?”

Mairu and Kururi share a glance and then nod. They told Satoshi what they knew about tainted and what Izaya had told them. They figured he’d have found out more, that he most likely pissed them off and warned them to back off in his own way. “We have a hunch that they were the ones behind the attacks” Mairu said

“It’s more then a hunch” Satoshi said “Izaya thinks they’ve got someone else helping them. They were very keen and determined to control the cities. They sought out your brother because, well.... you know. Anyway, I think Izaya’s warning clearly didn’t sit right with them. They’re merely kids, but I think they’ve gotten themselves a lot of people now, people that by all accounts, are nobodies, people with nothing left to lose. They wanted your brother to help them because he has a very perceptive eye. Given what he does for a living, I think they were hoping for him on their side”

“And when he refused, they used the drug” Shinra said

“Most likely. Izaya didn’t tell me if he found out about who was behind the leak. But I think that the leader of the tainted, the one that’s telling them information and whoever stole the drug are all connected”

“Do you think that they could all be the same person?” Kururi asked
“Not all. Izaya met the leader of tainted. But he seemed to think that whoever is giving them extra information on you guys and how they knew about the drug and how to attack. Is the same one that leaked and stole the drug”

“My spy” Shingen said

“Probably. Like I said, we were suppose to meet up. I was delayed”

Shizuo didn’t know what to say. He couldn’t find any words to take part in the conversation, but something played on his mind with what had been said. “So the night we supposedly got attacked. You were suppose to meet with Izaya? What was the delay? Must have been important. Didn’t you try and contact him?”

Nobody said anything for a moment, whether Shizuo had intended to or not, with the way he spoke, his tone was protective. But they didn’t dare say anything to let on he had done so. “There was a riot. It was sudden. Random. At first, I thought it was a distraction, to stop me from leaving. I figured that was stupid, no one would know what I was doing or where I was going. Now I’m not sure”

“What makes you say that?” Shinra asked

“Izaya kind of let on that he felt he was being followed a lot recently. Before the attack, like someone was tracking him. He didn’t let on to whoever it was that he knew. He just went about his day. It seemed weird to me too, but then I thought that it was even more bizarre- do you guys know a Gok Arasaki? Or remember him being mentioned?”

Shinra paled “Yes.... he was the one that stabbed Izaya the first time. Is he out of prison!?"

“No. Nothing like that. Just that, he’s been getting a visitor lately. Just out of the blue. I think, whoever was visiting Gok, Gok told him whatever information he had on Izaya”

“Couldn’t have been much, the two barely did business once”

Shingen then thought about the attacks. About the trigger memory. “But it was enough to know that Izaya was stabbed before he and Shizuo got together. Enough to have a pinpoint for the trigger and
drug to work in their favour” he said

“Oh. That makes sense”

“If Izaya has been trailed. Who knows what this guy told people” Shinra said “Have you managed to find out who was visiting?”

“That would be great. But the name he signed in with isn’t anywhere on our database. It was something I was going to talk to Izaya about when we met up, to see if he could find anything. Someone knew we were going to meet, I’m positive that same someone told Gok. It’s not a coincidence to me any more that a riot happened before we could do that”

Shinra frowned, feeling angry “That’s how they got to him. It was probably the easiest way. Otherwise he would have noticed, had they have tried a different approach. Izaya expected you, but instead, they went in your place”

“Why’d you use plural?”

“The injuries Izaya had. Could not have been from one person. There had to have been at least two or three”

Shizuo found himself getting frustrated, he could feel his temper rising and he couldn’t figure out why—or rather- he didn’t want to. “How the hell did someone like Izaya get fucking drugged anyway? That bastard is too observant”

Shinra thought back on where Izaya said he was at the time he called. “He was at a high rise café alley way”

“That was where we were suppose to meet. The tall café complex in Shinjuku”

“Sounds like they slipped the drug into whatever it was he was drinking. I’d be willing to bet though, that he must have figured it out the moment it started to take effect. But the drug would have left him pretty defenceless, he was in pretty bad shape” Shinra explained, he then looked at Shizuo. “I think they got you the same way. Tom said you were at a bar—“ Shinra blinked when a pad was shoved in his face
Shinra smiled “I think it’s a little bit late for secrets now”

“What are you talking about?” Shizuo said with a growl “I was shot”

“Yes. You were. But Tom got a call from the Barman, the one you always go to”

“Yeah. He found me in the alley”

“Yes. But you were at the bar before that. He said that some girl brought you a drink and then left a few minutes after. When he took out the trash sometime later, that’s when he found you. He said you didn’t remember what happened and he knew something wasn’t right because of the way you were acting. When we all found out that you and Izaya both had your memories wiped. We did everything we could to try lessen the confusion”

“What- what does that mean?”

[Shinra! This isn’t the time]

“I’m sorry Celty. But I think he should know now”

“Know what!?"

“You saw the video. Shizuo. You and Izaya lived together. You had each other’s numbers. We had to keep you apart and make sure that everything was how you remembered it. I kept Izaya here until Namie and our other friends were able to remove any trace of you from the apartment that was Izaya’s. Tom kept you at his, until he could secure an apartment for you, at the same complex you used to live in, he told you that fumigating story right?”

Shizuo stared at him, unsure what to think. Why? Why had they gone to so much trouble?
“You had over a year of memory wiped. We just wanted to lesson the confusion. We knew it would have been too much if we tried to tell you straight away. Namie even changed all the dates on Izaya’s computers and phones, and hid all the recent files. We even locked him out from the internet as long as we could”

Shizuo chuckled a little at that “That must have been good fun. I just bet he couldn’t last an hour without access to all the damn networks”

“It wasn’t easy. He hacked our password five times”

“Shizuo” Satoshi called “I’m sorry. I let you both down. I always tried to keep you out of trouble. You know, I knew it had to have been someone damn special to change Izaya like that. When he got evidence and told me to release you after you got arrested for attacking-this lowlife” Satoshi didn’t want to bring up anything dark while on speaker, not when Shizuo was like the way he was now. Though both Shinra and Celty knew who he was referring to. “I knew it was you. That he was changing because of you. The same goes for you actually, I knew you by rep, having had my fair share of reports on your outbursts. I also knew that you and Izaya were enemies, so imagine my surprise when I find out the reason I arrested you was because you were actually protecting him”

Celty looked over at Shizuo, he looked ready to faint, or kill someone- or both. She walked up to him, placing her hand on his arm [Are you ok?]

“I don’t even know. I’m so confused. There’s so much more truth to this whole thing. I just don’t know what to think any more It’s obvious that no one is lying. I know that now. It’s just- it’s...It’s fucking Izaya! You can see my point right? Why I can’t get this around my head?”

[I understand We all do. But it’s because you mean so much to us. It’s because we’ve seen it for ourselves. That’s why we told you. Why we wanted you to know. I’m sorry we kept it from you as long as we did. We were just hoping to find something evident to prove it first. We only found the disc today. We didn’t actually know about the cure though. That was kind of a bonus]

Shizuo sighed. “I still can’t believe this. I mean, it all makes sense, and the proof is there, the evidence in everyone’s words are there, it’s just - hard to swallow”

“Try thinking of it this way” Shinra said “If we were all the ones that didn’t have Memories of you two. And it was you trying to convince us, how’d you think we’d react?”
Shizuo laughed “I think you’d kill over”

Shinra smiled “Maybe. But you’d try to make us see, wouldn’t you?”

“I don’t know. I guess”

“I better get back to work” Satoshi said, interrupting them “I’ll call if I have any more information”

“Oh, one more thing” Shinra said quickly “What was the name Gok’s visitor signed in with? Just thought it might help”

“Kumoi”

“Just Kumoi?”

“That’s what it says. I better go. Be safe ok? Watch your backs”

Satoshi hung up and everyone fell into silence. Celty showed Shizuo her pad [You should go and find Izaya]

Shizuo snorted “Why? I really don't think that's a good idea. I'm too worked up, I don't want to break my promise”

[You won't! I know you're feeling angry. But I think not all of that anger is toward him. Because you know he's just as confused as you are]

“For once. I know. That this wasn't his fault. But you have to understand, that the hate I feel for him outweighs everything, I can't just let it go because of this”

“There's a way” Shingen then said
Celty turned to him and then shivered and then turned back to Shizuo. [You don't have to. It's no one's choice but yours] She then produced a ring from her shadowy jacket. [This is yours. Tom gave it to me to keep. Izaya really loves you]

Shizuo stared at the ring, frozen in place “So, we really were-”

Celty nodded [You got engaged new years eve]

Shizuo laughed “That's cliché”

[You don't have to like him right now. But after everything we know, I'd feel better if I knew he was ok]

“You know. I really do hate his guts. But he can take care of himself”

[You'd think so. But you don't know how much trouble he can get himself into. Yes, he can defend himself. But this is a dangerous situation. I'm really worried, about both of you]

Shizuo laughed again “You definitely don't need to worry about me”

[I know you're strong. Real strong. But I still care about you, I still worry]

“I know I know. Don't worry about it so much. I appreciate the concern” Mairu and Kururi stood up and wrapped their arms around him. “When did you two get so clingy? What happened to the two crazy troublemakers?”

Mairu hit Shizuo's leg with her fist “Shut up”

Shizuo chuckled. He then sighed and growled “All right. Fine. I'll go see the flea. But if I end up pummelling him, I can't be held responsible” The group smile and nod at him, he sighed again “God dammit”
Izaya sat on top of a familiar rooftop, he just wanted somewhere quiet for once, a place where he could think. Sometimes, he came here to reflect, no one knew of course, and why would they? It seemed as good a place as any really, the building was abandoned anyway, this was often a meeting point when Celty did a job for him. He was sat near a large tank, the breeze moving his hair as he stared down at the ground of the lower roof. It was rare for him to want to be alone, he didn't like where his thoughts took him, they always trailed off to a distant part of himself, reflecting was a taboo for him. He often wondered-on this kind of rare occasion-if maybe he took a wrong turn somewhere down the line, if the path he had chosen in life was one he really wanted to live. He loved humans, he loved causing chaos, exploring every part of what made someone who they were. Creating new reactions and new situations for his own personal entertainment. He pondered though, on what might have been, if he had taken a different path in his life, thinking back to his middle school days. He was so different back then, often the serious type compared to how he was now, what had happened? How had he got so-psychotic? Evil? He couldn't even think of a word to describe himself. Izaya stood, when his thoughts started to become this dangerous, this normal way of self hate, it was time to be back among the public eye. Time to do what he did best. He made his way off the rooftop, back down the stairs and onto the streets of his favourite city. Now buzzing with night life, traffic was often minimal and crowds of people gathered in all sorts of places, exactly how he liked it, he much preferred the nights, so many interesting events usually happened at this time. Izaya would lose himself often in the bustling streets, always looking for the next big thing. He stretched, spreading his arms out with excitement, looking forward to an evening of observation. Izaya grinned as he turned his head to the left, glancing around, wondering where to start. He didn't care, as long as it distracted him from the day's events, he refused to let his mind wander back to Shinra's apartment, to what he'd seen, it was too ridiculous. Izaya winced a little as he flexed his fingers, he had always wanted to throw a fist in Shizuo's face, but never before had he let him stir any anger within him. Izaya didn't see himself as an angry person, hardly ever did he show that kind of response, especially to his enemy. Only Shizuo reacted impulsively like that, throwing punches in anger as a natural mechanism, he was not like him, he was never like him.

“You know. I don't care what you think. I don't care about you or your pathetic attempts to goad me or get me killed. Had I been the one to find you, I wouldn't have unleashed any further injury on you. Not out of pity, not because I'd feel any kind of obligation to do the right thing, but merely to prove to everyone that I'm not a monster” Shizuo glared up at him “Like you”

Izaya frowned at the memory, as if Shizuo had any rights to call him a monster, he'd never admit it, but hearing that word directed at him, hurt him more than it should. He didn't know why, he didn't know why everyone hated him so much. He could take a good guess, but then that would mean taking his mind to places he had no desire to do so. He didn't feel guilty, he didn't, ever.

“You're a flea. That's all you'll ever be. Blood sucking parasite that no one ever wants around”
Why had that caused a reaction in him? Why had those words struck him painfully? Normally, when someone hurled those kinds of insults, he'd just laugh in their face and turn their words around on them. But he couldn't this time, for some reason, hearing them from his enemy, seemed to cause the reaction which others hoped for. How screwed up was that?

“Never pictured you as the spaced out type”

Izaya was about to shake away his thoughts and blend his way into the bustling people on the streets, when he realised that the words weren't part of his thoughts, that they were spoken out loud. He turned around, looking up momentarily as a puff of smoke illuminated by the bright city lights before it disintegrated into the air. His eyes soon landed on the one who spoke, like he really needed to see who it was. He took a step backwards, no hesitation in withdrawing his flick-blade, though he had to use his right hand. He should have known that he'd run into Shizuo, out here in the open, though he wasn't overly fond of the crowded night-life, Shizuo was as much of a night owl as Izaya. This was Ikebukuro after all, the city in which Shizuo lived in, and the city he had “forbidden” Izaya to come to. “Figures you'd seek me out. I couldn't care less whether I'm in the city or not. I did just come from Shinra's after all, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe you did pardon me this time”

Shizuo growled “Yeah. I still told you to get the hell out. I pardoned you from the city, without chase”

“And yet here you are”

“Cause I knew for a fact that you'd ignore it”

“You don't own this city monster. I can come and go as I please”

Shizuo clenched his fists, he then sighed and snapped his cigarette between his fingers before stomping it out on the ground. “For once. I didn't track you down to chase you”

Izaya laughed darkly “You don't believe that any more then I do. Next you'll be telling me that you just want to talk, like two people passing each other by on the street as they go about their day”

“Hm. Something like that. I guess”

Izaya laughed again “That's cute Shizuo. Really. Now if you're not here to chase me out, I have
more important things to do”

“Tst. You've been standing here for almost five minutes”

“Observing. Are you stalking me now? Trying to improve your skills as a pursuer? So that keeping tabs on my whereabouts becomes easier?”

“Observing? That's bullshit, you were so spaced out I could have stood right fucking next to you and you wouldn't have realised. You're the stalker, creep. I don't need to keep tabs, I can sniff you out anywhere”

Izaya grinned “Dogs do that too” huh, no wonder I hate him

“Would explain why I always want to get rid of you flea”

Izaya rolled his eyes. He was becoming bored with this routine. “What the fuck do you want Shizuo? Why did you really seek out my presence?” For once, Izaya was serious, and Shizuo found himself suddenly lost for words. Why the hell had he? Because their friends asked him too? Maybe. But he couldn’t help but think that he probably would have done so anyway, even without their encouragement.

“I was suppose to see if you were ok. Our friends were worried, god knows why”

Izaya chuckled “That won’t last. Believe me. They’ll hate me again soon enough, so don’t worry, things will go back to normal”

Shizuo stared at him, how could he say that so lightly? Did he really not care? “And you’re ok with that?”

“You’re pretty hung up on that video, aren’t you? I didn’t think you of all people would believe something like that. You hate my guts, that’s all there is to it. No amount of persuasion will stop that. You really want me to believe that after years of hating and trying to kill me, that one freaky small conspiracy has changed all that?”

Conspiracy? He thinks what happened was a fucking conspiracy? “Are you drunk? What the hell kind of answer is that?”

“You can believe whatever you want. I don’t. Nor do I have any desire to “fix” it. I’m surprised though, I thought that for once we might agree on something. You really unpredictable”

“You’re a fucking liar Izaya! You were just as shocked as I was. You pondered the thought too, that maybe, maybe there was a life better then this! Better then all this god damn fighting and hate!”
Shizuo slammed his fist against the wall, causing passers by to scatter. Izaya almost flinched, but he remained passive.

“You really are full of surprises. But it makes sense, for a monster to seek out a normal life, far be it from me to stop you from trying, though I might do just that” Izaya laughed “But you’re barking up the wrong tree if you think that normal life even remotely exists with me” Izaya grinned at his choice of words.

Shizuo bared his teeth at him, stepping forward. “You’re so wrapped up in your own sick twisted world Izaya. You’re the deluded one. You think you’re fine living the way you do, and maybe that’s true, but everyone—even you—seeks out companionship eventually”

Izaya laughed “You’re pathetic. Just because you need approval and acceptance, I don’t. I’m not a monster. Like you” Izaya turned his back, feeling like he had won.

“You don’t need acceptance? Then why did you react so strongly to what I said outside Shinra’s earlier today?”

Izaya stopped, biting his lower lip but keeping his posture and head high. “Don’t go looking for any kind of common ground with me, we’re nothing alike”

“You don’t know what I know! If you had stuck around instead of running away like you do—”

Izaya span around “You don’t know me! You don’t know anything! Just fucking leave me alone! I don’t care! I don’t care about some god damn video, you and I are not suppose to be together! We’re not suppose to be happy! We don’t get to be happy!”

Shizuo approached Izaya slowly, all the while he was yelling. He’d never seen him so angry, he was hysterical and Shizuo actually wanted to calm him down, Izaya had finally cracked, like he was showing part of his real self for once.

“Don’t try to understand me! I want you to hate me! Why is everything wrong? I want to wake up now, to a world where you despise me and everyone avoids me and you’re a monster and everything is the way it should be” Shizuo stopped, standing just inches from Izaya now, looking into tearful angry eyes. He closed the gap. Pressing his lips against him. For the first time, Shizuo didn’t see a manipulative bastard, didn’t see the man he had despised since high school. What he saw cut him deeper then anything Izaya had ever inflicted. What he saw was a scared, emotionally fragile, distrustful and misunderstood human being. That didn’t excuse him for everything, not by a long shot, but Shizuo could finally see something underneath everything Izaya showed to people. Izaya’s eyes widened. Stood frozen as his heart clenched painfully. He gasped and pushed Shizuo away, breathing heavily and then ran. Shizuo reached out and then took off after him.

“Izaya!” He called as he chased him, huh, looks like it happened anyway. Shizuo focused his eyes so as to not lose track of him, he was not letting him get away. Though with the way Izaya had freaked out, he probably wasn’t paying all that much attention, if his terrible dodging of people and objects were anything to go by. “Izaya get back here!” to anyone else, it probably looked like their normal routine of “cat and mouse” which was probably a good thing. He swerved to the left when he saw Izaya turn in between two buildings. Shizuo chased him down the long alley way, he was pretty sure by now that Izaya was running from his emotions rather then him. “Would you stop!” Izaya continued his pace, his eyes stinging from the wind whipping passed him as the tears clouded his vision. Shizuo saw the exit and pushed himself to run faster, he was not escaping tonight. As Izaya rushed out of the alley way, he turned sharply when something screeched to the right of him. His
eyes stared wide at the oncoming vehicle, it was as if time slowed down, he froze then, there was no way he’d be able to avoid it in time. Shizuo skidded behind, reaching his hand to grab him by the arm “Izaya!” Shizuo yanked him back from the road just in time, the vehicle screeched again and loudly bellowed its horn as it drove passed. Shizuo had never known fear anything like it, his heart leapt up in his throat when he saw Izaya run absently into the road, without a single glance. Instincts had taken over, to pull Izaya back, to save his life. It was the promise he made, that’s all it was, that’s what he needed to tell himself. But Shizuo couldn’t help the anger within him, he span Izaya around, ready to give him a piece of his mind. “Are you crazy!? Are you out of your mind!? What the fuck is wrong with you!? That damn car almost killed you! If I hadn’t of grabbed you when I did, you’d have-“ Shizuo felt Izaya grip his arm tightly, it was then he noticed his erratic breathing. “Izaya?”

Izaya’s body was trembling, Shizuo could feel him shaking against him. Sweat dripped from his forehead, he gasped and clutched at his chest, almost crouching.

“Izaya? What’s wrong?”

“Can’t. Can’t breathe” Izaya swayed then, Shizuo caught by the elbow as Izaya’s grip tightened. “My chest....” Izaya collapsed to his knees as Shizuo released him, he quickly knelt beside him. Izaya’s heart thudded against his chest, his breathing dangerously erratic. “Can’t breath....Shizu-chan...” Izaya reached for his throat, as if something was strangling him.

Shizuo didn’t know what to do, Izaya was frightening him. But he remained beside him, then he took in Izaya’s behaviour as he tried to remain calm. Shizuo wasn’t a doctor, not by any account, but he didn’t need to be. Izaya was hyperventilating. “Izaya. I think you’re having a panic attack” Shizuo shifted so that he was right in front of him. He grabbed his shoulders and tried to stop Izaya from shaking. “Listen to me. Try and take slower breaths. I know that sounds kind of impossible, but try. Just keep your focus on me for a moment. Breath in-“ Izaya’s eyes locked on to Shizuo’s as he managed to do what he was told “And out. Keep doing that, slowly. Ok, yeah” Izaya shivered, he was still shaking and clutching his chest. “Hey. Look at me” Shizuo told him when Izaya’s eyes drifted. “Tell me five things you can see. Name me five things you can see around us”

“I....feel sick,....my chest....”

“Izaya. Control your breathing. Slow breaths. Five things...”

Izaya began to glance around, fingers clutching at Shizuo’s arm. “Wall..., g-garbage bin, window....” Izaya began to calm down as he focused on his task. His breathing began to return to normal.

“That’s good....you’re ok”

“Vending machine....” Shizuo rolled his eyes, trust Izaya to make a quip in the middle of a panic attack. Izaya looked at him, taking another shallow breath. “Shizu-chan...”

Shizuo nodded slowly. “Yeah. That’s five I guess” Izaya’s grip loosened from Shizuo’s arm. The blonde stood and brought Izaya with him. “Can you stand?”

“I’m fine...”

Shizuo stood back, but near encase Izaya decided to collapse again. He looked over and then walked away as he said “Hang on” Izaya watched him cautiously, he was about to bolt when he saw Shizuo approach the vending machine but relaxed when he then saw him retrieve two bottles of clear liquid
from the bottom. He walked back over to where Izaya now sat and handed him the water. He looked back and then clicked his tongue at him. “Tst. Give me a break”

“What?” Izaya unscrewed the lid and took large gulps, his throat and mouth were so dry.

“Idiot. I know what you thought. Think I was gonna hurl that at you? Really?”

Izaya shrugged “Perfect opportunity”

“Yeah whatever. If I wanted you dead I’d have let that fucking car hit you”

“Why didn’t you?” Izaya took another large gulp

Shizuo let out a frustrated sigh. “I don’t know”

Izaya laughed quietly “Great answer”

“Shut up” the two fell silent for a moment, until Shizuo couldn’t help himself “I didn’t know you had panic attacks”

“Heh. Neither did I. It’s never happened before. Not even when I got stabbed”

Shizuo screwed the lid back on his bottle “Never?”

Izaya narrowed his eyes in confusion “No” he wondered then, that maybe it hadn’t just been because of his near miss with a fatal collision that caused his attack. Maybe it was his outburst on the street, his own honest words that cracked his emotional barrier. Maybe it was the fact that Shizuo kissed him. All three were most likely the cause, for something like that to effect him of all people. He stood then, feeling slightly embarrassed now and he didn’t like this calmness that had formed between them. “This doesn’t change anything”

Shizuo wasn’t sure he’d heard him right, but he knew. “You can’t be fucking serious?”

Izaya grinned at him, though it was clearly forced “Just hate me Shizuo. It’s so much easier. You’ll see”

Shizuo growled as he watched Izaya walk out of the alley way and turn off into another street.

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Shizuo made his way back to Shinra's apartment, he had no idea why, all he really wanted was to just go home. “You don’t know me! You don’t know anything! Just fucking leave me alone! I don’t care! I don’t care about some god damn video, you and I are not suppose to be together! We’re not suppose to be happy! We don’t get to be happy!” Shizuo pondered on Izaya's words, that was the last thing he'd ever expect to hear from him, he wondered what that truly meant. The meaning behind
those words, he was pretty sure that what Izaya truly meant, was that neither of them deserved to be happy. He really expected to fight with him, chase him and beat the crap out of him, like Izaya said—just as it should be. That didn't happen though did it? True enough, Shizuo did chase him, but he'd also kissed him and then saved his fucking life. He didn't know he could feel anything like that toward him, in five seconds Shizuo subconsciously lived in a world without Izaya, for those five seconds Izaya was dead and Shizuo felt his heart clench, he couldn't do it. That's why he grabbed for him, that's why he had really saved his life tonight, not just because of his promise. What did that mean though? Would he have saved him even if neither had seen what they saw tonight? Had those feelings always been there? Buried deep down, locked away within him? Maybe it was true, it seemed as though they'd gotten together the same way before. His other self had said that he'd saved Izaya from bleeding to death, so maybe it was only a matter of time. Shizuo snorted, it was maddening, to think of them as destined lovers, but they'd been enemies for so long, how had things changed so much? Maybe they were just tired. Shizuo often felt that way, in the safety of his own thoughts, when he was away from people. Sometimes, he'd sit in his apartment, angry with himself, thinking that he was tired-tired of the chase, tired of being so uncontrollably angry every time he saw Izaya, tired of the hate, tired of being enemies. It didn't cross his mind that much, because he really did hate him, only when he'd had a relatively good day, did his thoughts shift—because they weren't clouded by anger. Shizuo sighed, nothing happened the way it should have tonight, maybe he was tired now...........

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Izaya brought the steaming mug to his lips, his hands were still shaking from the recent events. In the comforts of his home, Namie had already gone and he could sit and think without being questioned. There was no doubt in his mind that she knew what was to take place at Shinra's, he was certain she wasn't the only one, judging by everyone's actions, a whole bunch of them knew. Izaya hated not knowing, he thrived on his ability to obtain information. He didn't even know about the fucking drug. Which posed the question as to why, how did that important piece of information escape him? “I was kept from the internet a long time, and there wasn't any discussions on the chat logs” in fact, since the stabbing, the chats had been very silent. It was obvious why no one mentioned it to him, that would have been something he could work with, he could play a lot of people against each other with that kind of drug. “They're smarter then I thought” his mind drifted back to the events of the alley way. He'd almost fucking died, by a god damn car. *How ironic, given how I tricked Shizuo into getting hit by one the very same way, twice.* The very same person that saved him from just that, he would not have survived. Izaya knew that if Shizuo hadn't of pulled him back, he wouldn't have been able to survive the collision, not at such a close range and speed. Not only did Shizuo save his life, but to add insult to injury, Izaya ended up having a fucking panic attack, right in front of him. Izaya wasn't sure what was worse, the fact that Shizuo continued to help him or the fact that he was thankful he did. *Why couldn't he have just laughed in my face and walked away, why couldn't he have hurled that vending machine at me?*

Izaya's thoughts took a more dangerous turn when he remembered Shizuo's lips, lips crashing against his own, how warm and surprisingly gentle they were. Gentle wasn't a word Izaya ever associated with Shizuo. Izaya shook his head, he was not going to go there, he refused to explore that notion any further. “Focus” he told himself “If what happened to us was true. Did they recreate our attacks on purpose? But who the hell would know about them? If Gok is indeed in prison, who else would know?” it didn't make sense to him, he was really confused and he hated being confused. Now he
really wished he had stuck around to hear whatever everyone had to say. He could simply ask, but he didn't want them getting the wrong idea. He had no intention of “fixing” anything. He sighed as he got up from the couch, he couldn't dwell on this any more tonight, like he had done for the passed two days, he was physically and mentally exhausted.

He placed his mug in the sink and then headed into his en suite bathroom. He stared into the mirror as he cleaned his teeth, just like he'd done so many times before, a weird feeling came over him, something flashed through his mind, a message written there before? Putting his tooth brush back in its holdall, he touched the mirror with his fingertips. He laughed then, he put his strange thoughts down to tiredness, mind still fuzzy from his freak out in the alley way. Perhaps his mind was playing tricks on him, conjuring up fake possibilities due to the footage they'd watched. He shook his head and then climbed into the comforts of his bed covers, sighing when his tired body lay against the soft mattress. He could hear the occasional car pass by from below, even now, at such a late hour, something was happening somewhere in the city, people slept, but the city never did. Not everyone was asleep at the same time, so there was always an occurrence, Izaya would likely be one of the first to find out, but tonight he really didn't care. His eyes began to drift shut as he listened to the first signs of a heavy shower about to happen, the light patter of rain against his window and he let it lull him to sleep.

Izaya bucked as Shizuo entered him with a deep hard thrust, breath heavy as he panted in time with him. Fingers clawing at a broad back as Shizuo fucked him hard. Izaya's moans filled the room, legs wrapping around Shizuo's waist, the blonde wrapped his hand around Izaya's cock and stroked him fast, matching the increasing speed of his thrusts. “Yes! More! Fuck me hard! Make me come!”

“Impatient flea” Shizuo breathed out, he then switched angles and lifted one of Izaya's legs over his shoulder and leaned forward as he pounded into him relentlessly.

“Yes! Oh god yes! Fuck, fuck Shizu-chan, I'm coming!” Shizuo thrust harder when Izaya cried out as he came, Shizuo bit deep into his shoulder when he released himself inside, his movements slowing but continuous “Ah...ah” Izaya fist the sheets, riding out his orgasm. Shizuo pulled out and Izaya groaned at the loss of heat that previously filled him. Izaya covered his eyes, breathing heavily as Shizuo sat over the bed, trying to control his own heavy pants.

Izaya shot up in the bed, startled awake by his vivid dream, followed by the sudden lightening and the loud clap of thunder. Izaya ran a hand through his sweat soaked hair, grimacing as he shifted uncomfortably in the sheets. That wasn't a dream, that was a nightmare, he rarely dreamed, and even when he did neither one contained someone by the name Shizuo Heiwajima. He threw back the covers, realizing with a painful ache that he was hard. “Fuck” he was not going to indulge himself, he was not going to sate his need, no way. He realized by the way himself and Shizuo were acting in his dream, that the two were current-as they were now, and not how they were in the video. Which meant Izaya's mind was thinking about him, as he was now, without no help from the drug's so called antidote. He turned his head to muffle his scream of frustration into the pillow as his hands
gripped the bars of the headboard, ignoring the pain in his broken fingers as they protested that movement. He simply lay there, eyes clenched shut as he tried his damnedest not to give in, the need to fulfil his bodies desire.

It was no use, Izaya pumped himself with fast strokes as the hot water of the shower rinsed away the shame he felt. He pounded the shower wall as he came, dropping to his knees with cries of anguish rather then pleasure. “Damn it....”

He lay on top of the covers once he'd showered, fresh bed clothes, staring at the ceiling, willing himself to go back to sleep. He didn't want to, afraid of what else he might find hidden within his subconscious mind. The rain beat heavily against his window, and every now and then his room would light up from the flashes of a storm. The wind howled in between, there wouldn't be a way of getting back to sleep now anyway, though he couldn't remember hearing about a storm. It wasn't like he hated them, nor had he ever been scared of them, as a kid he'd sit and watch with excitement until it passed. It was too noisy, too distracting to get any sleep, he found it hard to sleep at the best of times, if interrupted he could never continue to slumber like most people could. He should sleep-despite not wanting to- he was still so tired, his body still exhausted, now more then it was before he got to sleep the first time. Izaya frowned at the ceiling, things had gotten out of hand very quickly, unravelled his way of life in less then a three days, and who was to blame for all of it? “Shizuo” it was his fault, it had to be, he had kissed him, he had saved his life, so he was to blame for his messed up thoughts, he was the reason why Izaya couldn't fucking sleep. “To hell with this. This ends now, tonight, he can't plague me if he's dead” Izaya didn't care what time it was, nor did he care about the storm, rational thoughts be gone, he was done thinking.

By the time he reached Shizuo's apartment, he was shivering and absolutely soaked through. The rain hadn't let up and he was more angry at himself for being so stupid then at Shizuo. That seemed to annoy him too, that he had come all the way here, to Ikebukuro, because he was angry and wanted nothing more then to end Shizuo's existence, only now wanting nothing more then to be back in the warmth of his bed. Well, he was here now, he'd be damned if he suffered through the storm for nothing. He spat as the drops of rain from his hood fell against his lips, it did him no good wrapping his jacket more around him, he was completely drenched from head to toe. He quietly entered the building, he couldn't remember exactly what number Shizuo lived at, he was sure it was the second floor at least. He trudged across the corridor, leaving a trail of water in his wake, his body was going numb, the sudden shock of heat hitting his freezing body caused sharp tingling sensations.

It must have been pure luck when Shizuo opened the very door he’d pounded his fist on. Hair dishevelled and facial features suggested that he’d been sleeping-obviously. Izaya didn’t care, Shizuo wasn’t allowed to sleep thought free if he couldn’t.
“What the fuck? Do you know what time it is?” Shizuo, now more awake, realised who was actually standing at his door. “Izaya....”

“Y-you damn m-monster. It’s your f-fault. I can’t sleep, I can’t get my mind t-to s-shut up”

Shizuo simply stood there, trying to blink away the sleep in his eyes. “What are you talking about?”

Izaya grinned weakly, though his teeth were chattering and his body was shivering. “W-why. Why did you save me? Why couldn’t you just do me a f-fucking favour. D-damn you S-Shizuo....I hate you... s-so much”

Hearing the storm battering harshly behind him from his living room window, he took in Izaya’s appearance. “Damn it Izaya, the hell were you thinking?  You look like a drowned rat, are you trying to catch pneumonia? Get the fuck in here”

Izaya narrowed his eyes, anger burst through him, remembering his reason for coming here as he lunged at Shizuo who toppled backwards. Izaya fell against him, his knife out against Shizuo’s throat as they lay just inside the doorway. “Why did you do it!? I can’t get it out of my head!”

“Keep your voice down” Shizuo hissed “Do you want an audience?”

“I don’t care! We’re enemies! We’re suppose to be enemies, so why....why did you....”

Was Izaya seriously questioning this so much? He didn’t think it would bother him all that much that he’d saved him, it was a natural response, wasn’t it? Though he could hardly answer him now, soon enough, Izaya was going to realise why he wasn’t fighting him on this.

“Why did you kiss me....?” Izaya wasn’t yelling but he wasn’t loosening his hold either.

Ah, so it was the kiss that he was more angered by, that was what bothered him the most.

Izaya’s eyes darkened, he leaned down, despite feeling numb from the cold, despite his constant shivering and how his clothes stuck uncomfortably to his skin, he tightened his grip on the handle of his knife, pressing the blade harder into Shizuo’s skin. “I’ll kill you. so I can finally be free of you. I
hate you more now then ever”

“I’m sorry”

What? Did he just apologize? “Don’t apologise to me! What’s wrong with you? You should be trying to fight me, you should have lunged for me as soon as you opened the door! Why aren’t you trying to kill me!?"

“I can’t. I won’t. If you need to kill me, if that’s what it takes to make you happy. I won’t fight you, I won’t stop you. Izaya. You are not that person any more. Don't ever think for a moment that I don't trust you. I don't want you to ever believe that I have doubts. You're different now and that's ok, you can be an ass hole and that's ok, not everyone is going to trust you and that's ok too. The important thing to remember, is that I do, so don't get anything into your head, nothing anyone says will make you lose me. Ever”

Izaya’s eyes widened, his hand shaking as he tried to keep the firm grip on his knife. “What....? W-what does that even mean?” Izaya hissed and pushed the blade hard against him. “Answer me!”

Shizuo simply smiled. “There was something important, in the back of my mind, something I couldn’t comprehend, that spoke of promise. It was there, just far out of reach. Now I know, now I remember, I remember everything, so easily”

Izaya dropped his knife and it clattered to the floor. “You....what have you done? Did you-“

“I’m sorry. I- I just, wanted it to stop. I wanted to remember. I couldn’t deal with conflicted emotions. It was easier when I just hated you, but ever since Shinra’s apartment, I began to get confused, I was angry and I knew I wanted to hate you, but I also hated the thought of watching you die. Believe me, I tried to get it out of my head. For you as well as me. It was because of my conflicted desires that I chose this. I don’t regret it”

Izaya clenched his fist and punched the floor. “You don’t get to decide that! Why should you get to make that decision! You can’t just- take away the hate and then accept death by my hand with a fucking smile! Like you know what’s best”

“I know. It wasn’t a decision taken lightly. After I did, it killed me knowing that you were out there and I couldn’t hold you. That’s why I can accept it, death by your hand, because it’s better to die with you here then live without you”
Izaya saw the smile form on Shizuo’s lips, but he also saw the tears that began to form in his eyes. He bared his teeth at him, he didn’t know this man, what the hell was wrong with him? How could a drug-or rather, an antidote, change a person this much? Shizuo was a monster, he always will be, so why was he acting more like a human, making Izaya feel like the monster. “You can’t. You’re not suppose to say things like that to an enemy”

“You’re not the enemy. Izaya”

“Yes I am! Stop it!” Izaya fist Shizuo’s shirt “Hate me damn it!” Tears clouded his eyes as he released him and sat back, still straddling his hips. “Please. Please just-hate me”

Shizuo didn’t know how to respond, he was prepared to receive anger, prepared for the pain of Izaya’s blade, prepared to die, knowing the truth, knowing he loved him. He was not prepared for this, this other Izaya, different to the one he loved, different to his arch enemy. He felt like he was watching glass shatter in slow motion, every piece breaking bit by bit. He failed to realize the implications of his decision, Izaya couldn’t handle the strong hatred change into such affection all in one go, it was a big strain on his heart, he knew Izaya better then anyone, he should have waited, kept it from him. Remained falsely cruel to be kind. “I’m sorry. I should have-“

Izaya grabbed his shirt and kissed him fiercely. “Don’t talk. Don’t be gentle, don’t be kind. I don’t want to think about this. So just fuck me, ok?”

Shizuo frowned, this was so dangerous. “Izaya-“

“I don’t want you to love me. I don’t want anything from you except this. Burning, pleasurable hate. You can pretend if you want” Izaya tightened his grip, he wanted to recreate his dream, to tell himself that what they’d done was all it was, just a physical attraction, sexual frustration of their hate for one another. “Fuck me Shizuo. Fuck me like you hate me. Can you do that?”

Shizuo chewed his lip, this was a really bad idea. But he could tell Izaya was serious, what the hell was going through his head? Did he think that was how their relationship started? Shizuo almost laughed, it was so far from the truth that it was almost funny. He couldn’t possibly try to explain what really happened, not with how Izaya was acting now. Despite thinking and knowing this was wrong, Shizuo couldn’t help but feel a rush of excitement. He hated himself for that, he almost changed his mind, fear of hurting the one he loved crept over him. Shizuo growled lightly, Izaya obviously had a different prospective on their relationship at the moment, he should have known it wasn’t going to be easy, even if he himself was back normal. If this was what Izaya wanted, just to take away the frustration, then Shizuo would do what he asked. He couldn’t think about it too much, otherwise Izaya would bolt at the first sign of emotion.
“Fuck me” he heard Izaya repeat the words. Taking a deep breath, Shizuo growled and grabbed Izaya’s arms and flipped them, pinning the informant to the ground as he kicked the door shut. He pushed against him as he crashed their lips together. Izaya groaned and tilted his head up, Shizuo nipped and sucked at his neck, he reached his shoulder and bit down a little harder. Izaya breathed out and then kicked off his shoes. Shizuo pushed off and undid Izaya’s belt and with a little difficulty-due to the damp fabric-removed his pants and briefs. Shizuo removed his own a little faster and Izaya wrapped his legs around his waist. Shizuo stood with him, grunting as they stumbled for balance, so Izaya placed his feet on the ground and pushed him backwards. Shizuo’s back hit the wall, Izaya grinned and pressed his knee against the blonde’s groin. With the thought that Izaya was going to full on knee him, Shizuo grabbed him and turned them, he shoved Izaya up against the wall, pinning his wrists and pressing his body to him so he couldn’t move.

“What now?”

Izaya pressed his lips to Shizuo’s, slipping his tongue inside, moaning. Shizuo moved slightly against him in an effort to create some friction, it wasn’t a waste, Izaya gasped and then bit Shizuo’s bottom lip. The two pulled away and Shizuo licked his lower lip, tasting the metallic liquid. He let out an animalistic growl and then pulled Izaya with him and they stumbled toward the bedroom, Shizuo pushed him against the other wall, kissing his jaw and then sucking on his throat. Izaya groaned and shoved his hand against Shizuo’s cock. Shizuo froze for a moment, panting and clenching his fist against the wall. He moved them into the bedroom and shoved Izaya forward, the informant hit the mattress with a dark grin as he followed Shizuo’s example and took off their shirts. Shizuo took another breath and grabbed the lube from the draw before he could begin to come to his senses. He squirted some on his hand and lowered himself over Izaya, he felt legs wrap around him, heels digging into his back. Shizuo moved his lubed hand and then shoved two digits deep into Izaya’s entrance.

“Ah!” Izaya felt dizzy for a moment, he almost forgot what it felt like. He dug his heels in more as Shizuo gave him no time to respond when he added a third. “Fuck....” well, he asked for it. Izaya grinned, eyes rolling back then as Shizuo curled his fingers slightly, Damn he was good. Shizuo slipped his fingers in and out rather quickly, he pulled them back and then pushed a forth inside and felt Izaya tense as he gripped his shoulders. He couldn’t let Izaya see his concern, he couldn’t let on that he was worried about hurting him. He refrained from asking if he was ok out of habit, instead, he leaned down, taking his cock in his mouth as his fingers continued to move inside him. Shizuo’s own need throbbed painfully at Izaya’s loud moans. “Shit. Ah. Goooood”

Shizuo sucked him hard and licked around the head slowly, bringing him close almost three times before slowly taking it away. He removed his fingers and then pulled Izaya with him and they landed against the bedroom wall. Izaya chuckled menacingly at him, licking his lips. “I’ll make you scream. Izaya” Shizuo barely recognized himself speak, it wasn’t like him, it wasn’t ever like this. But he’d do it, just for the sake of Izaya’s sanity- if that’s what it took.
“You think so?”

“Done a pretty good job so far” Shizuo didn’t think any more on the situation and he pushed his already leaking cock up inside Izaya.

“Ngh! Ah! Shizu-“ Shizuo didn’t wait for him to adjust, he thrust up against him with repetitive movements. Izaya moaned loudly as he was filled completely, he rested his head against the wall, Shizuo pushed deeper into him and Izaya’s mind frazzled. “Oh god! Ah! Ah! Shit!”

“Say it, Izaya, say my name”

“Fuck! Fuck you!” Shizuo thrust harder and pounded into him faster, he lifted Izaya’s leg up slightly, hand flat beside him. “Ngh! Yes! Yes! Oh goooood”

“Izaya....I’m gonna make you scream my name....as you come”

“Big talk....” Shizuo shoved him hard against the wall “Ah!” Shizuo’s cock pulsed inside him as he grew harder. “Try me...”

Shizuo pulled out suddenly, Izaya yelped breathlessly as he was spun around, his feet touching the floor. Shizuo soon pushed back into him, Izaya’s nails grated against the wall as he hissed. Shizuo thrust hard and fast, pushing deeper with each move. He grabbed Izaya’s wrists, pulling his arms behind him, he had no desire to bruise him, whether it was fake or not, at least this way, he could lesson the damage. He pounded into him faster now, with a better angle he could move as he pleased. Izaya cried out in pleasure each time Shizuo moved inside him, taking him over and over again.

“Ah! Ah! Ah! Fuck!”

“My name. Say my name”

“You wish”

Shizuo let go of Izaya’s wrists and wrapped one arm around him and pushed him forward so that he
was bent over. He pounded him hard and used his other hand to stroke just as much. Shizuo pushed
his thumb against his head, causing Izaya to scream out. “Say it” Shizuo moved slightly and pulled
back enough so that he could thrust into him again. Izaya clenched his fists, he couldn’t take much
more, he needed to come and if that meant backing down, he didn’t care.

“Shizuo....fuck....”

Shizuo hit his spot hard “Scream it!”

“Ah!! Shit...”

Again and again, hard and fast “Scream for me!”

“Shizuo!! Ahh! Fuck me! Ah! Make me come!” Shizuo cried out as he fucked him hard and pushed
into that same spot, stroking Izaya’s cock and then releasing himself in a blur of ecstasy. He felt
Izaya tense and then scream out “Shizuo!” As he too released his seed into his hand, thrusting against
it to make it last. Shizuo breathed heavily and then pulled out, ruefully allowing Izaya to drop to the
floor. Izaya panted heavily, still with a hand against the wall. “Fuck....”

Damn it Izaya, what you do to me Shizuo watched him from the corner of his eye as he cleaned
himself off, Izaya looked ready to pass out as he leaned against the wall, legs propped. Shizuo waited
until Izaya fell asleep and then cleaned him off with a wipe and scooped him in his arms. “See what I
do for you?” Shizuo snorted quietly and placed Izaya gently into the covers. “I love you, you crazy
bastard”

........................................

Three days had passed and everything had returned to normal, well, as normal as it could be. Celty
and Shinra felt Shizuo’s pain, honestly, they didn’t think he was actually going to take the antidote,
knowing how he’d feel, knowing Izaya wasn’t going to feel the same. He never gave them a reason
as to why he had changed his mind, he didn’t tell them what had happened after he left their
apartment, but two days after that night he showed up at their door in an angered mess and
practically demanded it. The anger Shizuo felt faded, replaced by guilt they’d he’d spent the last few
months attacking Izaya every time he saw him. The memory in which he tried to recall while still
drugged came flooding back to him, as had everything else. He stayed away though, he didn’t think
it fair that he force Izaya to take the antidote just because he himself was normal now. He came to the
conclusion that Izaya didn't want to see him, for obvious reasons, he hadn't spotted him at all in
Ikebukuro, so he was intentionally avoiding him. Shizuo needed time to collect his thoughts together, to process what he'd done in the last months from the time he was attacked. He sent a message out to all his friends that he had returned to normal and now everything that he'd been told made sense. The night they had gotten attacked, Izaya was meeting with someone—but he'd told him a lie and said it was an old acquaintance, he didn't tell him that it had been Satoshi Shizuo probably would have worried if he did, Satoshi had said he had some information of his own that he needed to confirm. All this thinking made his head hurt and he missed Izaya's presence, any time he was confused, Izaya wouldn't berate him, he'd just explain it. So when Izaya had shown up at his doorstep in the middle of the night, his heart fluttered with hope, though it became obvious very quickly that he hadn't taken the antidote. Izaya had been mad at him, for reasons that were unclear, but he suspected the man was confused about what had happened, it gave him some reassurance. Izaya had obviously been thinking about him, since that kiss, he knew Izaya would try to kill him and Shizuo would accept that, because he loved him. What Shizuo hadn't expected was what followed after that, he tried not to think about it much, it had been neither of their style before, even when they first got together. Yet Izaya sought out some kind of explanation as to why the two ended up together at all. His conclusion was way off, but Shizuo didn't turn him away, he knew Izaya needed it, he even told him to pretend, as if deep down he knew that it wasn't the case at all. Shizuo acted as if they were role playing, it was hard to act like he hated someone, but he managed, and Izaya seemed not to notice. Of course, Shizuo knew that Izaya would bolt as soon as he woke up, he had been gone by the time Shizuo awoke. He imagined that if he were Izaya, he wouldn't have wanted to stick around for the aftermath either. The worst part, he knew that if Izaya did take the antidote—if he ever did—the informant would have a very hard time forgiving himself.

Namie looked over at Izaya, he had barely said anything in three days, she knew he must be dealing with some pretty confusing thoughts. Far be it from her to help him, not when he was this way at least. She thought it pretty strange though, that in the two days after the events—in which she was told—that happened at Shinra's he was normal. Normal in the sense that he was still as ass hole, it was obvious that he hadn't accepted the cure, in fact, he was acting worse then ever. Namie thought it was a bit much, like his behaviour was over dramatic, even for him. Yet in the three days that followed after, he was calmer, she knew he was immersed in his work. She didn't even know what he was doing, normally he'd be bragging about it, laughing at what chaos he was most likely to cause. Nothing like that was happening now, she was beginning to worry, like maybe he'd finally lost it. “As your secretary, don't you think you ought to let me in on what you're working on?” it was a lame excuse for a conversation, but she couldn't think of anything to jab him with, since he had been so quiet.

“No”

That was it? Just no? She gritted her teeth at him “Whatever it is you're doing. I hope you get your ass handed to you” he didn't answer her and she narrowed her eyes at him, how dare he deliberately ignore her. “I'm talking to you, Izaya” it was then she noticed he had stopped typing, eyes frozen on the screen for a moment. “What's with you?” Izaya narrowed his eyes and then quickly slammed the lid down on his laptop, grabbed his cell, slipped his shoes on by the door and made his exit. He didn't even wear his furline jacket. Namie stared after him, wondering what could possibly cause the need for him to leave like that.
“What the hell Izaya” she mumbled and walked behind his desk, she lifted the lid and sighed in relief when the laptop hadn't shut down yet, still clinging to the work he was doing. She recognized the name on top of the page instantly. “Nebula?” she skinned down what appeared to be a list, until her eyes fixed on another heading further across the page. “Pharmaceuticals?” what the hell was he planning to do with those? They were big company's, he had messed with them once on twice, back in the day, but he was hardly interested in them for long. “What are you up to Izaya....” she then remembered what Shinra and Celty had found out from Shingen, that Izaya was helping him find the person that stole his drug, that leaked it to the public, that he was suppose to have met up with Satoshi the night he'd been attacked. She knew about the cure too, that Izaya had no intention of taking it because he refused to believe any of it. She also knew, that Shizuo had, he had been the one to accept it, she didn't expect that of him. She sighed in frustration, if Izaya hadn't taken the cure, then why was he doing this? She tried to think of any possible reason he'd have to help Shingen, what he would gain from it. “Unless....” she stared back at the door “Izaya....., what did you do? Did you take the cure?” her eyes skimmed over the list and then they landed on a very familiar name, in green lettering, with the words match found flashing beside it. “Shit”

..............................................

Izaya looked at his phone, the caller ID showing as Namie, he swiped ignore “No doubt she's figured it out by now, she wouldn't have been able to resist snooping around my laptop. But it doesn't matter anyway, only one person can help me now” he made his way up the steps to a row of small apartments. He knocked on the door, shoving his hands in his dark grey jacket. The door opened and Izaya tensed, he took a deep breath and smiled a little. “I know I'm the last person you want to see. But I need your help”
So much had happened in a couple of months, regaining his memory was more painful then anything he'd endured before. He felt guilt crush him like a boulder, it wasn't like he meant to do those things-say those things, he wasn't even sure why he had decided to take the cure in the end. He remembered feeling conflicted with himself, a battle raging within him, like two sides of himself fighting to stay in control; one side subconsciously and one side at the forefront. Only when he had spent the night at Shizuo's, when he showed up at his door, finding that he'd already accepted the cure. He knew Shizuo had pretended to hate him that night, even though their encounter was anything but gentle, he knew, Izaya wanted to believe that their relationship was merely physical.

He remembered waking up in the middle of the night-or rather-early that morning, sitting up in the bed with more then a few bruises, he simply stared over at Shizuo, sleeping heavily. Remembered thinking that it was the first time he’d ever looked at him as anything more then a monster. That thought alone had scared him, he couldn’t stay, he had to get the hell out, lest he have a breakdown. He remembered the battle, between his mind and his shielded heart-one that he had thought was impenetrable, one that he protected with great precision. He remembered questioning everything, every move, every word, every part of his life up until now. Shizuo had always been unpredictable, it had been one of the sole reasons Izaya hated him so much. Yet, in less then five days, his world fell apart, his mind hazy and his heart unravelled, he couldn’t take the sudden change, he had never been so desperate to take away anything in his life. He imagined it was exactly how Shizuo had felt, in fact, the blonde had somewhat admitted that to him, didn’t he?

When he showed up at Shingen’s door, breathless, desperate, sleepless he just wanted it all to stop. “Give me something. Anything. Just make it go away” he had said, practically begged him. So he hadn’t out right asked for the cure, not really, he just wanted something. Maybe, maybe he was asking for an end, a way out, at the time, maybe he was asking for a quick exit. He had never been the cowardly type, at least, not in that way, but he couldn’t find a way on his own this time, he had all but given up trying. Izaya couldn’t handle it, his heart couldn’t handle it, his mind certainly couldn’t. Maybe Shingen knew what he wanted, and it wasn’t to take his own life, not really, it was as if Shingen knew that if he took the cure, it would ease the mental pain he had become trapped in. Needless to say, the doc had been right, everything became clearer, became less confusing, less intolerable, he gained all of his memories from his time with Shizuo, all the effort he had made to change for the better-mostly. However, the memories he had after being forced to take the drug, remained. They didn’t disappear, so even though he was back to normal, back to who he had worked so hard to become; the battle within himself was replaced by guilt. Guilt was something he’d
gotten accustomed to feeling over his time with Shizuo.

He remembered the very first time felt that emotion, it was sudden and painfully unexpected. It was after his encounter with the guy from the club, hiding out in Shizuo’s apartment. It was a cold evening, he had partially blamed Shizuo for leaving him alone at the time of his ‘attack’ “Right. Because nothing is ever your fault, is it?” Shizuo had said to him and Izaya felt as though he wanted to hide away forever. What he’d said to Masaomi in the hospital, the day Saki had gotten hurt, had never been more true, though he never expected that to bite him in the ass. After that, he continued to experience that same emotion, every single time, every time the past reared it’s ugly head, something he’d done always emerged and the guilt would surface. He couldn’t escape it, at least, not all the time. He made a deal with himself, that he’d spend the rest of his life trying to make amends, trying to make up for those he’d wronged by helping others that experienced what he had created against people in the past. He couldn’t always remember those whose lives he’d messed up, he wasn’t one to openly reach out and stutter out apologies, but if he got the chance to help them at some point, he’d do so without hesitation.

He couldn’t see Shizuo, not yet, especially not after how their last meeting went. Izaya was deeply embarrassed by his actions, not because he was disgusted-as he imagined Shizuo might have thought he would be if taken the cure- no, it was the fact that he enjoyed it, the pain mixed with pleasure was a secret fixation for him. It wasn’t all that uncommon, not really, but Shizuo wasn’t like normal people, he spent every waking moment trying to control his strength, he wanted to be gentle, he wanted to experience normalcy every chance he got. Shizuo prided himself on his ability to be a gentle lover-though he could be ravenous- Izaya didn’t have it in him to change that, he wouldn’t do that to him. He’d known Shizuo as a lover for what seemed like a long time now, even now, he would not change him, because he loved that about him. It was another reason why he felt guilty, he’d forced Shizuo into doing those things, even though he hadn’t meant to, he knew it wasn’t his fault, but still, he hated himself for it, because he knew he liked it, whether he was drugged or not.

Once he had finally rested, when his regained memories had settled and he was able to take a breath and think without wanting to rip his hair out. He decided to pick up where he left off, he hadn’t been that far from figuring out Shingen’s spy, his meeting with Satoshi had been interrupted or otherwise-sabotaged. He had figured that out soon after receiving the cure, but he couldn’t risk anyone knowing that he was normal, he needed time to finish his work. So calling Satoshi wasn’t an option for him, he wouldn’t be able to help him in the way he needed any way. He was suppose to tell him everything there was to know on Tainted, he would have too, had they not been stopped. He had mentioned the fact that he felt like he was being followed, trailed. He hadn’t told anyone but him, Izaya trusted him with that, because he knew Satoshi wasn’t your ordinary run of the mill cop. He wasn’t corrupt or anything like that, he was just the type that dealt with each case differently depending on the person seeking his help. Him and Izaya seemed to have developed an understanding, they weren’t quite sure when it happened, but at some point, information for information became a weekly thing for them. Even when he thought Satoshi was just late, Izaya had a feeling their not meeting was deliberate, something at the back of his mind was telling him otherwise. He’d been stupid, unusually careless, it was something he’d have to live with, it was done, nothing he could do about it now.
Regardless, Izaya knew from experience, that something as substantial as this, needed to be dealt with a certain way—not quite on the level, it was the case of—beat them at their own game—fight fire with fire—that kind of thing. Izaya wasn’t a hundred percent clear on what happened between the yellow scarves and the dollars that night Masaomi left with Saki. He knew Kadota was part of it, he and his group gathered members still loyal to the dollars in order to gain control. But he couldn’t be sure on details, even though he had initially started the war that led to the feud of those within that fight, he wasn’t exactly sure how it ended, since it wasn’t the result he planned, not entirely. That’s why he was here now, he could have asked Mikado or even Kadota, they’d know. But he needed someone that wouldn’t be so willing to help him—that sounded stupid right? But it was true, he needed a neutral ally, someone that had a different view on the situation back then. Someone that wasn’t intentionally involved, yet someone more involved then she realised.

Instant red eyes glared back at him through round lenses, he knew he wasn’t welcome here, that much was clear by the expression on her face. He glanced down, the tip of her katana began to show through the bottom half of her arm. “I’m not here to hurt you, or cause you trouble. I actually need your help”

“Get away from here”

“Sonohara, I wouldn’t be here if I thought I could handle it”

“What makes you think I would ever want to help you with anything?”

“Understandable. I mean, why would you trust me after what I’ve done to you and your friends. Masaomi especially. I know you’re protective of Mikado too, you have my word that this has nothing to do with them”

Anri’s eyes narrowed and her katana fully sheathed from her arm and she held it at arms length toward him. “Leave. Now” Izaya spread his arms out wide beside him, a small acceptant smile on his face.

“I’m completely harmless. I’m not carrying a weapon, nor have I any intention to fight with you. There’s a lot of things that have happened that you have no knowledge about. I’m different Anri. I guess you could say I’ve changed—somewhat”

“I don’t believe a single word of what you say. I know you’re just manipulating me into thinking what you want me to believe”

Izaya stepped forward, the sharp point of the blade poking him in the chest, not quite enough yet to cause any damage. “I don’t blame you, for not trusting me, but I’ve never intentionally sought you out, never come to you for help—at least—not like this”
Anri showed no intention of backing down, no sign of retreat “You don't deserve anyone's help. You cause the mess you get into, get yourself out”

“I deserved that. But thing is, this wasn't my doing, I'm honestly trying to help more then just myself. I come here selflessly. Just let me in, I'm willing to explain everything, the whole truth and nothing but”

Anri frowned, she wasn't budging, but the way he spoke, the way he was acting, in the time she'd known him, this was the most honest she'd ever seen him. She didn't know what to think, he confused and angered her, like he always had done. Something about him tonight though, it was different, he wasn't even wearing his trademark jacket, something that always made him recognisable. “You expect me to believe you've changed? Just like that?”

Izaya chuckled “Not really. I didn't exactly change my way of life over night. It, it took time, like I said, a lot has happened”

“And Shizuo? What about him? I saw the news”

Izaya tilted his head. Oh. “It's complicated. Please. Let me in and I’ll tell you everything. Are you a friend of his?”

“Why does that matter?”

“It doesn’t. I was just asking. Because if he trusts you, I should too, I suppose, you know he doesn’t befriend people so easily, if you’re lucky enough to pass the first introduction, then he’ll be a loyal friend for life”

Anri wasn’t sure why he was talking this way, he was being way too honest, way too open with her, it was unnerving and she couldn’t comprehend it. There was one thing she knew for certain though…. “Shizuo detests you. A lot”

Izaya gave her a sideways smile “When was the last time you actually spoke to him?”

“I haven’t really had much of a chance to speak with him in quite a while. What does that have to do with you?”
Izaya laughed lightly, trying to keep any cynicism from his tone, he didn’t want to give her any reason not to trust him, because he really wanted her trust, he couldn’t make his plan work without her. “You know me enough that I wouldn’t be here if I had any ulterior motive, if I did, I would have most likely sent another in my place. I’m not that cryptic any more I made a promise to someone, I plan to keep it, if you will hear me out, I’ll tell you why”

Anri studied him one last time before retreating her sword, her eyes fading back to their usual colour. She took a breath, feeling slightly worn out.

“I hadn’t meant to cause you discomfort”

Anri stared at him for a moment before replying “I’m fine. It only happens when I restrain from lashing out”

Izaya grinned a little “Well. I should thank you then”

Anri stood straight, finally stepping aside to allow him to enter her apartment. She shut the door and then led him into her small living space after Izaya slipped off his shoes by the door. It looked a little funny if she was honest, she hadn’t really had much adult company before, except Celty. She stood in the archway and watched Izaya as he sat on the edge of her bed, it seemed as though he didn’t quite know what to do with himself. She almost laughed, like he was trying to find the politest way to make himself comfortable, who knew he was etiquette. “Sorry. I don’t have anything to really sit on, like a couch”

Izaya chuckled “Don’t worry about it”

“Make yourself at home. Don’t feel obligated to act so formal. It’s not like we’re not well acquainted by now, even if I don’t much trust you- or much like you”

“I’m not entirely sure how to take that comment’ Izaya teased, but Anri noticed his good-natured tone. “I’ll just take it as a compliment”

“If you want” Izaya smiled and relaxed a little when the tension seemed to shift slightly. He scooted back, leaning against the back wall by the window, one long leg outstretched while the other was propped as he rested his hand across it. If Anri noticed his bandaged fingers, she didn’t say anything. “Um. I don’t have much in the way of hosting. I could make some tea though....?”
“Thanks” Anri nodded and left the room. Izaya let go of the breath he was holding, it wasn’t as if he was scared, but Anri could be one of two people; she could be your best friend or your worst enemy, at least, that’s how Izaya saw her. Huh, just like Shizu-chan For once, he hoped for the former, he didn’t expect full forgiveness or anything that drastic, but he hoped that by the end of this, he’d have her trust. Anri came back into the room a few minutes later and handed him a white cup. “Ah. Thanks. Been a few days since I’ve had a hot beverage”

“Oh. It’s- its no trouble”

Izaya cradled the mug in his hands, savouring the warmth as he held it balanced on his outstretched leg. “I can’t tell you everything. Some things I prefer not to mention, it’s- they’re private. I hope you can understand that”

Anri simply nodded, she understood that better than anyone. “I want an explanation as to why you’re suddenly different, why you’re here. But I’m not going to make you say anything you feel uncomfortable talking about. Everyone has their right to privacy, even you”

“Appreciate that. I can see why Mikado and Masaomi regard you as such a good friend”

Anri shifted on her feet before sitting down on the small pillow spread over the floor. “I don’t- really feel I’m as good a friend as they see me”

“That doesn't matter. They both value you, a lot”

Anri bit her lip, was she really sitting here, in her own living room, talking to Izaya Orihara as if they were best friends? It was maddening, it was impossible. “Um. How’s the tea?”

Izaya took a few sips to illustrate his point. “Good” Izaya looked over at her, for once, seeing her as a normal human being, not as a parasitic demon. “I just tell it how I see it. Didn’t mean to embarrass you”

“No. It’s ok. I just, it surprised me. That’s all. Most people can sugar coat things around me sometimes. But, it’s like you agreed with me, but at the same time-“ she had to remember who she was talking to, he was up to something, she was sure of it. But she said she’d hear him out first.
“No need to explain yourself, not to me anyway” Izaya leaned forward and placed his empty mug on the coaster upon the night-stand before leaning back against the wall. “I should really start from the beginning” Izaya huffed a laugh “Good thing it’s not a school night”

Anri found herself smiling a little and then nodded “You have my full attention”

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By the time Izaya had explained everything, Anri was sat down, staring at whom seemed to be a stranger to her now. No way, no way was this a trick, it was real, she knew that, Saika knew that. It was overwhelming, she had no idea one explanation could hold so much emotion within. She opened her mouth to speak, but her voice failed her, this wasn't the same man, not at all. He really has changed she thought. On the outside, he was still the same cocky sly ass hole as he always had been, but on the inside.....He was thoughtful, passionate; he loved, he hurt and sought out those around him for a deeper understanding. He wasn't the kind of man to show everyone this side of himself, which could only mean that he had trusted her as much as he wanted her to trust him. Anri knew he would not have told her what he did for none other then that reason.

Izaya gripped the cover beneath him, just to hide his shaking hands, he hadn't opened up like this to anyone else apart from Shizuo, and maybe Shinra. “Sorry. I know it must be a lot to accept” he chuckled “Saying it out loud even sounds crazy, even after this long”

“I- I don't know what to say....”

“Do you believe me?”

Anri looked at him, and for a second, she expected to see a shit-eating grin spread across his face, but she didn't. There was a sad smile in place of that expectant grin and doubt in his abnormal crimson orbs. No one had ever been so honest before, who knew that one day she'd find herself on the receiving end of such honesty, who knew it would be Izaya Orihara showing her that. “Yes. I do”

She heard him sigh in relief, wondering just how hard it must have been for him to come here and tell her such personal things. “There's a reason why you, Mikado and Masaomi were kept out of all this. I- I couldn't risk it, just-not after what I did to you”

Anri nodded, he had just as much right not to trust her as she did, she probably would have done the
same. “I understand”

“I suppose you would do. I know revenge is probably not your way” Izaya gave her a sideways smile “Or maybe it is. Who knows”

Anri sighed “Sometimes. I sometimes think about it, I just could never go through with it”

Izaya huffed a laugh “You could have you know. I certainly wouldn't have thought any differently of you, though if I'm honest, back then I probably would have laughed and praised you” Anri frowned as she clenched her fists, Izaya scooted off the bed and knelt down beside her, he placed a hand over her fist. “But you didn't. Even after everything, that makes you a bigger person then I'll ever be”

Anri looked up at him in surprise “I-”

Izaya smiled “Sometimes. Revenge is the only way that we can protect those we love, as long as it's for the right reasons” Izaya removed his hand and sat back, curling his legs under himself.

“I'm....happy for you, it's strange, but I am” she smiled “I'm happy for you. You know, Mikado always believed there was something good in you, he's like that”

Izaya wasn't really surprised by that, Mikado was always too trusting, he was more surprised that the boy was right-this time. “Not always a good trait to have”

“I know. But this time, he was right wasn't he? I can see that”

“I'm sorry that it took me this long to show you. You must think that I only told you such things if only to get your help”

Anri smiled knowingly at him “Didn't you? Would you have told me all this if you didn't need my help?”

Smart ass he thought teasingly “Maybe you're right. I'm selfish like that” Izaya laughed, surprisingly though, Anri returned the laugh light-heartedly.
“I want to help”

Izaya's eyes widened for a moment before slanting with the creases of a smile. “Are you sure?”

Anri nodded “You said revenge sometimes might be the only way we can protect the ones we love. Which is why I believe that this isn't some kind of plot for selfish gains. I'd do anything to protect my friends, to protect Mikado, just like I can see that you'd do anything to protect Shizuo”

Izaya shifted uncomfortably, slighting hindered by her bluntness At least she hasn't hugged me yet he thought with amusement, since that had become a thing with him, for reasons he really couldn't fathom. “I should go over the plan with you. But not tonight, it's late. You should get some rest, I'll come by early in the morning, if that's all right”

Anri watched him stand up and then followed after him, Izaya seemed to stumble slightly and placed his palm flat against the nearest wall. Anri stepped forward, almost reaching for him, but refrained from doing so when Izaya held up his other hand. “Are you all right?”

Izaya chuckled “Don't worry. Just a little light headed, I probably stood up too fast”

Anri frowned, she almost forgot how old he actually was, he definitely looked a lot younger then 24? 25?, she actually wasn't quite sure of his age. “When was the last time you ate something?” Izaya let the stubborn girl lead him back onto the bed, it had always been a gripe from those around him, whether they meant it out of concern or not, just because he was skinny, didn't mean he starved himself. Though in this case, he had neglected to take care of himself, not on purpose mind you, he just had a lot to figure out. Finding out the spy and planning his next moves with Anri had become his top priority, obviously even more important then his basic daily needs.

“Ah. I don't know, I can't remember if I'm honest”

“I'm not a very good cook. But I have plenty of ramen?”

Izaya looked up at her, feeling like he really didn't deserve her kindness, he shook his head “I've imposed long enough, I'll come back tomorrow, ok?” he stood once again and this time, Anri caught him mid fall.

“You're not going back outside until you've had something to eat. Don't make me use Saika on you”
Izaya raised an eyebrow, he could tell she was serious, but he chuckled anyway “So, you're a-cruel-to-be-kind, kind of friend?”

Anri seemed to be taken a back by the reference, did Izaya want her friendship, as well as her trust? Who'd have thought..... “Ramen?” she asked, awkwardly ignoring his question for now.

Izaya smiled “Ok. If you insist, I wouldn't want to give you any reason to use that sword of yours” he teased her, she returned the smile and left the room again to make their food.

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Izaya lay back against the wall, he felt a whole lot better now that his body was fuelled, he looked down at Anri through half lidded eyes. Feeling exhaustion settling in, now that he was finally full, his body was recognising his other need he had failed to give, sleep. “I should go. Thank you for the food, I didn't realise I was that hungry”

“I know what that's like. Sometimes I forget to take care of myself too, it's easy to do that when you live alone, when you've got no one to remind you”

Izaya nodded, feeling his heart clench, aching to be with him. Shizu-chan he wanted now more then ever to make things right, to hold him close and tell him how much he meant, to be able to tell him that everything was ok now. Izaya knew this wasn't his fault, it was obvious to even a complete stranger. Tainted. This was their fault, they tore him and Shizuo apart, along with that idiot accomplice of theirs, they would pay, dearly.

“You look exhausted” he heard her say, interrupting his thoughts

“I'll be fine. I'll come by around 7”

Anri looked over at the clock, it was almost one in the morning, she shook her head “Just stay here. You're practically dead on your feet”

“You sound like Shizu-chan” Izaya laughed
“And if he were here, he'd probably kick your ass for neglecting to take care of yourself”

Izaya raised both eyebrows, she was nothing like how he used to imagine her to be, he leaned back on his palms. “So this is what being friends with Anri Sonohara is like? You're not shy, you're mean” Anri laughed, trying to ignore the 'friend' reference Izaya kept gesturing between them. “Honesty is a good quality to have in a friend”

“I never considered myself as someone's friend. Not really. I'm really nothing more then a-

“You're not a parasite Anri” Izaya interrupted her “You do know that friends lean on each other for support right? That it's a natural response to rely on the other?”

“But-

“It's true. Not that I can talk, I'm the last person that can sit here and give you a lecture about accepting help from others. But I know that it doesn't make you a parasite”

Anri clenched her fists, it was the complete opposite to what he had said to her when they previously crossed paths, she wondered whether he realised that, yet neither of them were willing to dive into that particular occurrence. She sat down beside him, propping her legs up to her chest. “Sorry”

Izaya tilted her head, she reminded him of a girl he had tricked into a suicide pack, one of many that is. Broken, somewhat fragile and in the process of giving up on life. Of course, Izaya knew Anri wasn't the type, she'd never take her own life like that, it was just her thoughts-that reminded him of them. “Don't apologise. You shouldn't apologise for being you. I certainly don't regret being who I am” Anri looked at him and Izaya continued before she got the wrong idea “I just regret what I did. It's not a big difference between the two, but a small difference can mean a lot more if you search harder for it”

“A life lived for others is a life worth living.....”

Izaya smiled “Yeah. Something like that. It just-it took me a hell of a long time to realise that”

“Einstein is smart like that” they were quiet for a moment, an apology was on the tip of his tongue,
but he wasn't ready for that last step, he'd apologise when this was over, because Anri wasn't the only one he owed that to. “You really should just spend the night. Ok?”

Izaya was grateful, that she wasn't prying for an apology, so he didn't dwell on it. “Maybe you're right. It does make more sense, doesn't it?”

Anri laughed as she nodded and stood up to walk toward the closet that was on the opposite side of the room “I've got a spare futon at least. You can take the bed though, it's easier if I sleep on the floor”

Izaya tilted his “Is that a quip on my age? I'm not that old you know”

Anri tensed and turned to him, shifting awkwardly with the futon in her hands “Um. No?”

Izaya chuckled “Relax. I'm kidding. But I really don't mind sleeping on the floor, it's your home”

Anri shook her head and then lay the futon flat on the floor. “You're the guest”

“If you insist” Izaya was too tired to argue about formalities, he took off his jacket and hung it over the head board. Anri left the room to change out of her clothes, she came back to the living room/bedroom in a fresh pair of pyjamas.

“I um- don't really have anything for you to sleep in. but there's a pack of new tooth brushes under the sink and a towel on the rack, if you want to freshen up”

Izaya nodded “Thanks”

The light had been switched off and both Izaya and Anri were laying in comfortable silence upon their respective beds. “Izaya?” Izaya opened his eyes, grunting in reply, he hadn't realised he'd dropped off. “Being the good guy- suits you”
A small smile tugged on his lips “Goodnight. Anri”

“Night”

“Anri?”

“Yeah?”

“You won't get hurt. I'll promise you that”

“You don't have to worry about me”

“I do. I'll make sure you're safe”

“Izaya...”

Izaya laughed “Besides. If I let you get hurt, I'll have to answer to Mikado or Masaomi, or both, that's never a good thing”

Anri nodded, even though neither could see within the darkness of the room, she then laughed “That's true”

“Goodnight”

“Goodnight...Izaya”
Eiji glared angrily at the mass crowd of people before him. Things weren't happening at all like he planned, Izaya was back to his old self and they still hadn't gotten anywhere. Doubt was quickly beginning to spread within his Tainted group, but he knew they were afraid, that thought alone made him grin. “Our day will come” he said, but he felt like he'd been repeating that since this whole thing started, it was becoming meaningless, like he was starting to not believe it himself.

“You know. We've been hearing that a lot lately. You said Izaya was helping us, he's back to his old self, Shizuo hates his guts, so what's the damn hold up!?” someone from in front of the group said- Fujima? Faruri?- Eiji couldn't remember his name, he couldn't remember over half of these people's names.

“Shut up! You're not in charge here!”

“Neither are you” someone said from within the crowd, Eiji stared around, who the hell had said that? He could have sworn he recognised that voice. “You've never been in charge, not really”

“W-what? Whose saying!? Show yourself!”

“I told you before, you're just a rookie, a pawn on the chess board”

No way....it's- it can't be

“You didn't take my warning seriously. I predicted as much” Eiji heard a chuckle “You really are in way over your head” he watched a tall figure approach him, dressed in plain dark trousers, black shoes and a dark grey-blue hoodie. “I think it's time I finally introduced myself” Eiji's eyes widen as the long fingers of the mystery voice pulled back the hood, Eiji shook as he stared in disbelief. “Nice to meet you, I'm Nakura”

Izaya narrowed his eyes and then quickly slammed the lid down on his laptop, grabbed his cell, slipped his shoes on by the door and made his exit. As he made his way from the building he flipped open his cell phone and skimmed the contacts until he found who he was looking for. It rang a few times and Izaya wondered whether he'd even answer.

“Izaya” a sudden familiar voice came over the phone “I was wondering when you'd call. I knew it...”
was only a matter of time”

Izaya clenched the phone “Really?”

“I take it you're back to normal, that the effects of the drug are no longer within your system I mean”

Izaya’s eyes narrowed and he took a sharp turn down the street, he stopped and leant against the wall. “So it was you”

“Maybe. I didn't think you'd take it so personally”

Izaya gritted his teeth “You fucking drugged me”

Izaya heard him chuckle “I didn't give you the drug Izaya”

“But you were there, weren't you? That night”

Another chuckle “Yes. But I wasn't within site. You have no idea how long I'd waited to watch you suffer”

Izaya rolled his eyes “Seriously, could you be any more cliché Nakura?”

“You did this to me! It's your fault I'm this way, you've spent fourteen years making me suffer, pay for everything you started. Tarnishing my name”

“You deserved it. You still do”

“I didn't deserve this! I never-”

“You stabbed my best friend. I wasn't going to let you get away with it. I promised him that I would spend the rest of my days making you pay for it” Izaya heard him stutter, breathe shakily down the
phone and smirked. “I'm not saying of course, that I didn't deserve what you did, but I've done far worse to others, your revenge is pointless, it doesn't compare”

“You....bastard”

“Though I have to say, I didn't think you were smart enough to pull off something of this magnitude. I feel sorry for poor unsuspecting Shingen, of course, he doesn't know what really happened, does he?”

“I hate you. You manipulative fucking freak”

“Are you still that sore over what happened? I didn't force you to make bets, it wasn't my fault you lost all your money-or rather-your dad's money” Izaya laughed then “I was eleven. We were kids. But you had to go just that one step further. You made your own life hell, when you stabbed Shinra”

“I didn’t mean to! It was suppose to be you!”

“It doesn't matter now. How did you end up working for the pharmaceuticals and nebula? As I recall, you weren't that bright”

“Not everyone in the companies needs to be. But I only got the job at the pharmaceuticals after I was employed by Shingen. I evidently told them about the drug that he was working on, they offered him a lot for it, but he refused”

“Let me guess. The pharmaceuticals told you to steal it for them, yet you had other plans in mind”

“Quick-witted as always Izaya. I didn’t intend for the drug to get into the public like this, I only wanted it to get to you”

“If only that was true. You may have had a vendetta with me, and personally I would have called it quits, as such. But you crossed the line when you involved those I care about, you tore him away from me, you hurt him and that I will not forgive”

Nakura laughed “You don’t care about anyone Izaya, quit trying to fool me”
“A lot of things change. You however, are still the same ignorant boy from middle school with a pathetic grudge. You have no idea what I’m truly capable of. You messed with my family, you will pay”

“Izaya! Wait! I did quit...I-after you were forced to take the drug, after I told the leader of the tainted what to do next- I backed out, I panicked, I abandoned it all.”

“You ran away”

“I was a coward. I knew, I knew that you and Shingen were working on figuring things out. He was working on the cure and you were trying to find the spy. I didn’t want to be anywhere near, because I knew eventually you’d take the cure”

“So only after the attack, after they left us both for dead-or otherwise, you figured it was a bad idea? You’re pathetic. I knew I was being followed by the way, you’re not that subtle, I just didn’t know it was you”

“How else would I have gotten the information on you? About your life with Shizuo, about your run in with Gok-“

Izaya laughed “conspiring with gangsters now? How low you’ve sank”

“Like you’re one to talk. I only found out the info through trailing you. It wasn’t all that hard. I learned everything I needed to know”

Izaya snorted “You broke into my apartment and what-bugged it?”

“Just your living room, and took the time to browse through your computers while I was at it, I was there the day you and Shizuo met with that business owner, at the verve café”

Izaya remembered the picture he received once he’d come back from Yamata. “You sent the picture”
“I wanted to mess with you. I couldn’t resist, since you had no clue what was going on”

“Did you tell him I was going to be there?” He thought the man was supposed to be in prison, of course he hadn’t known that at the time.

“I looked him up, he feigned innocence and blamed his wife on the whole thing, he got out with a caution and a ban from fostering any more kids. I got into contact with him when I found out that you were going to the exact same place that you had already been. That secretary of yours has pretty good diversion skills”

Izaya gritted his teeth and then grinned “And just what was that suppose to achieve? Did you hope for Mr Washiba to kill me?”

“Not really. Like I said, I wanted to mess with you”

Bastard, Izaya thought as he clenched the phone. “And Tainted?”

“They’re kids. But you could say that I planted ideas in their heads, just like what you did to the yellow scarves, you could say I wanted to mimic you, using your persona, the same way you used mine. You tricked them and played them, and as a result, a young school girl got hurt”

Izaya tensed, that was something he had to live with for the rest of his life, nothing he could do or say would ever make up for that. “Your point?”

“It’s kind of the same, except you were on the receiving end of it this time. Maybe people will be grateful. The funny part is, that I didn’t even meet them face to face”

“Until they find out you ran away like a coward. You can never measure up, to the likes of me, but just like me- I will never let you forget what you did either”

“I told you everything”

“Yes you did, and thank you for that”
“But-What are you going to do? Izaya?”

Izaya hung up, it was Nakura all along, he was to blame. He was following him, he stole the drug, he distributed it into the city, he told the Tainted group about where to find him and Shizuo, about how each of them were attacked before. “I guess I don’t have to worry about him any more anyway. One less obstacle in my path”

“No. It can’t be...you’re-“

“I told you, I’m not one to be messed with. You think you’re the only one that’s crawled up from nothing? You think you’re group of sheep makes you a somebody?”

Mayu looked over at her brother and then back at the taller man, trying to figure out what was happening, she could have sworn the man before them was Izaya. “Eiji? What’s going on?”

Eiji gritted his teeth “What the hell kind of person do you take me for? You expect me to believe that you- that all this time, you was Nakura?”

“I am Nakura”

Eiji shook, his legs wobbly and his fists clenching so tightly that he was sure he was creating crescent marks within his palms. “STOP MESSING WITH MY HEAD”

The taller man walked toward Eiji, stopping inches from him and grinned “But it's fun”

Jupei snorted and stood beside his brother. “Don’t let him get to you Eiji. He’s insane if he thinks we’re dumb enough to fall for that”

The man grinned “Oh. How interesting. They don’t know, do they?”

Jupei frowned “Know what?”
“Shut up. You don’t know anything” Eiji seethed

“I know everything, about who you are, why you came here and what you’re really trying to achieve. Does it really strike you as that surprising? Weren’t you suspicious at all?”

Eiji growled “If you were Nakura all this time, why would you intentionally go through all that?”

“I’m a good actor. That drug? Didn’t effect me”

Mayu turned sharply to her brother “But you met him! You met Izaya! You said-”

Hiroshi looked at him for an answer, this was getting creepy fast.

Eiji stiffened, thinking back on his past encounters. “I did- I-I mean...on the street, I met him....that was when I asked for his help”

Jupei then replied “Wasn’t that before you got into contact with that other guy?”

“How could you not know it was the same fricking guy!?” Mayu shouted

“Want me to tell them?” The raven haired male asked with a sly grin

“I-I never met him, I got into contact with him over the phone, he told me his name but, told me not to reveal it to anyone else. He gave me information, told me exactly what to do and before we knew it, we had a much larger group and a powerful drug in our midst” Eiji slowly explained, saying it out loud sounded even worse, how could he have been so stupid?

“This isn’t right, what the hell are we suppose to do now?” Mayu asked, she looked at her brother when he wasn’t replying “Eiji!?”,

Jupei lay a hand on his shoulder “Yo. It’s ok, we messed up, but we’ve got numbers on our side”
Hiroshi snorted “Hate to say it, but he played us. We’re really just kids who dealt a bad hand. We never was in control. I’m out, I’m sorry Eiji, but I think it’s time we bail”

“Me too” Mayu agreed “Let’s get out of here”

Jupei looked at their brother, his eyes were wide with what looked to be restrained rage building. “Eiji?”

“You, you cocky son of a bitch. How dare you” Eiji watched him grin and that only angered him further “You’ll pay, you’ll pay dearly. You can’t touch me now” Eiji glared into the crowd “WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!?! HE BETRAYED US! KILL HIM, KILL HIM NOW!”

“Eiji! We should go, let’s get out of here” Hiroshi said and pulled on his arm to get his attention

*Why aren’t they doing anything?* Eiji thought with a fearful gaze “DON’T JUST STAND THERE!” *What the hell is happening?*

The four siblings looked around at the group, it was only when they studied them carefully did they see sharp red glowing eyes staring back.

“So, you want to sabotage their gang, in the same way that the dollars infiltrated the yellow scarves” Anri asked as she handed Izaya a mug of tea and then sat on the floor across from him, cradling a cup of her own as they went over his plan. It was early, the sun had barely been in the sky two hours.

“Sort of. I’m honestly not quite sure what happened. I was obviously the one that caused everything to happen, but I don’t know the details as to how it was resolved. I would ask Dotachin, but I can’t let him know I’m back to normal yet. I would ask Masaomi but-well, you know how that would go”

Anri nodded “I can’t really tell you all that much. Celty and Kadota probably know a lot more than me. It was kind of a blur”

Izaya sipped his tea and then took one of the rice crackers from the plate in front of them “Just start from your side. I imagine you took control of them, or at least, most of them” Anri stiffened in surprise “I take that as a yes. I guess I’m just good at reading people like that”
“I did take control of those in the yellow scarves. It was all I could do to stop them from hurting Masaomi. Kadota gathered the members of the dollars and blended them in with the yellow scarves, they didn't know what hit them. I just wish I could have stopped them a lot sooner”

“I don't think it would have made a lot of difference. Masaomi is kind of the revengeful type, he wanted to make whoever hurt you pay. Of course, he didn't know that the Slasher was connected to you”

“He still doesn't. But that's ok, all three of us made a promise that when he comes back, we'll tell each other everything”

Izaya smiled “You know. I'm actually kind of jealous”

“Why?”

“That I didn't have that kind of childhood, you know, a friendship triangle like you three have”

Anri smiled “Maybe if you weren't so dis-trustworthy and kept playing around with other people's lives-”

Izaya huffed “Hey. I'm not completely to blame” he pouted a little and then chuckled “Though I think if anyone is truly jealous, it was Shinra. He only had two real friends in the whole time he was growing up at school. Imagine having those two friends meet, hoping for a chance to experience the bond like what you share with the boys, only to quickly discover that they were destined to hate each other”

“Are you talking about Shizuo?”

“He really wanted us to get along. He'd conjured up this trio fantasy, that threw harmless insults and got into trouble with each other”

“I see. So you and Shizuo-you really didn't like each other, ever?”
“Not back then. I spent most of the time setting him up during high school and his spent most of the time trying to kill me after it. So I suppose Shinra partly got his wish, we did get into trouble, just not exactly with each other”

“I can tell though, that you regret it now”

Izaya huffed a laugh in embarrassment “Whether I do or don't doesn't matter. Whether I could go back and change it, I don't think it would have made a difference. Shīzu-chan was a very hard person to get along with, his temper was something of a problem, even if I didn't do what I did, my personality would still have sent him into a rage. I think Shinra was just setting the bars too high”

“Only now you-”

Izaya laughed “I really don't know how he puts up with me. He often tells me how annoying I am, my attitude hasn't changed all that much, but for some reason, his temper has dissolved significantly over the time we've been together”

“He must really love you....”

Izaya shifted uncomfortably and then grinned “I think we've gotten off topic”

Anri stammered “S-sorry about that, I didn't mean to pry-”

“Don't worry about it” Izaya placed his empty mug on the night-stand. “The yellow scarves and the dollars feud were inevitably my doing, just like the blue squares”

Anri nodded “But you didn't have anything to do with Tainted, they conjured that up all on their own”

Izaya grimaced “Yes. Mostly, they sought out my help after I was drugged. But I don't think I got very far with them, at least, not that I can remember, Namie did a good job of keeping me away I think”

“I guess, I was just wondering how you was going to sabotage their group without knowing what
they're capable of. I mean, you knew the yellow scarves, and you knew the dollars”

“I did. But when the fights started, when it all went down, was I there?”

Anri shook her head “I don’t ever remember you being there”

“Right. I set up the whole thing, only to sit back and watch the fireworks” Anri clenched her fists then. “Shizu-chan may have been drugged at the time, but what he said was right, I am a coward, I was always a coward, even you and Mikado burst in blazing, ready to fight anyone. And you’re just highschoolers. I’m capable of a lot of things, but when it comes right down to it, I’d rather simply watch how it ends”

“You can’t compare yourself with everyone. Not everyone is the same. I’ve seen you fight, plenty of times-”

Izaya chuckled “I know how to defend myself. I’m quick on my feet and good with a knife, that’s all”

“If you were a coward, you wouldn’t be risking your life right now”

“Tst. If I weren’t a coward, I wouldn't be asking a high school sixteen year old for help”

Anri sighed, having this conversation with anyone was tiresome, having it with Izaya was practically impossible, he was as stubborn as they come. “You’re not a coward Izaya. You barged into that club on your own when you thought those men had your sisters. You risked your own happiness to protect everyone from the truth when you told Shizuo those lies, you stood in front of that gun, knowing that you might not survive, because you just wanted Shizuo safe”

Izaya sighed “Ok. That wasn't exactly my plan, I didn't have much time to think at the time”

“But you still did it. If-if anyone is a coward, it's me, I just don't know how to survive without others around me”

“Not necessarily a bad thing. If I’m honest, once me and Shizu-chan became a couple, I found myself subconsciously seeking his protection. Not all the time, but knowing he was there, made me
feel safe, something I didn't think I needed”

“Really?”

Izaya took a deep breath “I didn't mention this before, I won't go into detail, but someone from my past came to my apartment once, and the first thing I could think of was that I wished Shizu-chan was there, to help me, to protect me. Pretty pathetic right?”

Anri shook her head “No. not at all. D-did-did he?”

Izaya tilted his head “Not exactly. He phoned me, I tried to ask him, but subtlety isn't his strong suit”

“Oh”

Izaya laughed “It's fine. Really. But I discovered something about him then, that he's the type of person that will blame himself if he's unable to protect those he cares about. I think it's more of the case that he knows he can, he just got there a bit late”

Anri looked at him and smiled “Maybe we're both cowards”

Izaya returned her knowing smile “Maybe”

“I want to help you, I just think we'll be spotted before anything happens”

“They'll recognise me for sure, even without my usual jacket. But they've never seen you before, you said that no one suspicious came to you to ask about us”

“No. I was never approached”

“They really are rather amateurish, at least the four that started it all are, yet the larger group are merely humans that have nothing left to lose, though I think some might just want to kick my ass if given the chance” Izaya grinned
“So...you want me to-”

“I need to at least get my knife, it’s out of character for me to attempt this plan as it is, I’m really not willing to go full kami-kaze and not have a means to defend myself” Anri nodded “I’ll give you a few hours, will that be enough time?”

Anri was a smart girl, she didn’t need Izaya to tell her what he wanted her to do. “By the time you get there, none of the others will recognise you”

“I can blend in that way”

“Then what do you plan to do?”

Izaya grinned “Oh I know a lot more then he thinks I do. I know exactly how to get under his skin. I have feeling his siblings don’t know the full story, it’ll be all too easy to turn them against him” Anri blinked in surprise “Trust me, he deserves it. He’ll then soon realise that his precious gang isn’t even going to help him, thanks to you of course, and he’ll crack under the pressure”

“Do you think he’ll just run?”

Izaya shook his head “Probably not. He’s not that smart, but I know first hand what he’s capable of”

“R-right...”

“Don’t worry, I told you that you’d be safe”

Anri smiled “Thanks. But, I was actually more worried for you”

Izaya laughed “Well I appreciate that. Physically, I’m not capable of inflicting a lot of damage, unless I use my weapon, I know how to fight, but I’ve already broken my fingers once” Izaya lifted his hand up “Heh. Shizu-chan’s face is like a solid wall”
Anri laughed, “Maybe you just need more milk”

Izaya laughed too “Funny. That's what he said” Izaya turned serious again “Regardless. We both know I can cause damage with words”

Anri nodded, she knew full well that he meant that. “I understand”

“The only thing that concerns me, but I don't want to scare you, I know he has a gun. But I'm hoping that I'll be able to catch him off guard before he has a chance to use it”

“You think he would?”

“I'm willing to bet he already has. If he loses it, which he might do when he realises there's no way out for him, we should be able to make a quick escape. If his siblings do stick around, they'll be too busy fending off your little Saika's to worry about us”

“If he loses it, he might just leave them behind to come after us”

“It's a possibility. I'm sure he's fully capable of doing so, if it came down to him or them. But let's not jump the gun that far just yet”

Anri nodded, they both stood up and Izaya laid a hand on her shoulder “I should thank you Anri”

“Thank me when it's over”

“All right. In any case, I should at least thank you for trusting me. I know it couldn't have been easy”

“I was sceptical I figured it was just another one of your schemes to get me on your side for who knows what. But someone who was willing to admit to as much as you did, I knew that you were telling the truth. I could see it for myself that you had changed”

“I'm really not all that different”
“Whatever you might think. It's enough”

Izaya moved his hand away and smiled “Be careful. Though I probably don't need to worry. Just do what you did to the yellow scarves”

Anri nodded “I shouldn't have any trouble. How will I know when you're there?”

Izaya grinned “You'll know”

“You don't have any control left. They don't work for you, they never did, though I think you knew that, didn't you?”

Eiji clenched his fists “What have you done?”

Izaya chuckled “I didn't have to do anything. You fucked up all by yourself. I just wanted to see the look on your face when I made you realise that”

No! it wasn't suppose to happen like this! I don't get played, I don't! How did this—how did one guy manage to cause me so much trouble. He's a monster. He isn't human! How dare he do this to me. “I've come too far. Too damn far to be taken advantage of by the likes of you!”

“Eiji! Have you gone insane!” Hiroshi shouted. Izaya knew what Eiji was reaching for, he quickly darted forward and lunged at him, Eiji held the gun at arms length, he fired in panic and the bullet strayed off to the side and Mayu screamed as the bullet hit her leg. “Mayu!” Hiroshi and Jupei knelt beside her, she gritted her teeth and they tightly pressed their hands against her leg to try and stop the bleeding.

The gun slid from Eiji's hand the moment they hit the ground, Izaya grinned as he pinned the younger male to the floor, his knife dangerously close to his throat. “Whatever you did to me is nothing to what you did to Shizuo, I won't let you get away with it”

Eiji tried to push Izaya off, but the informant was too close, the knife was too close to his vital life
Hiroshi frowned, he wasn't going to leave Mayu's side, didn't Eiji know that the gun had wounded her? As Jupei was about to step forward to help, they noticed some of the group stepping toward them. “What the hell is going on!? We're a group! We're not a threat to you! He betrayed us, not us!” Jupei shouted at them but it was like they couldn't hear them.

Izaya grinned down at Eiji “These humans, are mine. You don't mess with them” Eiji glared at him, Izaya retreated his knife and jumped off

“As the group of people drew nearer to them, Izaya span around, eyes quickly searching for Anri. His eyes soon locked onto hers as she stood just at the forefront, he ran toward her and shook her shoulders slightly. “Anri” Anri blinked, her eyes returning to her normal colour, she latched onto his arm for a moment. “We need to leave, are you all right?” Anri nodded, Izaya grabbed her hand and turned to Eiji with a grin and a wave of his hand. “Have fun. Maybe if you had learned more about the people in the city rather then focusing on just me and Shizuo, you might not have been in this predicament”

Eiji gritted his teeth, he jumped to his feet, searching for the fallen gun. He grinned and then made a grab for it and turned back. “I'll fucking kill you!”

Izaya snorted and then made a run for it, dragging Anri with him.

“As Eiji! What the hell are you doing!? Are you just going to leave us here!?” Hiroshi shouted, the three other siblings glance up as they were eventually surrounded by the zombie looking people. “Shit. Fucking bastard”

“This fucking sucks” Jupei hissed

Izaya and Anri almost reach the front of the exit, a couple of shots ring out and they duck their head. Izaya stopped long enough to smash his elbow against a window, he then coaxed Anri forward, he helped her climb out of the window and then followed after her as another shot was fired. They ran across the grounds of the old building and turn sharply to the left as they jumped over the low wall. They then ducked behind a larger wall, Anri peered around the corner, trying to control her
breathing. She could see Eiji from her view point. “I don't think he saw us come this way” she whispered. She watched him for a few seconds longer, he didn't seem convinced though, that they'd escaped entirely. She then turned back to Izaya when she didn't get an instant reply. “Izaya?” she looked at him for a second and then glanced down to see him holding his side. Her eyes widened. “You're hurt!” she whispered loudly

“I'm all right...” he hissed “I was just grazed....that's all”

“You're bleeding....”

“I think it was back at the building....the bullet must have grazed me, but it hit that girl instead. I didn't realise at the time, I didn't even feel it” Izaya grinned a little “Heh. Maybe I was too lost in the moment”

Anri looked back around the wall, she noticed that Eiji had stopped walking and was looking at the floor. Crap she backed up against the wall when he looked up. “I think he knows we're over here”

“I probably...left a trail, sorry” Izaya moved away from the wall “We should move” the moment he turned to run, pain throbbed through him and he yelped as he fell back against the wall.

“Izaya....”

“You should get out of here, now”

Anri shook her head “I can't leave you here, you're hurt, you can barely walk. I can distract him away from you, it'll be a lot easier for me, if I can get close enough, I can cut him”

“You need to run, don't go putting yourself at risk, what about Mikado? He'll kill me if anything happens to you...”

“And what about Shizuo!?” Izaya blinked in surprise at her, he was about to say something but she interrupted him “I know what I'm doing. Don't worry” Izaya tried to grab for her but she was already running across the short distance toward the next building ahead of them.
"Anri!" Izaya whispered before he hissed and doubled over. "Fuck..."

Namie cursed under her breath for the second time, she didn't want to get anyone else involved but she had a bad feeling. She hadn't seen him since last night and as far as she could tell, he hadn't been back at the apartment. She checked her phone for messages and then decided that it was best to let the others know. She sat on the bed of her hotel room and sent a message out to the chat group they had all started when everything went wrong.

NY: Has anyone seen Izaya?

It didn't take long for someone to reply

MO: Huh? Not since the day we got him to Shinra's, why? What's wrong?

KO: everything ok?

SK: what's he done now?

NY: I don't know. He was acting weird and then he sort of left in a hurry last night, I haven't seen him since, and I checked his laptop, he found out who stole the drug

SK: he did? But- does that mean he's taken the cure?

NY: it's a good possibility. I tried calling him but he didn't answer

SK: who is it? Who stole the drug?

S: Sorry for the late reply everyone. What's going on? Who's responsible for all this? Is Izaya back to normal?

SK: who is it Namie!?
NY: all right, but you didn't hear it from me, it's Nakura.

SK: What!? Are you sure!?

NY: yes, his name matched up with a list of people from Nebula and Pharmaceuticals

SK: he didn't say anything about where he was going?

NY: No, he's not even wearing that damn jacket

S: Sounds like he doesn't want to be found

SK: more like he wants to blend in. He had to have taken the cure. But, Nakura? What the hell is he doing working for Nebula or the pharmaceuticals for that matter

S: do you know him?

SK: he's an old classmate of mine, back in middle school

MO: Hey! Sorry for ghosting. But I just checked the chat site and Kanra just entered


Shinra left his phone on the table and walked into the hallway and burst into the bathroom. Celty jumped and slid open the shower door, Shinra could tell she was glaring at him, like he hadn't seen her this way a hundred times. But this wasn't the time to be pervy. “Sorry Celty. But I need you to check the chat log that you, Izaya, Mairu and Kururi are on”

Celty quickly stepped out of the shower and coated her body in shadowed clothing before picking up her phone. [What's wrong?]
“No time to explain. Check the group messages”

Celty quickly scanned over their group chat and then gave a startled surprise. She then entered the chat room, sure enough, Kanra was there.

Kanra: everybody is here but no one’s answering, I'm boooored

Celty typed on her phone [Sounds like him]

Shinra tilted his head “Isn't Shizuo on there now?”

[Yes. But when he took the cure, he didn't want to risk Izaya knowing about it, so he kept away]

“That makes sense” Shinra left the bathroom and Celty followed him back into the living room

SK: I'm back. Celty sees it too

MO: Well duh.

KO: why would we lie?

CS: ask him if he's ok. Wait. I'll ask him. It'll sound less suspicious

Pm: Setton to Kanra

Setton: How are things with you? Are you ok?

Kanra: of course! Why wouldn't I be? It's not like you to care about my well being
Celty slumped [It's him all right]

CS: it's definitely him

MO: did he take the cure or didn't he?

NY: if he did, he didn't want anyone to know about it. He didn't tell me, but something was off

SK: are you sure he's not back at the apartment?

NY: I don't know about now, I'm at a hotel

S: Maybe we should give him a day. He's obviously fine for now

SK: I'll let you guys know if I hear from him

MO: likewise!

Everyone logged out of the group chat

Celty then sent a quick goodbye to the chat room and then turned to Shinra [I feel like I should go check on him]

Shinra smiled “I thought you might say that. Be careful” Celty picked up her helmet and nodded. As she was about to leave, her phone bleeped. Celty stiffened in surprise “What's wrong?”

[It's Anri. I think she's in trouble]

“Is she ok?”
Anri. Where are you? Are you hurt?

Anri crouched low behind the rooftop's building, she then typed on her phone quickly, covering the light as much as possible. I'm not hurt. But someone is after me. I'm on a roof:

Celty's hand jolted, as if surprised “What is it?”

[She's near that old building where the Yellow scarves feud took place]

“Really? That seems a bit strange”

[I'm on my way. Don't move, stay hidden]

:I'll try:

“You should go and help her. She's in danger. I'm sure Izaya is fine, but if you want, I can go. Not like we weren't friends anyway”

[Are you sure?]　

“Why not. Just a friend catching up with a friend. Ha ha, he'll probably kick me out anyway” Celty hugged him and then nodded and ran out of the apartment.

Mairu stood up from the bed of hers and Kururi's room and reached for her jacket “Come on”

Kururi looked up at her “Where are we going?”

“We're going to Izaya's”
“He won't want to see us”

“I don't care. He's our brother and I want to see if he's ok, we can beat him up at the same time for worrying us”

Kururi shrugged and then got up to get her own jacket “All right”

Shizuo blew smoke into the night air as he leaned over his balcony. He felt surprisingly calm. He honestly didn't know how that was possible. He didn't know how he had managed to stay away from Izaya, it was killing him not knowing if he was ok. His thoughts drifted to their last encounter as he took another drag of his cigarette. “Damn it. Izaya, what the hell were you thinking that night?” his phone then bleeped and he saw a text from Tom

:Hey. Have you heard from Izaya?:

“What the hell?” :No. why would I?:

:Well. Namie hadn't seen him since last night, but a few minutes ago, Izaya's sisters said that he was just on the chat room. Apparently he's fine:

:Why tell me? I mean, I'm glad he's ok, but he hates my guts right now: Shizuo ignored the images of that night with Izaya. He couldn't exactly tell him about that.

:I know. But, the thing is, Namie thinks he might have took the cure:

Shizuo's eyes widen :He what? How do you know all this?:

:Uh. Well when you and Izaya got drugged, everyone worked hard to make sure everything was how you remembered it:

:Yeah. You told me:
We made a group chat. All of us, Satoshi included:

*oh* :Hasn't he spoke to anyone?:

:Not really. But like I said, his sisters AND Celty spoke to him on that chat log. He seems fine:

:Ok. Thanks for letting me know:

:You're going over to see him aren't you?:

Shizuo sighed, he knew it was probably a bad idea, but after what he just found out, he wanted to see for himself. :I'll be careful:

Eiji opened the door to the roof top.

Anri looked up when she heard it squeak. *Celty should be here soon* She regretted the decision to climb to the roof top, but it was the easiest way to draw him away from where Izaya was. She peered around the wall and watched as Eiji slowly made his way across, searching. She wondered if maybe she could make a break for the door, she could see the gun still in his grip. *Would I make it?* She looked over, the door was at least seven feet away from where she was, she watched as he turned back her way. Her eyes widened as he started to approach the wall. Thinking he was sure to spot her if she stayed where she was, she made a dash for the door.

Eiji immediately turned and jumped at her, making a grab for her jacket. She yelped as she was pulled back roughly and thrown backwards. She fell hard against the ground. Eiji gritted his teeth and stalked toward her. “Where is he!?”

Anri scrambled back on her palms, trying to put some distance between them “I don't know”

“Liar!” Anri flinched when a gunshot echoed and sparked as it hit the ground. “I don't even know who you are, but you're obviously a friend of his. Where is he!?” Anri scrambled to her feet as Eiji continued to approach her, his eyes wide and crazed with uncontrollable rage.
Izaya was right, he really is capable of killing someone. Anri stepped back but stiffened when her heel grazed what felt like the edge. She looked down only to confirm her suspicions. She noticed that there appeared to be another small building below her, she couldn't see much, but given the reflection of moonlight that was bouncing off it, it looked like glass covering the large area. Anri distanced herself slightly from the edge, it wasn't likely she'd survive if she fell. Anri glared at him as he moved toward her, her eyes shifting to red. Eiji was too unstable to really notice, he held the gun toward her. Anri gritted her teeth, her katana slowly ebbing out from her arm.

“Where. Is. He?” Eiji gritted out

“Right here!” Eiji span around and was met with a crack to his face, he fell with a thud and the clank of a pipe followed after. The gun skidded across the ground once more. Izaya hissed as he picked it up and threw it off the roof. Anri let out a breath as she dropped to her knees. “Anri? Are you all right, are you hurt?” Anri realised he was talking to her and she stared up at him, he held his hand out to her.

She shook her head as she took his hand, he pulled her to her feet with a grunt of pain. “I'm all right. I'm not hurt at all”

“Why don't we clear the building of your little Saika's and get out of here?” Izaya gritted his teeth as he took a step forward and Anri took hold of his arm, bringing it over her shoulder to support him.

“You need medical attention. I think we should go to the hospital”

Izaya chuckled “I'm fine....we shouldn't leave them like that for long, you need to tell them to disband from the group before they snap out of it...” Anri knew he was right, when she had taken control of them, she had told them what to do according to their plan up to a certain point. Escaping the building had been secondary, they weren't entirely sure how Eiji would react. “You were right. He did leave his siblings behind....”

“I had a feeling that might happen. I told them not to hurt them, they just needed to hold them back”

“You think that worked?”

“I hope so....”
Celty screeched to a halt, stopping just between the two buildings. {Anri. Where are you? I'm here}

Anri got her phone out and saw the text and smiled “It's Celty”

“She's here?”

Anri nodded “I told her where I was, that I was in a bit of trouble. I didn't say anything about you” She smiled “You were suppose to leave”

“Disappointed?”

Anri shook her head “Happy. I wasn't a hundred percent sure if you really had changed. Now I know” :I'm safe. We're up on the second roof:

We Celty looked up to the building on her right, she could make out Anri but someone else with her. Is that Izaya? Celty, now confused, messaged her back :Anri. Is Izaya with you?:

“Um....”

“It's ok. It's all over now, you can tell her”

Anri nodded :Yes. He came to me for help. He told me everything, he wanted to stop Tainted before he told you. We're....we're friends now:

“We are?”

Anri smiled “You did just save my life”

“True. I just really wanted to get him back. He did break my shoulder blade” Izaya laughed lightly,
trying not to move too much.

“We should really get you to the hospital”

Izaya nodded “First things first....ok?”

Celty shook her helmet, how was that possible? *How is he here, when he was logged in as Kanra less then an hour ago?* She quickly found Shinra's number and rang him. She waited, and waited, no answer.

Shinra's phone sounded throughout an empty apartment as it vibrated against the coffee table.

Celty slumped, she wasn't going to start worrying just yet. They were both in a bit of a hurry. *The idiot probably left his phone*

Anri was about to take a step forward when she saw Eiji sit up. “Izaya....”

Izaya looked over at the gestured direction “Getting up after a pipe....to the face, I'm impressed” he mused, though he really was shocked.

“You.....bastard, I'm going to...fucking kill you” Eiji grinned manically “I'M GONNA KILL YOU!!” Eiji ran toward them, bloody face and no fear.

Anri's eyes widened *Celty*

Eiji laughed as he approached them, hands spread wide “YOU'RE DEAD!”
“Anri. Tell Shizu-chan I'm sorry” Anri looked up at him, but before she could question what he meant, she was pushed roughly to the side. Izaya clenched his eyes shut as Eiji lunged into him and they fell over the edge.

Anri watched in horror as the two fell toward the building below. “IZAYA!!”

Celty jolted her helmet up when a loud screech pierced the silence followed by what sounded like glass shattering. She froze, she could have sworn she saw- she got off the bike and ran.

Anri clutched her chest and dashed for the exit, she threw open the door and had to keep herself from toppling down the steps. She jumped the last few and stumbled forward, crying out as her knee cracked against the ground. She didn't care, her heart thudded in her chest and she got to her feet, she ran out of the building and made her way toward the one below. Please, please don't die, you can't die on me now As Anri turned the corner, she stopped when she spotted Eiji, he'd landed outside of the building, he wasn't getting back up this time. She turned away from the gory sight, and then dashed toward the entrance beside her. She froze in the doorway, Celty was already with him. “C-Celty?” Celty looked up when she heard her name being called, Anri limped into the room. “Is- Is he....” when she reached them she fell to her knees beside him, not caring about the shooting pain it caused her. “Tell me he's ok....” Anri's voice cracked as tears threatened to fall

[Anri-]

Izaya groaned, his whole body was caked with lacerations from the glass, to which Celty had removed before he woke up. She had also wrapped a thick layer of shadow around his abdomen. “I should.....stop saving...people. I'm...really bad at it”

Anri laughed through her tears, she couldn't believe it. “You're really alive....”

Izaya moved to lean on his elbows, only to be crushed by Anri as she wrapped her arms around him. “Ugh....” Izaya hissed and fell backwards. Again with the hugging “Yeah.....” Izaya's lips tugged into a smile as he lay a hand on her back. Anri pulled away with a smile.

[Idiot!] Izaya blinked at the brightness shoved in his face [Why didn't you tell anyone!]

“I didn't want anyone involved. You'd been through enough trouble”
[You should have at least told Shizuo!]

“If I had. If he got the knowledge of those involved here, there's no telling what he'd have done. I
don't think I would have been able to stop him. Not even you. You know that”

[I do. And you're right. You really are bad at it]

Izaya chuckled through ragged breaths, he then looked at Anri “Now I need a hospital” Anri
nodded, laughing at the same time. Izaya moved up onto his elbows once more, testing the rest of his
movements. Anri tucked her hands under his arm, ready to help him stand.

[Izaya don't-]

Izaya let out a pained cry when he placed wait on his right leg “Fuck!” he fell back, gritting his teeth
as he clenched his eyes shut, trying not to black out.

Anri looked up at Celty's phone and grimaced when she read her next message from the part she had
been about to show Izaya. “Celty said your leg is broken”

Izaya took a deep breath “Great.....thanks for the warning....” together they helped Izaya to stand,
placing most of his weight on his left leg. They moved slowly out of the building, Izaya trying his
best to walk with only the slightest pressure of his right foot on the ground.

The door handle to Izaya's apartment opened, it was dark, no sign of anyone being there. It didn't
make sense, he'd entered the chat log, it seemed unlikely he'd be anywhere else but here. “Izaya? Are
you home?”

The people on the city street below suddenly screamed as a loud explosion sounded above them.
Glass shattered from the window of the top floor and a mass of flames flared outwards. Some stared
up in horror, realising that the building was an apartment complex. Some ran off screaming. Others
shouted for help or demanded to call for help. Another explosion, smaller in mass, rocked the
building as more flames drifted from the hole above where the glass windows had been. It was
likely, that if anyone was home, they wouldn't have survived. But being the top apartment, it didn't look good for anyone else living there either. If it was possible, the sky became more black as a thick layer of smoke covered the stars, a glow of orange in its wake.

A hooded figure stood across the street, grinning as he watched the building burn. He took a photo with his phone and pulled back his hood. Feeling rather satisfied with himself, Nakura laughed loudly, nobody heard it since it was drowned out by the noise of chaos around him. “Game. Set. Match” he said as he sent the photo through an email.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry for the cliff hanger once again!

I really do love those, he he
Broken

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dark clouds of thick smoke continued to cover the night sky as several fire-fighters desperately attempted to extinguish the harsh flames of the building. The first three floors were successfully evacuated and were being treated among standby ambulances for mild burns and smoke inhalation. The explosion had sent the people of Shinjuku into a mass of panic, the news of the fire quickly spread throughout the city as reporters hurried to the scene. Civilians within a three mile radius were evacuated as a safety precaution due to the thickness of the smoke. It was becoming difficult to maintain that safety however due to the reports on the news- as friends and families were beginning to crowd the area, searching for their loved ones, hoping to find them safe. The police had begun to arrive and caution tape spread out to a fifteen foot distance from the building to avoid further harm. Shinra stood shaken on his feet, clutching the yellow and black tape, the flames reflecting in his glasses. There was no real way to tell if Izaya was in that building, it wasn't clear to any of them, yet Celty had wanted to make sure he was ok. Shinra wasn't even five blocks away from reaching the apartment complex when he heard the rumble of an explosion from a distance. He stared up at the very place that was Izaya's, the very top floor, he could hardly see a thing between all the angry flames. There was no doubt in his mind, that the explosion had to have originated from that very apartment, because even though the fire crew were doing a surprisingly good job of keeping the flames partially contained, the windows on the first floor-being those of Izaya's-were the only ones that appeared to be shattered. At least, as far as Shinra could tell, it seemed that way to him anyway.

He bit his lip, if Celty were here.....it would be fairly easy for her to extinguish the building's deadly flames. He dare not attempt to go in, he wasn't cut out for the heroic type, further more, Celty would kill him. Shinra clenched his fist, but, this was his best friend- if there was even the slightest chance that he'd be able to save him...... If it were Celty in there, trapped in a blazing death trap, there would be no hesitation crossing his mind. This was different though, this was a friend-his best friend-but still. He loved Celty, he was forever in love with her, love outweighed all sense of reason. It was hard to distinguish the love of a partner to the love you feel for friends, he did love Izaya-not in the same way-but the friendship kind, he'd discovered that a long time ago. Neither one would openly admit to something that sounded completely ridiculous, friendship love was commonly expressed more between girl-friends. Yet, he's risked his life before, when he stood in front of him to stop the knife attack from Nakura- what was the difference now? Nakura Shinra always wondered if one day, there'd come a time when their estranged classmate might rise to get revenge on what he knew Izaya put him through. Izaya was the first real friend he had, besides Shizuo of course, and he loved him like a really annoying eccentric brother.

Just as Shinra was about to throw all caution to the wind, he heard the yelling of voices which sounded very familiar. Despite all the loud chaos surrounding them, their voices overlapped everything else.

“Let me go! You don't understand!”
Shinra blinked in mild surprise at first and then his feet were moving of their own accord. *Mairu*

“Let us pass”

*Kururi*

“It's not safe Miss! No one is going anywhere near that building”

Mairu and Kururi struggled in the grip of a police officer, doing their damnest to break free. “That's my brother's building! He could be trapped in there, let us go!”

Mairu kicked upwards and clocked the police officer in the head and made a run for it, Kururi right behind her. “Mairu! Kururi!”

The twins froze and turned to where they heard their names being called. “Shinra?”

Shinra ran toward them, stopping as he reached them and pulled on their arms “Don't be reckless, you know its too dangerous”

“But- Izaya, he could be trapped…”

“I know. Believe me, I want to fight the flames to save him too. But you know the situation wasn't clear, we don't know if he was even here. What would he do if he finds out his little sisters burnt asunder trying to rescue him completely pointlessly?”

“And what if he is inside?” Kururi asked, keeping it together a lot more then her sister was doing.

Shinra smiled sadly at them “The fire-fighters know what they're doing, they're trained for this, they'll get anyone out if there's a chance of anyone alive”

Shinra pulled them backwards slowly “But....Shinra, he's all we have....”

Pulling them back behind the tape, Shinra wrapped each of his arms around them as the twins
struggled to wait for any signs of survivors appearing. Another set of sirens approached the area and stopped abruptly to the side of an ambulance. Satoshi got out of the car and stared wide eyed at the flame engulfed building. “Christ....” he breathed out, he wasn't expecting this, even when he received a notification on his news feed, he didn't think anything to be so.....gut retching. “Shit. Izaya.....” Satoshi gritted his teeth and turned to see what he could do to help with the panic. *You better not have been in there, I swear to god.*

“Look! It's Satoshi!” Mairu shouted

Shinra and Kururi look to where she had pointed, Shinra lifted his hand up “Satoshi! Over here!”

Satoshi stopped and turned to see three familiar faces, he sighed in relief, at least the twins and Shinra were safe. He ran toward them, stopping long enough to show his ID badge before he was allowed to pass through to the other side. “What on earth are you doing here?”

“We was on our to see if Izaya was ok....when we got here, the building was already up in flames” Mairu explained

“I was about five blocks away when I heard the explosion” Shinra added

“Hey. Us too, except from that way” Mairu jerked her thumb behind her

“I didn't want to believe it when I spotted the news cast. Do we know if-” Satoshi cut himself off, panicking wasn't going to help.

Shinra shook his head “Its really not clear. But I can tell you, I'm pretty sure this wasn't a building accident”

“Yeah? I sort of had a feeling you were going to say that. You guys did say that Izaya logging on to the chat was suspicious. Since Namie hadn't seen him since yesterday evening”

“But- does that mean that someone hacked his alias? Making it look like he was fine?” Mairu asked

Satoshi looked at Shinra and the doctor nodded “Think it was this Nakura guy?”
“Maybe. Seems plausible Somebody was out to get someone”

“Do you think he stole the name, knowing one of us was likely to check on him?” Kururi asked

“Well they clearly know a lot more then we do” Mairu frowned “It had to be someone who knows us all pretty well”

Satoshi sighed “Izaya did say he was being followed recently. Is Nakura capable of all this Shinra?”

Shinra thought for a moment, he could barely think straight with all the noise “Maybe. I don't know, I haven't really seen him in a long time. But if anyone is likely to pull off his personality, it'll probably be him, since he's known Izaya as long as I have. But I don't think even Izaya had any idea it would be Nakura”

“Right. I'm just going to go by that assumption, for now at least, it's been our best lead anyway” the four flinch and crouch as some of the other windows shatter. “Dammit. This fire could burn for hours”

“They're beginning to get control of it though. It was worse when I'd arrived”

At some point, the bottom half of the building was stable enough to enter, fire-fighters prepared to fight the rest of the flames from within and the search for survivors began.

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It seemed as though hours had passed by, the flames destroying the complex had finally been defeated. Only a few during the last ditch effort to put out the fire had been rescued and pulled from the building, they were obviously injured, but Shinra suspected they'd live. Personally he didn’t care, he just wanted to know if they'd found him..... there was a sick feeling in his gut though, had he been at the forefront of the explosion, within the actual apartment, there most likely wouldn't be a body to find. Shinra prayed he was away from the apartment, that he'd left just in time to avoid the worst of it, that the explosion was timed and not triggered. “Shinra...” Mairu gasped and clenched his arm when the fire-fighters began to carry out those they’d found after the fire was out. No doubt the bodies of those that were less likely to have survived. The ambulance crew took their cue and checked them one by one as they were lowered to the ground. Shinra saw a few shake their head, there was a sudden scream as a woman darted under the tape and collapsed beside one of the bodies.
It was amazing to him, hardly any of the bodies being brought out looked recognisable, yet someone had, if the cries of distraught were anything to go by.

It was horrible to think about, but Shinra only wished they didn't find his body. He couldn't bare the thought of Mairu and Kururi seeing him.....the way that woman saw.

“Is that all we could find?” Shinra vaguely heard one of them say

“I think so-” another replied sadly

“Wait” the first one who had spoke interrupted as he looked into the building. “There's someone else. They're bringing them out now....”

“....Is it-” Satoshi couldn't finish his sentence, all four of them tensed. Mairu and Kururi held onto one another tightly.

“Was he found on the top floor?” The second whispered

A paramedic ran toward them as they lowered the person on the floor. “He's alive!”

“What? That's incredible....and, and there's not as much damage as there should be....I mean...”

The paramedic frowned as he checked the man's pulse “His pulse is extremely weak. There might not be a lot of outside damage, but I can't tell the full extent. He's likely inhaled a lot of smoke and there's swelling on the right side of his head. We're going to have to get him to the hospital fast”

Shinra placed his hand on Mairu's shoulder “Wait here...”

Kururi held onto Mairu as she clutched her chest. “Izaya....please....”

Shinra walked toward the paramedic as another one darted passed him. Together they lifted the unconscious man onto a stretcher and carefully lifted him from either end. “Wait....I need to see” Shinra called to them.
“We don’t have time! We’re talking him to Shinjuku hospital if that helps” The paramedics skinned passed him, but it gave Shinra enough time to see a blur of blonde hair amongst the ash and blood. He also managed to catch a glimpse of the torn and charred bartender suit.

“Shizuo....” Shinra stared after them in shock, he had a feeling it wasn't Izaya, but he hadn't expected..... He snapped out of his shock and ran, stopping only to shout to the girls “Call Celty! I'm going in the ambulance”

“What? Shinra! Is it Izaya!?”

“It's Shizuo!” Shinra ran passed them and made it just in time to get in the van

“Shizuo? But....then, where is-” Kururi caught her sister before she could collapse to the ground. “Where is he....”

Satoshi breathed out a sigh and placed his hand on the small of Kururi's back. “Come on girls. I'll drive you to the hospital, ok? You can call Celty on the way”

“Don't you have to stay here?” Kururi asked

“They'll manage. Family comes first, ok?”

Kururi smiled and coaxed her sister to move as they followed Satoshi into the car.

Izaya sat on the wall with his leg carefully propped on slightly raised terrain rock. A thick layer of
Celty's shadow wrapped around it to keep it in a makeshift splint. Izaya wondered if she had most likely paid attention to Shinra's work during the time they were together. He grimaced as he leant back on his palms, feeling the short grass that was layered behind him. His body fucking hurt he was physically and mentally exhausted, all he wanted to do was find Shizuo, embrace him tightly for all he was worth and sleep for two days. He looked up as those from the group stumbled out of the building, unaware they had been tricked. Following after them was Anri and Celty. He smiled tiredly at them. “Everything ok?” he asked.

Anri nodded with a smile “Yes. They're all going home, or wherever they first came from, I was worried there for a moment. I thought I might have been too late to finish my instructions”

“You did fine, what about the other three?”

[I called an ambulance. I did my best to stop the bleeding on the girl's leg. They're going to turn themselves in. They didn't take the news of their brother all that well, but I think they'll be ok]

Izaya shifted and hobbled forward with a few stumbled moves. He placed a hand on Anri's shoulder. “Thank you Anri. I really mean that, I couldn't have done it without you”

Anri chuckled, fresh tears appearing at her eyelids “It was nothing. I'm glad I could help” Anri wrapped her arms around him for a moment before looking up at him. “I'm also glad, you're ok. Thank you for saving me”

Izaya smiled “Just don't tell Shizu-chan”

Anri laughed and Izaya joined her amusement, Celty's shoulders jolted, indicating she was laughing too. Izaya's laugh was cut off when a jolt of pain reminded him of his body's condition, he fell forward, but Celty and Anri were there to catch him. “We need to go to the hospital”

“I'll be all right.....Shizu-chan awaits” Izaya tried to chuckle but he wheezed and then coughed.

“Izaya. You fell through a glass roof! You're seriously hurt. We're going to the hospital right now”

Izaya blinked and pouted over at Celty “She's mean” he could only assume that she'd rolled her 'eyes' by the way she had tilted her helmet back slightly and then shook it in his direction. “All right. But I'm not the one that's going to tell him that I'm there”
The two help Izaya walk toward Celty's awaiting bike. “Izaya?”

Izaya gritted his teeth before replying, he really needed medical attention. “What is it?”

Anri smiled “I've never had a gay best friend before”

Izaya smiled and laughed lightly, the jolt of laughter causing his body to tense. “Oi. Don't make me laugh right now”

“Oh. Sorry about that”

“You better tell Shinra you're safe. He'll only whine and I'll end up getting the blame” Izaya told Celty, nudging her shoulder with his hand.

Shinra Celty stiffened and Izaya had to hold himself up more when she moved away from him to talk. [I almost forgot! Before I left, Kanra appeared in the chat room]

Izaya's mouth opened in surprise “It wasn't me. I've been here, when was that?”

[Just over an hour ago. Your sisters noticed it. We thought it suspicious because Namie said she hadn't seen you since yesterday]

Izaya tilted his head, not surprised by the communication between them all. “She's right. I haven't been to my apartment since, except to get my knife”

“But if you didn't post anything. Who did?” Anri said, she started to have a bad feeling

[I was about to go and check on you. Everyone was pretty worried, that's when I got the message from Anri] [Shinra went in my place]

“If someone hacked my name. Then they were most likely in my apartment. Did you call him?”
Celty slumped [I did. But I have a feeling he left it at home]

“Tst. Typical Shinra. I often told him he was a scatter brain sometimes” Izaya pulled out his own phone, it had a crack down the screen but otherwise, it was working, much to his relief. “Let me check the log. I might be able to~”

“What's wrong?”

“It's an email” Izaya clenched the phone when he saw the receivers address. His eyes widened and he gasped.

“Izaya, what is?”

“It's....It's my apartment, the building....”

Anri and Celty peer down at his phone, Anri let out a light cry of shock “It's in flames!...”

[This can't be! What about Shinra! What if he was-]

Izaya gritted his teeth. *Nakura, you son of a bitch* “This is....all my fault”

“What? Don't say that!”

“I talked to him. Just yesterday, I thought he was done....I believed I'd scared him off for good”

[Who are you talking about?]

“Nakura.... he's responsible, for everything”
Izaya looked up at her “You know?”

“Shinra told me the truth. Back when we found you after the attack"

“I see. No one was suppose to know, but I suppose it doesn't matter now”

Celty shivered “We don't know anyone was in your apartment!”

Anri nodded “She's right. We don't know-”

“It's an obvious trap. He knew someone would go to the apartment. He's already been in the apartment once-”

“What do you mean?”

“It's how he knew so much. He even told me himself. He broke into the apartment and bugged the living room and tracked my recent activities through my computers. He stole the drug and- but I didn't believe that he would....” Izaya hissed as his body almost collapsed.

“Izaya....” Anri held him tightly, she was struggling to bare his weight with her small frame. “We can't think the worst yet. Even if it was deliberate, there's no telling if any one of our friends was there”

Izaya tried not to think about those it could have been, had they gone to check on him. Namie and Shinra, it seemed they were the most likeliest. That didn't leave a lot of their friends left. Izaya shook, trying to ignore the clenching feeling in his heart. What if it was his sisters? Concerned enough to visit him without a single warning of danger. Shizuo wasn't as likely, there was no way of him knowing what was happening, he had stayed away from the chat room and kept to himself since that night. Even so, Izaya couldn't shake the fear..... all of them, they meant more to him then he often let on, even Namie, who had become like a sister to him. The more he thought about it though, the more it seemed like it could have been Shinra, since Celty had confirmed that was where he had been heading.
[Anri is right. We can't jump to conclusions just yet. We should get you to the hospital first, then I'll go and find out what I can]

Izaya nodded slowly and Celty moved his arm around her shoulder and they continued to walk back to the bike.

With her free hand, she laid her palm across the seat and it changed into a horse and carriage. Her phone rang and it startled her, Anri helped Izaya lean against the carriage as he hopped forward. Even though Celty couldn't verbally answer, those who often called her knew the signals.

“Celty! It's- it's Mairu....I'm- I just, I don't know what to say” Celty stiffened, she almost broke her phone with the way she was clenching it.

Shinra, please don't let him be-

“Celty. I know you can't answer much. We're at the hospital in Shinjuku. Izaya's apartment....there was an explosion and- the whole building went up. Shinra was with us, we arrived almost at the same time. I just- do you know where my brother is? I need to speak to him.....please.....please tell me you know if he's ok, I have to talk to him”

Celty shook Shinra, he's ok, he's alive

Izaya looked over at her “Celty?”

Celty held her hand out and Izaya gave her his phone and she typed [It's Mairu]

Izaya paled, no, no way....please god don't let her be- “W-what?”

Celty then realised how that sounded and she shook her helmet vigorously. [On the phone! she's on the phone. She really needs to know you're ok, she wants to talk to you]

Izaya breathed out a sigh of relief, then he clasped her elbow “Shinra?”

Celty nodded [Shinra is ok]
Another sigh and then he took the phone from Celty, shifting with a grant of pain, he didn't think he could remain standing much longer. He took a shuddering breath before placing the phone to his ear. “Mairu?”

Within the reception area, Mairu, Kururi and Satoshi were sat on a three seater couch. Mairu froze at the sound of her brother's voice, it felt like forever since she'd heard it. “I-Izaya? Is that you?”

Izaya thanked god she was ok “It's me. Calm down”

“You're ok? You're-”

Izaya smiled “I'm all right. I'm not a hundred percent physically, but mentally.... Mairu, I'm sorry, I'm really sorry, for everything I said....”

“No! It wasn't your fault....I'm, I'm just happy to hear your voice, I saw the building- I went to come and check on you, you were logged in as Kanra and-”

“Hey. It's ok. Nothing happened to me, at least not- did you say you were there?”

“I'm all right. Nothing-nothing happened to me either”

“A-and Kururi? Is safe with you?”

“Yes. We both are, Satoshi and Shinra too, we're at the Shinjuku hospital, Satoshi drove us”

“What? Why are you at the hospital?” Izaya's heart began to pound in his chest, something wasn't right, something had happened. Anri and Celty waited impatiently, Anri held her breath, a horrible feeling came over her. Izaya swallowed the lump forming in his throat, Mairu wasn't answering him. “Mairu.....why are you at the hospital, are you sure you and Kururi are ok?”

“We're all right. Izaya....I- there were people being carried out of the building and- and”
Izaya sighed, they were probably in shock “It's ok. Everything is all right now. I'm-” he looked to Celty for confirmation and she nodded, that she would take them to the hospital in the other city. It wasn't a great idea-given Izaya's physical state- but he needed to be with them now. Izaya smiled “I'm coming to you, ok? I'll be there soon, just calm down”

“I'm not finished! Just listen ok?”

His smiled faltered, his heart tightening again “Ok”

“They- carried out people from the building, but- well, they didn't make it. There was a survivor- he was unconscious and-” Izaya could hear her sniffling, there weren't many his sisters would be so upset over. “Izaya- it's Shizuo”

Izaya's eyes widened Shizu-chan, what the hell were you doing there? “Mairu, is he ok?”

“Shinra is with him and some other doctors.... but, they think he suffered a lot of head trauma....he's in a coma”

Izaya paled, the phone slipped from his hand and his legs all but buckled under him. Anri tried to catch him and crouched beside hi. “Izaya! What happened? Is everyone ok?” Izaya couldn't speak, his mouth open but no words came. “Talk to me”

Celty picked up her fallen phone and ended the call-they could worry about that later- Izaya was in shock, his eyes unblinking as he stared at her blankly when she knelt beside him. [Izaya, what happened?]

Izaya clenched his fists “Shizu-chan.....he-”

“What? Shizuo? Is he ok?”

[Tell me he's ok!]

“He's- in a coma...”
Izaya clenched his fists and stood up, batting Anri’s hand away as she tried to help him. “Celty...let’s go” Celty looked at him for a moment and then nodded as she quickly mounted her horse. Izaya turned and stepped up into the carriage, using his good leg to prop himself up. Anri didn’t dare try and help, she could tell he was struggling to hold himself together. She waited for him to be seated and then got in herself.

Satoshi stood in front of the girls and handed them a small steaming cup of hot chocolate. “Here” They both took it with smiles “Thanks” Mairu said and cradled the cup, remembering how Izaya used to bring them the beverage on cold winter nights when they were little, it was one of the rare times that he was nice to them, back when they were living at home.

Kururi looked over at her and placed her head on her shoulder. “Are you ok?” She asked, balancing her own drink in her lap.

“Sure. Is it- is it horrible that I’m glad it wasn’t Izaya? I just-“

“I don’t think so. We know Shizuo would have wished the same thing. He’d rather it have been him then Izaya. So don’t feel bad”

Satoshi sat beside them “She’s right. Besides, Shizuo will come out of this. Nothing can kill him, he’s practically immortal. I don’t know him as well as you do, but I know that much at least”

Mairu nodded “You’re right” she agreed but her mind doubted it, even if Shizuo always seemed indestructible, he wasn’t immortal, he was still human.

Kururi looked up as they saw Shinra walk into the reception. Shinra smiled at them, he looked tired. “Hey guys” he greeted them, pushing his glasses up.

“How is he?” Mairu asked

“Hard to say. Shizuo isn’t like other people, his body is a pretty quick healer, but, he’s been running off adrenaline all his life, his skin and bones are practically unbreakable. Unfortunately, his head wasn’t as tough. I’ve seen him endure so many blows to the head even I couldn’t believe it. For him to be in a coma, he must have been caught right in the explosion, but I’m really not all that surprised he’s alive”

Mairu frowned “Why are you grinning?”

Shinra blinked in surprise, was he grinning? He then coughed and smiled apologetically. “Sorry. I get excited every now and then. Old habits”
Kururi smiled “Izaya used to say that you were the more warped between the two of you”

Shinra pouted “Is that so? Tst, I used to say the same about him”

Suddenly, the automatic doors beside them slid open and Izaya stumbled into the hospital, holding his side and practically hopping. “Izaya? What the-“

Mairu and Kururi placed their cups down on the floor and jump out of their seat “Izaya!” Mairu shouted and the two ran toward him.

“Mairu....Kururi. I’m glad you’re safe”

The twins launched themselves at their brother and he barely flinched as he laid his hands on their backs. “Us too” Mairu mumbled, trying her best not to cry.

Shinra walked toward them, he could see some of Izaya’s cuts and bruises, but judging by the way he’d stumbled into the building, there were other injuries. “Izaya, what happened? Where have you been?” Just then, Anri and Celty ran into the hospital. “Oh. Anri, good to see you safe” Shinra then broke into a smile. “Celty!” He went to hug her and she cast shadows across his face.

[Not the time!] [I’m glad you’re safe though. I was worried]

“What happened?“

[It’s a long story. More importantly-]

“Where is he? Shinra....” Izaya spoke as he gently pushed the girls off and looked at him.

“He’s alive. But-well, they had to operate. There was extensive tissue damage, surgery was necessary to prevent further complications such as bleeding. They were able to relieve the pressure of swelling, but after the surgery he slipped into a coma”

Izaya gritted his teeth “Where-is-he?”

“He’s alive. He’s upstairs, room 14, ward 2” Shinra stepped toward him, wondering why the hell he just told him that “Izaya. I should really look at you, get those injuries properly treated”

“I’m fine.....I can manage for now”

[He’s being stubborn! He fell from a building into a glass ceiling protecting Anri. He’s got a deep wound on his side and his right leg is broken!] [I wrapped them as best I could, under the circumstances]

Shinra sighed and wondered just how the hell Izaya was even walking. In fact- “You shouldn’t have even moved after you first fell. I’m amazed you’re even alive, you really should have called an ambulance”

Izaya rolled his eyes and then smiled “You know me better then that, don’t act so surprised”

Shinra frowned “I’m serious Izaya. Who knows the full extent of what a fall like that could have
done-"

[It's not all his fault. I should have thought about the situation more carefully]

Shinra smiled at her “Don’t go feeling guilty. He always was a bit of a masochist, he used to walk all the way to our apartment with all sorts of injuries, grinning like a Chester cat while completely ignoring the pain”

“Have you always said that about me? You’re such a poor excuse for a friend”

Shinra shrugged and then grinned “Come on. You know it’s true. If it makes you feel any better, I used a past terminology” Izaya snorted “Regardless. You really need to be treated-“

“I’m not going anywhere except upstairs to Shizu-chan”

“No. You’re coming with me so I can tend to your wounds”

Shinra stepped forward and grabbed his friends arm, Izaya’s eyes narrowed and he drew his flick-blade and slashed across Shinra’s arm. “Don’t!” Celty caught Shinra as he stumbled backwards, gripping his arm tightly. Anri glared at Izaya and he seethed “Don’t even try it” Izaya then turned and broke into a run, disappearing down the corridor.

“Izaya!” Shinra called after him

Izaya grabbed the stair railing as he climbed the stairs, almost skipping every other step. Luckily it was only the second floor, he hissed as the last step seemed like the hardest. He stumbled forward and continued to run through the next corridor. In the back of his mind, he knew this was a bad idea, he could feel something grating between his thigh and his hip, he didn't care, he just wanted to see Shizuo. He harshly pushed open the double doors in front of him that divided the corridor into two sections, he didn't stop as he glanced up and read a sign that stated rooms 7-14. Izaya almost skidded as he knocked over a wet floor sign, cursing his luck. He stumbled forward he tried to stop himself from falling flat on his face, his right leg went first on instinct as he made a grab for the doorway. Izaya's eyes widened when he heard a loud crack. He fell with an agonising yell and rolled onto his back, covering his eyes with his forearm. All adrenaline shot out of him and he was left only with blinding pain, he couldn't think, he couldn't breath and he was only fifty percent sure he was at the right room. Breathing harshly, he gritted his teeth as he stared up at the sign on top of the door, as pain burned sickeningly from his leg up and around his hip toward his lower back, blackness began to take form around the corners of his vision as the 1 and 4 blurred. Izaya could barely lift his head, he craned it up toward the only bed occupying the room, his vision made an outline shape of someone laying across it. He could vaguely see the ECG screen close to the bed and the bleeping sound of the heartbeat detected was the last thing he heard before darkness overtook him completely.

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Izaya opened his eyes and quickly shut them as his aching head protested to the sudden light shining
from the ceiling. He could feel something covering his mouth and lifted his IV covered hand to confirm an oxygen mask. He was painfully aware that he could barely move so he gave up on the idea of removing the offending item and let his hand fall limply back to the bed. Izaya opened his eyes more slowly, allowing time to adjust before glancing down when he realized his other hand felt heavy. His sister, Mairu, lay with her head tucked in between her left arm while her right hand curled around his left one. She was asleep, he didn't want to wake her but he really needed to talk to someone, someone that would tell him just how the hell he'd gotten here. The sound of his own heartbeat on the monitor beside him jerked him more into awareness. “Shizu-chan....” His thoughts immediately went to his partner, his first reaction was to get the hell out this bed. The second he tried to sit up, pain shot down his lower back through his leg. His whimper was muffled by the mask and he was grateful for that. His body's protests cleared his clouded thoughts, remembering-to some extent-details of his injuries. Izaya was no doctor, so in simple terms for him, he had a broken leg-he grimaced when he remembered the loud crack he'd heard before collapsing-possibly in two places, some deep laceration on his side-something about a bullet? An image flashed in his mind of himself falling through a glass ceiling off a rooftop, it would make sense as to why his back felt like he'd been hit by a truck.

“Izaya?”

Izaya was startled out of his thoughts as he glanced back down to find his sister staring at him. “Mairu.....sorry, did I wake you?” Mairu shook her head, her hold on his hand tightening as she bit her lip to stop herself from crying. Izaya managed to move his hand to brush her chin with his forefinger and gave her a small smile. “Hey. It's ok. Don't cry”

Mairu wiped her eyes across her sleeve “I'm sorry. It's just-we've been so worried”

“I'm all right. I think. Maybe I was a bit reckless earlier.....sorry”

Mairu scowled earlier? “Izaya you-”

Before she could finish her sentence Kururi come running into the room, Izaya gave her a small wave. “Kururi....”

Kururi froze and stared into the eyes of her brother “Izaya? You're awake....”

“I guess I blacked out.....”
Kururi looked at her sister and Mairu shook her head, Kururi nodded in understanding. “I’m glad you’re awake”

“Yeah. But my body isn't liking the awareness” he lifted the hand that was attached to an IV drip “Whatever pain relief was going through my system, is quickly wearing off” The twins gave him a sympathetic smile, he knew that much at least. Izaya raised an eyebrow, they were acting strange, seemingly uncomfortable talking to him. At first he figured it was the shock of the days events, but there was something else, something they weren't telling him. “Is....is Shizu-chan ok?”

Mairu nodded “He's the same. I mean, he hasn't woken up or anything....”

Izaya chuckled lightly, his mask fogging for a moment “I doubt....even Shizu-chan is capable of waking from a coma in a day” Mairu and Kururi looked at each other, unable to maintain eye contact with him. “What's wrong?”

Before either of them could open their mouths, Shinra walked into the room, he stopped for a moment, realising that his friend was awake. He then returned Islay’s smile with a scowl as he placed his hands on the girls' shoulders. “Give us a few minutes ok?” he told them, they looked eerily at their brother and then at Shinra.

“Don't be too hard on him” Mairu said and they left the room quickly.

Izaya watched Shinra walk to stand at the edge of the bed, the doctor's stern expression told him his friend was definitely not happy with him.

Shinra slammed his hands against metal edge, causing Izaya to flinch. “What the hell were you thinking!!?”

Izaya struggled to find the meaning to Shinra's question, he answered with the first thought that came to his head. “There wasn't much time.....it was either me, or Anri”

Shinra clenched his hands around the bar “Not that do you have any idea what damage you could have caused?”

Izaya stared at his friend in confusion “You've lost me”
Shinra sighed in frustration “Your ability to be so careless with your injuries is astounding”

“Shinra-”

“Shut up. When you fell, you fractured your femur-that’s the upper thigh-”

Izaya rolled his eyes “I did take biology you know”

Shinra pointed a finger at him “Don’t interrupt me! I’m not in the mood for your quips right now”

“Are you that mad at me?”

Shinra glared at him and Izaya decided to close his mouth and kept quiet. “The sacrum bone-the lowest part of your back- was bordering the same way. You should have stayed exactly where you were and called an ambulance but of course, Celty had no way of really knowing that. Given the height of the fall, you could have seriously damaged your spine. Izaya opened his mouth to speak, he was starting to get worried, yet Shinra held his hand up. “I’m not finished. When you got here, your body was so consumed by adrenaline that it was the only reason you were even standing and walking around. A sensible person would have allowed their doctor to treat them right away, but that has never been your forte has it? So what did you do?” Shinra slammed his hands against the metal again “You ran! I mean you full on ran, not just a little bit, but pushed your body into full speed. You even ran up a flight of fucking stairs! Forgodsake Izaya do you ever think before you act!?” Izaya remained quiet, Shinra was really pissed and he began to wonder what damage he’d caused himself. Shinra saw the fear creeping into Izaya’s eyes and he managed to calm slightly. “No Izaya. As much as it might have been expected, you’re not paralysed” Shinra sighed “You did manage to add another fracture to your leg, the fibula bone couldn't handle the extra pressure from your already weakened leg and it snapped”

Izaya grimaced That would explain the loud crack I heard

“I imagine your sacrum bone had already given way, most likely when you climbed the stairs” Shinra was more calm now, as if the relief of saying it all out loud assured him of Izaya's recovery. He moved around to the side and sat down on the chair. “Even though we can rule out paralysis, physical therapy is a vital part to your recovery, mostly because of your leg. I’m not going to lie, it’s going to take time, and a lot of effort on your part. The operation you had was successful, you will make a full recovery, you know”
“Operation?”

“Of course. Bones don't slide back together themselves”

Izaya grimaced “Spare me the details” Shinra smiled “I just meant.”

“You want to know how long you were out for”

“Somehow. It's been more then a day right? I could tell by the way my sisters were acting”

“Yeah. After everything you've been through, you were out for a while, especially since the operation. Your body needed time to recover, not just from that”

“How long?”

“Almost two weeks. That's probably why your memory was a little fuzzy when you woke up, it's also one of the reasons you'll need help”

“Therapy”

“Yeah. The two weeks you were out of it were good for the healing though, it helped the braces along”

“Braces?”

“Sure. Your leg has two metal frames supporting it from both sides, they're nailed into the bone to help keep them together while you heal. There's also a metal plate in place for now to help your spine”
Izaya stared up at the ceiling, this was all too ironic for him, he took a deep breath. “I see. Do I have a choice?”

Shinra blinked “Huh? About what?”

“Therapy”

“What do you mean? You are going to take it aren't you?”

Izaya smiled sadly “I think, that perhaps this is what I deserve”

Shinra frowned “Are you seriously still doing this? After everything, you're still punishing yourself?”

Izaya sighed “It's not as cliché as that. Even if those around me can forgive me, it's never going to end. Something always comes and reminds me, it doesn't let me forget. This is a perfect example”

“Why? What does that mean?”

“Shinra. I couldn't protect Shizu-chan the way I wanted to, I didn't even know what was happening. By the time I found out, I was already helpless to do anything. That's why”

“But that's not your fault!”

“In a way. It is. No matter my intentions, it all links back to me one way or another. Nakura got revenge because of what I did to him so many times, therefore, I might as well have planted the bomb that sent Shizu-chan into a coma myself”

“You're wrong Izaya!”

Izaya chuckled “You're only getting defensive because you know its true. 'You can run from your past all you want, but it will always follow you. Your guilt will be your past and that will be your god' ”
“Huh?”

“I said that very thing to Masaomi once. Words have never related to me more, it made me realise, that the worst of what I did, I did to him and Saki. What I put Masaomi through that day was what I felt when I found out about Shizu-chan. The irony part, is that Saki was almost unable to walk because of what those scum bags did, that was my fault too. I was also the one that told her to pretend like she couldn't ever walk”

“Izaya....”

“I think this is just karma at its finest”

“So, are you saying that what happened to Saki, is what you deserve, that's why you're going to refuse therapy?”

“I can't absolve for everything. But, if I can give someone this much, then that's what I'll do”

“Izaya! This isn't atonement! This is your health we're talking about, there are plenty of ways to make up for wrong doings”

“Maybe. But opportunities don't always come to me like this”

“What about Shizuo? What about your sisters? How'd you think they'd feel about your decision?”

Izaya smiled “They'll be fine. Everyone will get used to it eventually. It's not like I’m dead”

Shinra glared and leaned over the bed, his face half cast in shadow from the setting sun. he then grabbed Izaya's shoulder, hard. “You really are something else. You honestly think I'm going to be part of this ridiculous version of atonement? Not everything you did was a mistake” Izaya winced when Shinra gripped harder “You're actions now are still selfish. So I guess maybe you haven't changed”
“Shinra.....”

“Not everyone holds grudges. If people like Anri and Shizuo can forgive you, then do you really think this is what'll make everything better? I didn't think you were that complex” Shinra released his hold and practically stormed out of the room. Izaya stared after him in surprise and then hissed as pain danced in his vision for a moment. He stared up at the ceiling again.

“You're wrong Shinra. I do deserve everything I get. Because I'm the one that kept your fiancé's head for so long, I'm the one that caused her turmoil”

A week later, Izaya's recovery was slow, he refused any kind of treatment that related to therapy. Even though he was still a way off to be able to receive therapy, he made it clear when the topic was brought up. He'd had a few visitors over the week, Kadota and his gang dropped by, happy to have him back. Celty sometimes sat with him in the evening and they'd play a game or two of chess, then she'd spend the rest of the night beside Shizuo. He was grateful for that, since he couldn't be at his side himself yet; that thought annoyed him, it wasn't like he'd asked for this, he'd promised Anri that she wouldn't get hurt. True to his word, the reason he took the fall and not her. That still didn't change his mind, he knew this is what he deserved, the situation was too convenient. Anri and his sisters visited often, he'd listen to them talk about their days at school and even gave Anri a little advice about her feelings toward Mikado. She had opened up a little to him about how her feelings conflicted with that of those she felt toward Masaomi. It wasn't as if he was in any position to be giving her love advice, his only real experience was with Shizuo. She seemed to take that on board, it took one of them to almost die to realise that they loved one another. It was strange to talk to Anri, yet refreshing, they spoke like they'd been friends since the beginning.

Mairu, Kururi and Anri tried everyday to convince Izaya to accept therapy when the time came. He simply declined with a smile and told them that it was ok, that he'd still be here.

Shinra was the only one that hadn't come to see him, not since that evening, the doctor-his best friend- couldn't comprehend his decision. Izaya hadn't known him to be this way before, Shinra shrugged off almost everything Izaya did, telling him how fascinating it was. At least, that's how it used to be, back in school, I guess we really have changed. Even if Shinra never came to see him, he was certain that he would visit Shizuo and for that, he didn't mind if Shinra shut him out completely. Maybe he'd come to accept my decision, in time.
Another two weeks passed by, visits dwindled, but for both patient and visitor, there was only so much of one another they could take. Izaya didn't mind, it gave him a break from the idle chatter, even though by now, he was bored out of his mind. There wasn't much going on that interested him as of late, even if it did, there wasn't much he could do about it. Namie accepted a few jobs on his behalf, it gave her the excuse she needed to visit, he helped her when she asked-giving her a nudge every now and then in the right direction. He'd make a few phone calls here and there, he didn't need fully functional legs to always get the job done. He felt grateful to her, the jobs she'd accepted followed the rule of his promise to Shizuo, one day, he'd tell her that her work was appreciated.

Despite refusing the obvious treatment, he was happy, his recovery was getting him closer to actually being able to get out of this god awful bed. His arms remained a strong point of his, so he was able to lever himself up when he wanted to. It was most likely he'd have to use a wheel chair, so he couldn't let his upper body strength waver as well.

Izaya was sat up in the bed when Anri next came to visit, his back supported by pillows as he focused on lifting the light weights. The doctor on the ward warned him about too much strain so soon, so he agreed to only exercise with ones he honestly felt comfortable with. Izaya stopped his movements when he saw Anri enter the room. “Hey. I don't think School is quite over yet, don't tell me I'm becoming a bad influence on you” he teased. Anri shook her head, not moving much closer to him. “Something wrong?”

“Everyone is trying to accept your decision....” she said, clenching her fists. Izaya sighed, he didn't want to talk about this any more “I can't”

“I don't want you to be upset about it. It's really all right”

“Shinra told me what you said. You shouldn't make those kinds of choices, its not fair, you don't get a second chance, only to throw that away by punishing yourself”

Izaya clenched his hand around the weight “Anri....I-don't know how else to make it right”

“I forgave you because you changed, you proved that to me by being honest, you didn't need to risk your life saving me, because I already forgave you before that. You apologised, not the way most people do, you didn't ask for forgiveness, that's how I knew you meant it”

“Not everything I've done can be fixed the same way......that's why I have to accept this”
“Stop it!” Izaya blinked at her, surprised by her outburst “You don't deserve this! Why can't you see that!?”

“Because it's just not enough....it's never going to be enough”

Anri frowned and then looked down at the floor “Maybe you won't listen to me, or your sisters, or our other friends. But I know someone who just might convince you” as Anri stepped to the side, Izaya's eyes widen as a familiar girl came into the room, he spoke her name almost in a whisper.

“Saki...”

Saki smiled at him, tilting her head “Hi Izaya”

Anri then made her exit and allowed the two to catch up, Saki walked toward the bed and smiled as she sat down on the chair. “Saki.....what are you doing here?”

“Well, Masaomi really started to miss his friends, I bugged him for hours about it, talked him into moving back.....he's going back to high school”

Izaya nodded and looked out of the window “That's good. Anri misses him too”

“I know. She's not the one that called me first”

Izaya looked over at her “Shinra?”

“He's not that aware of our past, is he?”

Izaya shook his head and then sighed “Dotachin....”

“He looked out for Masaomi a few times. It was sort of strange that he called me, I don't think I've ever really talked to him that much. He had a lot to say”
Izaya grimaced “I bet he did”

“He wasn't willing to go into a lot of detail, I pried the rest from Anri”

“I might as well write a biography” Izaya lay back against the pillows, wincing at the sudden pull of of his stitches on his side.

Saki chuckled and lay a hand across his “I didn't think I'd have to visit you in the hospital one day”

Izaya removed his hand “Why did you?"

Saki tilted her head “Because you came to see me”

Izaya shook his head “You and I both know that was different, I didn't go to be nice”

Saki bit her lip, Masaomi wouldn't think so but she believed differently “Izaya. What happened wasn't all your fault. I believe that. I also think you really did care about me, in your own way, but I think that you just wanted to hide it. You know, I felt kind of guilty that I ratted on you to Simon, I didn't mean to betray you Izaya.....”

Izaya blinked in surprise, her betray him? He shook his head “No.....it was me, I betrayed you Saki, you trusted me a lot, I let you get hurt, I was an ass hole back then”

Saki swung her legs back and forth for a moment “Maybe. But even so, I could tell you cared about me, enough”

Izaya sighed and brushed his hand over hers “I'm sorry. For everything”

Saki covered his hand with hers once more “Idiot....”

“Nothing I say will ever-“
“Izaya. I don't want to hear those words from you. Ever. It's not who you really are”

Izaya smiled “You don't know me any more Saki”

Saki smiled in return “I know. But I do know this” She stood up “You don't deserve whatever it is you think you do”

“You don't understand-”

“No? I think I understand better then anyone. I kept racking my brain trying to figure out why I was punishing Masaomi by pretending that I couldn't walk”

“You know the reason. Because I manipulated you into it”

“You know, for a while that was the case. But afterwards, I did it to punish myself, that maybe I deserved it, for whatever I put him through”

Izaya couldn't believe what she was saying “You did nothing wrong Saki. All you did was trust in someone that you thought would protect you. That should have protected you, I could have done”

Saki smiled “And let me risk losing the two people I loved?”

Izaya blinked at her “W-what?”

Saki giggled “Yeah. I love you, I don't know why. I mean, not the same kind of love that I feel for Masaomi. But I cared about you enough to love you, messed up huh?”

Izaya chuckled and shook his head “You could say that”

Saki smiled “I know what you're doing Izaya. Because I did the same thing”

“But I-”
She shook her head “Not everything you did was wrong. I had fun too”

Izaya clenched his fists “Saki....” tears threatened to fall “I don't deserve your...your kindness, nor do I deserve your forgiveness”

Saki held his hand “Then do for me one thing” Izaya looked up at her “Walk. Make it up to me and walk, ok?”

Izaya looked down and tightened his grip in her hand as tears fell from his cheeks, he nodded and Saki smiled in relief. “Saki. I don't know what the hell I'm doing any more.....I can't lose him. I won't survive....” Saki crawled up onto the bed and wrapped her arms around him, his hands came up and clenched her shirt and he cried, letting his emotions go. Saki simply held him, wondering how long he'd wanted to make things right with her, whoever this Shizuo was, he must be something special.

“It's ok. It's ok now, we're here for you, I'm here”

“I'm so sorry....”

“I know. But you'll be all right, you can overcome this, I'll make sure of it” Saki held onto the broken informant, embracing him tightly.

A short blonde figure stood in the shadows of the doorway, watching the two with a frown upon his face. “You can't fool me twice. You're not going to hurt Saki's heart again Izaya”

After two long boring months of recuperating his body, making sure he was strong enough to withstand the exercises, Izaya kept his word to Saki and started therapy. She was there everyday to help support him, the first week consisted of leg exercises, bending it slowly back and forth. The professional therapist was strict, but Izaya didn't mind, he preferred it that way, it meant he wasn't pitied and the woman was aware of his pain tolerance. She knew exactly how much he could endure, despite his protests of the pain. The woman reminded him of Namie, if he was honest, so in a way, it made him feel comfortable. He even began to strike up a re-pour with her, he'd tease her and bicker with her, insult her and she would give as good back. He spent the next two days using his leg muscles to push forward, he would sit on the edge of the bed and use her hand to push against. Sometimes she'd place an object in front of him and he'd move it with his legs, she'd scold him often
for using two and would even hold his good leg down in order to prevent him from doing so.

Saki and Anri sat on the bed watching as Izaya shuffled slowly forward across the parallel bars. They could see the pained expression on his face and the concentration of his steps. The woman, Lera was her name, frowned as she stepped backwards from in front of him. “You're not using your legs enough, you're cheating”

Izaya grit his teeth, managing to glare up at her “How....can you....cheat at this?”

Lera tilted her head “You are using your arms too much, I can tell, you are putting most of the pressure on your upper body, you may as well be on monkey bars”

Izaya snorted at her comment, but took her comments into account and relaxed his arms slightly. She grinned at him, her point proven when he stumbled and fell flat on his face. He lay his forehead against his hand. “Bitch” he muttered

she crouched in front of him, still grinning “Well that was rather pathetic”

“Shut up. I hate you”

“Good” Lera stood up and tapped her foot “I was getting worried that I was going soft on you” Izaya seethed as he lifted his hand out for the bar but she grabbed hold of it before he could touch it. “Bend your leg, put those push exercises to use” Izaya glared at her, gritting his teeth as he tucked his leg underneath himself, his palm fell flat on the floor when she let go of his hand. “Don't crawl” she scolded

Izaya rolled his eyes and pushed himself up with both his arms but placing most of his weight on his leg. He hobbled and hissed at the shooting pains in his lower back toward his leg and then steadied himself.

Saki leaned toward Anri “She's kind of mean, isn't she?” Anri nodded but both herself and Saki knew Izaya would respond well to the harshness, even if he whined and complained like a five year old.

“Why can't we just use crutches?”
Lera flicked him on the forehead and he pouted at her “It's the same thing as cheating, how do you expect your leg to gain back it's full strength by using those things? Besides, your spine isn't strong enough for those yet”

“But this is much better?” Izaya grinned, shuffling forward “I think you might just like to watch me suffer little witch”

“You know those pathetic insults are useless. I'm simply doing what my job requires. It's been made perfectly clear to me, your relationship with pain is something of an enigma. Whose the real sadist here?” Izaya kept quiet, still glaring at her with a somewhat curve of his lips, he was about to shuffle forward and she placed a hand on his chest. “From the beginning”

“Why?”

“You fell. You know the rules. You fall during the walk, you start again”

“Are you sure you're not here to kill me?” Izaya complained and stuck his tongue out as he placed strength on his arms and used mostly his hands to go back to the start.

Lera shook her head, she'd dealt with stubborn people a lot in her years as a therapist, but never had she dealt with someone like Izaya before. Stubborn yet extremely childish, it was a wonder anyone could put up with him, he could also be very observant and insulting at times. It was one of the good qualities that made Lera good at her job, she wasn't quickly fazed, it took a lot to bring her down. When they first started, he told her about Shizuo's condition and that he was in a coma, but he didn't want to see him until he could walk there. It had been the only time she saw him honest and open. She understood his implications, she told him that no matter what, she'd make that happen, he respected that. He knew, that if it were Shinra or even Namie, they'd just give in to him to stop him whining. Even though he insulted Lera, he commended her for her own stubbornness, no matter how mean he thought she was.

Another week passed and Izaya had adapted to his new routine and was now walking without the help of bars. Lera wouldn't admit it, but she was impressed with his progress, it took most people double the time it had taken him to get where he was now. She stepped back from him each time he stepped forward, when he stopped she would make some remark about weakness to egg him on again. She wondered half the time whether he wanted to catch her and strangle her, but she knew he drew the line when it came to hurting females. Though he knew that any given chance, she would knock him on his ass at any time. His palm lay flat on the wall once they'd reached the other side, out of breath, he huffed a laugh. “You don't hide your surprise as well as you think.....”
“I'll admit, I am a little impressed”

Izaya laughed “Oh. It shows. You might just be meaner then my secretary, I wonder who would win if you two went at it”

Lera rolled her eyes “Gay or not, men will always get some kick out of two women fighting”

Izaya grinned “I'd wager my money on you”

Lera snorted “Aren't you a gentlemen”

Izaya chuckled “Not really. I just like to mess with her. She can be scary though”

“I feel sorry for her then, working with you must be exhausting. I'd be shaking her hand, not fighting with her”

“Gripe all you want. She gets suspicious if I'm too nice”

“I expect that's the case with most people around you”

“Maybe”

Lera put her hands on her hips “Then you better get yourself in fully functional shape, so that you can keep surprising them”

Izaya grinned
After three more weeks of therapy, Izaya was almost recovered, he was able to walk without any assistance and could even run short distances. The screws in his leg had been removed and the plate that supported his sacral had also been removed. Everyone was amazed and overwhelmed with his speedy recovery, it was thanks to Saki that he had even attempted it. He spent most of the day and the evening by Shizuo's bedside, he knew most people found a comfort in talking to their comatose loved ones. Izaya thought the notion was ridiculous, he didn't expect that Shizuo could hear him, he simply sat beside him and held his hand. The first day he'd come to see him, he'd froze, never did he think he'd see Shizuo in this kind of state. It had been a very hard sight to deal with, he didn't know how anyone else had dealt with it. Izaya wondered how Kasuka had dealt with it, he knew that Shizuo's brother had come to visit, even if it only had to be for a short time. Kasuka had a busy lifestyle but he wouldn't not visit him.

The first night, Izaya lay his head upon Shizuo's chest and cried himself to sleep. Izaya looked down at their hands linked together as he threaded their fingers, smiling to himself. Shizuo had his ring back on, knowing he must have placed it on after gaining his memories back. “When you wake up. We'll make it happen. I promise, I'll marry you Shizu-chan” Izaya chuckled lightly “You better wake up. After all, I spent months in painful therapy with a witch, so it's the least you could do” Izaya stood up and kissed the top of Shizuo's head “I love you”

“Painful isn't it?” a voice from behind startled him “Seeing someone you love in such a bad way, being helpless to do anything”

Izaya turned and clenched his fist, but he soon relaxed, he didn't want to start any arguments or fights. “Masaomi”

The seventeen year old blonde shoved his hands in his pockets to hide his own clenched fists. “So. What's your angle here? Is this your new way of tricking people now?”

Izaya walked passed him “I don't blame you for thinking it, but I'm not tricking anyone”

“You and I both know that's bullshit”

Izaya lifted his head in agitation and turned in the boys direction again. Hands in his own pockets. “I didn't ask for Saki to come here. That's what you're really here for, isn't it?”

Masaomi turned to glare at him “You just stay away from her!”
Izaya smirked for a moment and then it disappeared “I told you, I didn't ask her to come. She said she wanted to and felt obligated because I often visited her”

“To manipulate her and feed her a bunch of crap!”

“That's what I said”

“She should have- what?”

“I told her she didn't have any favours owed. She insisted though”

Masaomi frowned “That's because she's too nice. Even after what you did”

“I don't expect your forgiveness, nor am going to ask for it”

“Good! Because I will never trust you, I don't care what everyone says, you will never change. I'm pretty sure Shizuo will come to his senses eventually”

Izaya narrowed his eyes “You have no idea what you're talking about”

“I know that he fucking hates your guts. What'd you do, hypnotise him?”

“Think whatever you want”

Masaomi studied him for a moment, the sinister tone and grin Izaya always had were gone, he almost backed off, but he just couldn't forget the past, he couldn't forget what he'd done. “Shizuo would be better off if he didn't wake up”

Izaya snapped, he lunged forward and pinned the boy to the floor, his flick-blade out and pressed firmly against his throat. “Say what you want about me, but leave Shizu-chan out of it”
Masaomi blinked in surprise. He really loves him. “I guess you really did find out what love really is. I didn't think someone like you would even comprehend it.”

Izaya snorted and stood up, he pocketed his knife. “I'll keep my distance from Saki. But I can't control what she wants, you know you can't stop her if she wants to see me. Just tell her, I said thanks for her help.” As Izaya was about to walk out, the heart monitor beside the bed began to pick up speed, and the boy turned toward the bed. “Shizu-chan?” Izaya took a shaky step forward and then froze when the fast beats became long toned, no breaks in between. Izaya fell to his knees, barely flinching at the dull pain the sudden drop caused him.

Masaomi ran from the room and shouted down the hall. “We need some help in here!! hurry up!!”

Two doctors came rushing in and instantly sprang into action, the covers were pulled back and they flicked a couple of switches. One of them grabbed the two paddles from the defibrillator. “Charging!” there was a small pitched noise and then “Clear!” a loud shock was heard as the doctor pressed the paddles against Shizuo’s chest. The other doctor, in charge of checking for a pulse, shook his head.

“No pulse, go again”

Izaya's heart clenched painfully, he stood up on shaky legs, he couldn't watch, he couldn't watch Shizuo slipping away from him. Izaya turned on his heel and sprinted out of the room. Masaomi tried to make a grab for him but wasn't quick enough, he slid into the hallway. “Izaya!” he called, but the informant had already bolted out of sight.

Shinra and Celty were passing through the reception when Izaya zipped passed them, Shinra and Celty turned to stop him by neither was able to. “Izaya! What's wrong?”

Celty flashed her phone at Shinra. [Shizuo!] they both dashed into the corridor and quickly made their way to the stairs.

Izaya ran outside and then collapsed behind a bed of flowers that were growing on top of a round wall. He fisted his hands and screamed as he hit the wall, tears streaming down his face. He let out a cry of anguish, continuously hitting the wall with his fists. “Shizu-chan!!” Izaya slid to the grassy ground, heavy breaths and aching knuckles, his heart pounded painfully against his chest. He felt sick, tears continued to fall from his face, his eyes shut and he did nothing to stop his mournful loud sobs. “You....can't....leave me....” Izaya threw back his head with a howl of emotion “You can't
die!!” pounding his fist hard against the wall, his breathing slowed and his body shook as his sobs quietened. “I...can't....live without you....Shizu-chan....” Izaya stared up at the building, tears burning his eyes as the wind gently blew in his face. He took a deep breath of anger and ran toward a set of metal steps that seemed to spiral around the corner of the building.

Shinra and Celty stood in the room, the two doctors were still trying to get their friend back. They'd stopped shocking for the moment and were performing CPR. Celty clutched her chest as Shinra held onto her. “Don't leave us Shizuo....please don't leave us”

Izaya stepped through the door of the building's roof, his legs burned from the harsh use of them but he didn't care any more. Tears blew from his face as they reached the end of his cheeks, his breath hitched, his body continued to shudder with silent sobs as he walked toward the ledge.

One of the doctors stopped pushing against Shizuo's chest, there was a couple of seconds of silence and then the monitor suddenly bleeped back to life. “There's a pulse! We got him!”

Celty shook and grabbed Shinra tightly, her relief was as obvious as the happy tears in his eyes. Even Masaomi sighed in relief as he slid down the wall. “Wait a second!” the doctor shouted, Celty and Shinra stiffened “He-he's awake, I mean, he’s waking up”

“Are you sure?” Shinra asked as he, Celty and Masaomi ran toward the bed. Shinra helped take off the respirator and Shizuo opened his eyes. “Shizuo?”

“Whoa. He’s really awake” the boy said, utterly shocked, as far as he knew, Shizuo had been in a coma for at least four months. That was what Saki told him anyways.

“Shizuo. Can you hear me? Do you know who I am?” Shinra asked, he was concerned, he knew about coma patience. Their brain was sometimes damaged from the trauma or they were unable to recover from being in the coma.

“You think he’s all right?” Kida asked
“Shizuo?”

Shizuo moved his arm and pushed himself up, it startled the other two doctors. “Whoa! Easy there Mr Heiwajima, you’re not well”

Shinra held his hand up “Its ok guys. He’s not your normal patient. Shizuo, how you feeling?”

“Damn....” Shizuo held his head, it was pounding, like he was extremely hung over. “What happened? Where the hell am I?”

“It’s ok. You’re in the hospital in Shinjuku city”

Shizuo looked over “Shinra? The hell is going on? One minute I’m-“ all of a sudden, everything came rushing back to him, the chat logs, his conversation with Tom. “I was at Izaya’s apartment...I think, is he all right? Has anyone seen him? Didn’t he take the cure? Where is he?”

Shinra smiled, laying a hand on his shoulder “Relax. Shizuo...you’ve been in a coma for five months”

“What!? That’s impossible!”

“Hey. I thought so too. We all did, to be honest, none of us expected you to wake up”

Shizuo snorted “Well thanks”

[Do you know what happened?]

Shizuo shook his head and gritted his teeth “That’s what I’ve been trying to ask”

[You were caught in an explosion. Someone hacked Izaya’s Kanra chat to lure one of us to his apartment]
“Who!?”

[That's. That’s not important right now. There was a bomb, it triggered when you opened the door]

“You mean, the whole fricking place blew up!?”

Shinra nodded “Yeah. It was pretty bad. Some died in the fires that the bomb caused, they dragged you out last, you were alive and we operated, but you went into a coma”

Shizuo swept a hand through his hair. “Shit” he then looked at them, something felt off. “If five months have passed, then....where is he? He must be ok now right?” Shizuo tensed, they weren’t answering him. He clenched the metal bars of the bed and bent them “Answer me!” Shizuo’s eyes then widened “Wait. Did he- did he get caught in the explosion!? Is he-“

Shinra waved his hands “No! No, he’s not- I mean he’s fine, I think-“ Shinra rubbed the back of his head

“What do you mean, you think!? Shinra! Where is Izaya!?”

“He ran off!” Masaomi shouted

Shizuo looked over at him, tilting his head “Um. You’re that...kid, I forgot your name, Izaya told me about you....”

Kida frowned “I bet he did “Anyway. Here’s what kind of happened. We were arguing and then your heart started going crazy and then you flat lined..the doctors came in-“

Shinra nodded “Yeah. He ran passed us in the reception”

“So let me get this straight” Shizuo swung his legs over the bed and stood up, slightly wobbly, much to the doctors dismay. “This sounds like I died or something”

“Well, you did. I suppose, for a few minutes”
Shizuo clenched a fist “But he’s not here. Does Izaya think I’m dead?”

Kida sighed “I tried to call him back. But he looked pretty shaken up”

Shinra paled “I think you’re right, he couldn’t have known you were going to come back. He ran off and- I mean, we didn’t even think you were going to make it”

“Where the hell was he running to? What the hell has been happening!?”

[Calm down! I’m sure he didn’t go far]

Just then, Mairu, Kururi, Anri and Saki ran into the room. They froze when they saw Shizuo standing up, awake and clearly ok. “Shizuo?” Anri called

Shizuo looked at her “Oh, hey. It’s-Um, Sorry, I forgot your name”

“Anri”

“Yeah. That’s right”

“Hey! We don’t have time to chatter!” Mairu shouted

“Izaya’s on the roof!” Saki shouted next

“Why is he on the roof?” Shinra asked

“How the hell should we know!?” Mairu replied hastily

“Wait. If Shizuo is awake, why isn’t Izaya here with him?” Saki asked
Shizuo growled and pointed at Shinra and Celty “They think he thinks I’m dead”

Saki blinked “Why?”

“I dunno. I don’t quite know how it all works. Something about flat-lining, I might have died for a minute or two”

Saki gasped “I can’t lose him....I won’t survive...” suddenly she started panicking, Masaomi looked over at her

“Saki? Are you ok?” He asked

“I think he’s going to jump!”

Everyone stared at her in surprise, Masaomi laughed “Come on, he’s not that type. He doesn’t love someone enough for that. He’s too much of a coward to take his own life”

Saki frowned and stormed up to him, but Shizuo beat her to it. He lifted the boy off the floor, growling as he pulled him toward his face. “You oughta watch what you say kid! I’ll hurl you into orbit you little runt! Whatever history you and Izaya have, you better learn to let it go, he’s not the person you remember. What he did to you was pretty awful, but you should know that no one feels more bad about it then he does”

Kida shook, mainly because Shizuo scared the crap out of him, but also because what the man said seemed genuine.

“Look. He seemed pretty unstable when he thought you might not pull through before. He truly loves you, I can tell, the thought of losing you- his heart won’t take it” Saki explained

“He’s going to jump!” Anri shouted in confirmation. She knew Izaya was capable of a lot of things. What Masaomi said might have been true before, but Izaya loved Shizuo too much, that if something took him away, he wouldn’t know what to do with himself....how to live.
Shizuo turned to Shinra “What’s the quickest way to the roof??”

“Top floor, there’s usually a fire exit” Shinra replied. “But you shouldn’t even be-“ Shizuo darted out of the door without hesitation “Running around” Shinra finished, it wasn’t as if anyone could stop Shizuo anyway.

Izaya stood at the ledge of the roof, looking down as the wind gently blew across his face. Tears still clung to his eyes, he clenched his fists and bit his lower lip. “You weren’t suppose to leave me....you promised you’d never leave me” Izaya’s legs shook, he was fully recovered, at least for the most part. Mentally, he had been holding on to a thread of hope, that he knew Shizuo would pull out of his coma, that was the only thing that drove him on. Shizuo was the only one in his life that he’d truly ever loved, he took a chance on him, based on the thought that nothing could kill him. “I was wrong.....I should have never trusted my emotions” Izaya choked on his sobs “But you made me love you.....I just couldn’t help it. You gave me a new life, what am I suppose to do without you?” He stepped forward, his feet hanging over the edges now “I can’t live this life without you here, if I do, I’m scared I’ll go back to who I used to be. I don’t want to....I don’t want to ever break my promise” Izaya tilted his head up, tears falling once more as he took one last step forward. “I love you, Shizu-chan....wait for me” as Izaya stepped off the ledge he heard a loud voice

“Izaya!!”

Izaya’s eyes snapped open as he felt the wind whip passed his face. Shizu-chan? Time suddenly slowed, he didn’t understand what was happening, someone shouted his name, the only one who ever called his name like that. But it couldn’t have been....

Shizuo darted forward but reached for him a split second too late. He watched in absolute distraught, he couldn’t save him, he didn’t get there in time....how was it fair? Why would fate allow him to wake up from his coma only to take the only one he loved away from him?

Coldness wrapped around his body tightly, it seemed right enough, yet something was missing. Maybe this was suppose to be what happened, but he felt no pain, nothing in his body felt broken-and he would know of course-was this what was suppose to happen? Death was certain, maybe it was suppose to be quick, so quick that it was painless. It wasn’t true, even if you jumped from that height, you had to feel something, you had to feel excruciating pain—even if for a seconds-before death took you immediately after. Izaya was sure of it, but yet he felt nothing, just coldness, like dark hands clinging protectively around him....he was fully aware of this, like shadows....shadows! Celty’s shadows!

Shizuo’s heart almost leapt in his throat. Celty’s shadows had never looked so damn beautiful before. He watched them spread out like a spiders web, wrapping securely around his lover in a shield, making sure nothing harmed him. Shizuo’s tears fell as he choked out a sob when Celty caught
Izaya, instantly stopping his fall, lowering him slowly to safety. “Shit....” Shizuo fell to his knees, his heart still hammering against his rib cage as he clutched his chest. “Izaya....what were you thinking?”

Izaya opened his eyes, he felt ground beneath him then, yet there was still no pain, and he could move! Was his intuition right? Did Celty save him? He frowned, he didn’t ask to be saved, this time, he didn’t want to be saved. As he sat up, her hand lay on his shoulder and a bright light flashed in his eyes, from that of her phone. [Are you crazy!? What were you- you could have died!]

Izaya looked away from her “That was the point”

[What?] [I barely made it in time! What was I going to say to your sisters? To Anri and Saki!]

Izaya stood up and backed away “I didn’t ask to be saved! I didn’t want to be saved...” Izaya clenched his fists “I don’t want to be in this world....can’t you understand? It hurts too much....I don’t want to go back to the way I was....but I will if I try to live without him....I can’t do that to them. We’ve created this life together, I don’t want to screw it up. This is how I want to be remembered now, Shinra will know what I’m talking about. Tell him, that I consent if he still wants to perform that special dissection he was always rambling on about” Izaya smiled “He’ll know what that means too”

Celty stood up [Stop talking like that! You think everyone was just going to accept this decision!]

Izaya smiled sadly at her “I want them to understand. It’s ok if they don’t, but I want them to remember me, as I am now....if that’s not too much to ask....”

Izaya held her hand “You’ve been a good friend to me, I didn’t deserve that, but thank you, look after Shinra. And please lookout for my sisters, they can be trouble, but they’re good kids”

[Izaya! You don’t have to-]

“Please. Please don’t follow me” Izaya turned from her, he didn’t get but a few paces away before he was suddenly met with an angry voice.

“Just what the hell was that!? Are you trying to give me a fucking heart attack!? What the hell made you think that was a good idea!?”
Izaya froze as an all too familiar being stalked up to him. “Shizu-chan? But—but you—“

Shizuo snorted “You think I was going to up and die and leave you here by yourself? You can’t even last five minutes without me, this is proof enough”

Izaya blinked back tears, it couldn’t be. He watched as the doctors tried to revive him.... “I thought....fuck...” Izaya fell to his knees, tears rolling down his face. “I thought I’d lost you....that you left me...alone”

Shizuo growled as he gritted his teeth, he stalked up to Izaya and yanked him up by the shirt, pulled back his fist and punched him. Celty startled but didn’t make a move to intervene, it was clear Shizuo held back enough, though he was probably still weakened from the coma. “You idiot!”

Izaya stared up at him, the latter of rain that had started gently washing away his split lip. His body shook, a delayed reaction to what he’d almost done. “I’m....sorry, Shizu-chan, I’m so sorry....”

Shizuo knelt down and yanked him by his shirt again, this time, he embraced the informant tightly. “Don’t you ever do that again. I don’t ever want to see you that way....please” Shizuo clutched at his clothing “Don’t leave me Izaya....”

Izaya clenched his eyes and wrapped his arms around him, finally. It felt like a lifetime ago since they’d held each other. “I won’t, I promise....as long as you don’t leave me”

Shizuo huffed a laugh into Izaya’s shoulder “Who the hell is going to stop you from doing stupid crap like this if I do?” Izaya pulled away to look Shizuo in the face, Shizuo rubbed a stray tear from his face with his thumb. “I love you”

Izaya smiled and pulled Shizuo forward and crashed their lips together as the rain turned into s fine shower.

Celty sighed silently in relief, she could finally relax, they all could, because Izaya and Shizuo belonged together, no matter what, nothing could tear them apart. It had been proven on more then one occasion, what ever happened to them, it only made them stronger.

“Izaya! Shizuo!” Their kiss was eventually interrupted by the sound of familiar voices calling out to them. They pulled away and glanced over to see their friends and family running over to them. Mairu
and Kururi darted ahead and Izaya was nearly knocked off his feet as the girls launched themselves at him. “Thank god you’re ok...”

Izaya felt his heart constrict, guilt at almost leaving them. “I’m all right now, everything is ok, I promise”

“You can’t ever leave us. Not ever. Both of you. You mean too much” Kururi said

Shizuo placed a hand on her head “Don’t worry kiddos, I’m not going anywhere. Neither is your brother, not while I’m around anyway”

Izaya rolled his eyes but smiled nonetheless, he’d gotten used to Shizuo’s over-protectiveness, and he found that he didn’t mind it any more While Mairu and Kururi held each of Shizuo’s hands, happy to have him back too, Izaya stepped forward and embraced Saki and Anri with each arm as they hugged him. He looked up to see Masaomi frowning at him, he gently pushed the girls off and walked toward the boy. “I’m not going to hurt her again”

Kida tilted his head and looked over at Saki who was smiling with tears of happiness, he looked back at Izaya “I don’t trust you yet. But, I’m glad you didn’t die at least”

Izaya nodded and lay a hand on his shoulder “I’ll take it”

Kida smirked “Good”

Izaya then looked over as Shinra stepped beside them, he gave him a hopeful smile “Still mad at me?”

Shinra frowned and then sighed “I should be” He then shook his head “But you’re impossible to stay mad at these days”

Izaya grinned “Sorry about that. You can blame Shizu-chan”

Shizuo grunted “Oi. I can’t be all to blame”
Izaya chuckled “You kissed me first”

“I-“ Shizuo then blushed “Shut up”

Shinra clapped Izaya’s arm, holding onto it for a moment. “You do mean a lot to me, you know, I should have told you that a long time ago”

Izaya grinned “Don’t go getting sentimental on me now Shinra. You know I was going to let you dissect me”

Shinra chuckled “Wow. Thanks” Shinra glanced over at Celty who was tapping her foot and had her hands on her hips. Shinra smiled and tightened his hold for a second. “Seriously though. I’m proud of you, Izaya”

“You too. I guess we’ve both changed”

Shinra nodded and the two eventually hugged “I love you, you idiot”

Izaya huffed a laugh “Better not let Celty or Shizu-chan hear you say that”

Shirts wrapped his arms tighter “Shut up. You know what I meant”

Izaya winced for a moment and then grinned “I know” Shinra let up his hold “You too”

They pulled away and Shinra turned back to the hospital “Come on. I better check you both over after those little stunts you just pulled”

Izaya and Shizuo grimace, the informant then grinned up at his lover. “Wanna make a run for it?”

Shizuo smirked “Hell yeah”
The two turned in the opposite direction and ran, Shinra turned to see the two just barely before they disappeared into the night. “Naw! Izaya! Shizuo!” Shinra sighed “They’re hopeless”

Celty’s shoulders jolted, a sign that she was laughing [Just let them be. They’re fine Shinra. They’re finally ok]

Masaomi linked his hand in Saki’s. “You ok?”

Saki placed her head on his shoulder with a smile “I am”

The boy then grinned “So. I knew you had kind of a weird devotion for him, but I didn’t know you were in love with the guy”

Saki turned to him with a slight tinge to her cheeks “Don’t take it that way! And you shouldn’t have been eavesdropping!”

Kida laughed “I was kidding” Saki punched him a few times “Easy. I swear I was kidding” he continued to laugh as the rest soon joined them.

…………………………

Izaya and Shizuo had stopped running when they’d reached a fair distance from the hospital. They were now both sat on a high wall. “Guess we can’t go home” Shizuo said after a moment of silence

Izaya chuckled lightly “There’s yours”

“Yeah. But I know you like the space”

Izaya shrugged “Its not important right now. I do have another apartment, I brought it during the time I was drugged”
Shizuo snorted at the convenience “Takes care of that then”

“We don't have to use it. We can look for a place together, if you want”

“Seriously?”

Izaya shrugged, he was tired and he really didn't care what they did. He just wanted to go wherever and sleep. “It's late. We'll spend a couple of nights there, then we can look for a different place”

“Are you sure? What are you going to do with the other one?”

“I was thinking about giving it to Namie”

Shizuo almost fell off the wall “Did you hit your head or something?”

Izaya chuckled “Like you're one to talk, coma man”

Shizuo growled “Shut up”

“I figured, she's been staying at hotels since she started working for me, it might just be easier for her to live there”

“Think she'll buy that? You know she doesn't trust you much”

Izaya chuckled “I'll just tell her it's a holiday bonus. That she'll buy”

Shizuo laughed. “Hey. Do you know if my brother came at all? I mean, did anyone tell him?”

“I don't know about how much he knows, but I was told he'd to visit a couple of times”

“I should tell him I'm ok, that I'm awake”
Izaya pulled his phone out from his pocket and sifted through the numbers and then stopped when he landed on the right number. “Here”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “Why the hell do you have his number?”

“How'd he get it?”

“I think my sisters had it”

“How the hell- you know what, never mind” Shizuo soon sent a quick text “He's always busy. So he won't mind if I just text him” Shizuo’s fingers lingered over the buttons.”What do I say?”

Izaya sighed and grabbed the phone back “You're hopeless” he then sent a text to Kasuka :I'm ok now, Shizuo x: “There”

“Really? You know he’s going to know that’s not me. I’ve never sent a fricking x on the end of a message, not to a family member anyway”

Izaya shrugged, “It still got the message across” Izaya then read the message that was replied :Thank you for letting me know Izaya. Tell Shizuo I’ll see him soon: Izaya chuckled and then showed Shizuo

The blonde laughed “Yeah. I told you”

The two were silent for a moment, Izaya looked up at the sky, the rain had long since stopped and the stars were shining brightly “I don’t think either of us want to talk about what happened”

Shizuo looked at him and then down at the ground. “I'm sorry, if I hurt you”

Izaya lay his head on Shizuo’s shoulder. “Neither of us are to blame. But.....I didn’t mean what I said, back at Shinra’s, you know...when you tried to strangle me”

Shizuo snorted “Yeah. Maybe we both said shit, whatever, maybe we deserved it”

“Maybe. Still. I’m sorry”

“Me too” Shizuo laughed then “We really do get into some serious shit don’t we? I can’t imagine the damage if we’d have gotten along the rest of the time”

Izaya smirked “Maybe this is all a way of catching up”
“Yeah well. I think we’ve proved that no matter what happens, we can’t be pulled apart”

“Alive or otherwise”

Shizuo tensed and turned to look at him “I don’t want to think about that. I can’t believe you would-”

Izaya smiled “It hurt a lot to let you in, you think I’d be ok letting you go?”

“No. I dunno. I didn't think you would do something like that-”

Izaya's smile faltered a little “I was scared, of what I might become, given time.....”

Shizuo understood what Izaya meant, he wrapped his arms around his small frame, noting he seemed a lot smaller since the last time he held him. “Shit, Izaya, you're fricking bony”

Izaya chuckled “Give me a break. I haven't exactly been able to look after myself properly”

“What kind of excuse is that? You can still eat. Damn it”

“Don't worry so much. I'll be all right, I'm anorexic or anything”

Shizuo shook his head, Izaya always had a hard time taking care of himself, he knew he didn't do it on purpose. But it worried him sometimes. “I know. We really have been through hell this last-what? Nine months?”

“Ten. I think”

Shizuo growled, clenching his fists in anger “I can't believe we spent almost a year apart like this.....what if I-what if I really ended up hurting you?”

Izaya grabbed Shizuo's clenched fist “You didn't. We're ok now. It's really over now”
“I still don't understand how it all got solved, that part is confusing the hell out of me”

Izaya chuckled “I'll explain it better later....for now-” Izaya lay his forehead against Shizuo's chest, relief flooding him as he heard the strong beat of his heart, Izaya bit back tears, he refused to cry again, he'd had enough of that. “Can we just go home?”

Shizuo sighed in relief and wrapped his arms around him “God yes” Shizuo bit back his own tears “I missed you, so damn much”

Izaya fist Shizuo's blue top “I know. But I'm here now. I missed you too” he then chuckled, realizing that Shizuo still had his hospital shirt and pants on. “Let's go, before anyone thinks you've escaped from a mental hospital” Izaya laughed, pulling at Shizuo's top.

Shizuo laughed “Maybe you're right” Shizuo jumped down off the wall and then held his hand out

“Do I have to walk?”

Shizuo rolled his eyes but didn't retort, Izaya did look exhausted, he pulled on his arm and Izaya wrapped his legs around his waist and lay his head on the strong man's back. Shizuo began to walk in the directions he was given. A smirk suddenly crossed his features. “By the way. That was some night” he felt Izaya tense, oh yeah, the informant knew exactly what he was talking about. “I didn't realise how wild you were”

Izaya blushed and hid himself as he sunk his head. “Shut up. Idiot”

Shizuo laughed “Can't imagine what we would have done if both of us were ourselves”

Izaya groaned in dismay “Please shut up”

Shizuo chuckled “Sorry. Couldn't help myself. Had to make a quip at that”

“You enjoyed it too....don't deny it”
Shizuo growled lightly “I'll drop you”

Izaya chuckled “Now who's getting flustered”

“Damn flea” Shizuo said it playfully, he was just so relieved to have him back

“Protozoan...” Izaya remarked back just as playfully, Shizuo then stopped and craned his head, Izaya leaned forward and they shared a long kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Phew! That took a lot of effort, I really hope you guys enjoyed this chapter. I'm sorry if maybe Izaya seemed a little OOC, but I wanted to get everyone to understand just how much he had come to love Shizuo. I hope it was a good read, I feel like it's almost coming to an end, I'd like to finish it with a few more chapters, I know you guys have had such angst and hurt lately. So be sure to look forward to fluff and happiness in the last few.

Happy Easter everyone!
Hi all! sorry that this isn’t an updated chapter. I just wanted to say, because I don’t get much time to reply to all the wonderful comments that have been left for me throughout this sequel. I’d just like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support and wonderful feedback I’ve received, thank you for reading, I really do appreciate it, it makes me very happy :)

A new chapter is on the way, I just haven’t had the time lately, but it should be up sometime this week! I’m unsure how you all felt about my last chapter and would like to apologize if there was anything in there that should have been tagged, I have now added a tag to warn readers. I didn’t know the chapter was going in that direction until I wrote it lol. Sometimes, unplanned events are the best outcomes, I was very happy with it, so I kept it in.

Anyways, I’m rambling now, so I hope you all had a good Easter and thank you again for your wonderful feedback!

An update will come soon!

xxx
“Are you sure this is what you want, Izaya?” Satoshi asked him as they sat on his couch. Izaya had gone to see him a few days after they’d left the hospital.

“Ne. he’s still a coward, and he’s still somewhat of use. At least, to you anyway. Though, perhaps one day, I might find a purpose for him after all”

“But he blew up your apartment Izaya. Not to mention being responsible for those other people’s deaths”

“That is a problem, isn’t it? But; that man would do anything to keep himself safe and out of jail. I should know, I was like that” Izaya smirked a little.

“I can’t just release him. There’re too many witness statements. Gok for example, testified, he’s now got life” Izaya raised an eyebrow, Satoshi almost shrugged “He was in for murder, as well as the attempted murder of course. He was at death sentence”

“Good for him. Nakura’s case is different though no?”

Satoshi leaned forward, elbows resting on his knees “It’s difficult to say to be honest. I know you’ve known him a long time and you’ve put some good evidence forward on your part, I know you said that it’s possibly your fault that he did what he did. That maybe he wasn’t thinking about the rest of the people in the building, just purely focusing on you-or rather-those associated with you. But the fact remains, that he did do it”

“So is it wise to put him in the same prison as Gok. Since the two seemed to be rather acquainted?”

“No. but if I place him in another station, it puts me off the case and who knows what might happen then” Izaya smirked, Satoshi huffed a laugh. “You sneaky bastard”

“Thank you”
Satoshi shook his head. “Damn Izaya. One day, I will get you to work for me”

Izaya chuckled “If you say so”

Satoshi sighed “All right. You win. He’ll serve his sentence, in Harajuku mental clinic”

Izaya nodded, the smirk never leaving his face “That way, you can tag him and use him if and when needed, he won’t be able to protest at all”

“True. Though there are limits. At least, to my conscience”

Izaya chuckled “Like I said, perhaps one day I might find a use for him”

Satoshi shook his head “Isn’t that what caused the whole thing in the first place?”

Izaya sighed “I was just joking. Besides, Shizu-chan wouldn’t let me anywhere near him anyway, even if I wanted to”

Satoshi nodded “At least that’s something, I guess. Try to stay out of trouble from now on, at least, try not to piss people off too much. You know, you both gave us a scare”

Izaya laughed “My pissing people off days are over. At least, most of the time. To innocent’s anyway”

Satoshi rolled his eyes “Not exactly the best promise. But I’ll accept it, because it’s you” the two stood up, Izaya making his way to the door. “Take care of yourself, Izaya”

Izaya waved his hand nonchalantly “I’m sure we’ll need one another soon enough, don’t miss me too much though” he then walked out of the door

Satoshi shook his head “Cocky bastard”
Izaya tilted his head as he listened to his sister on the phone, Mairu, he had a sneaking suspicion that she had done something he wasn't going to like. The way she was stalling—she always did that when she was hiding something. He'd had her on the phone for a good twenty minutes now, there was only so much small talk he could muster with her. “Mairu. Spill it. I'm in the middle of a job—” he wasn't, well—he was, but it wasn't as important as he'd made it out to be.

“Whatever! You're always in the middle of a job when I call”

Izaya rolled his eyes “Just because I'm self-employed, you don't get to call whenever and expect me to—”

“Mum and dad invited us to the family gathering and I told them you would come with us” Izaya blinked, she said it so fast and with absolutely no break that he couldn't even break any of it down. He managed to get Mum and dad and then he was lost in her flurry of words. “Not even I'm that good at keeping up with what you just said, and I practically raised you”

Mairu huffed “Yeah yeah, fine job dear brother. Anyway—Mum and dad—”

“Mairu!” he interrupted her before she could try it again “I will hang up on you”

“Ok!” she sighed “Don't be mad”

“You know when you say that I'm already halfway there” Mairu made a noise, indicating she had stuck her tongue out. Izaya pinched the bridge of his nose, only a select few could cause him frustration. “Mairu...”

“Sorry. Ok. I spoke to Mom and Dad earlier today”

Izaya looked up then, he was surprised they even remembered them. “And?”

“That's your reaction? Just-and?”
“We didn't exactly have the best encounter the last time I saw them”

“What did you see them?”

“It was almost two years ago, around four months after me and Shizu-chan got together”

“Well, I bet they've probably forgotten by now”

Izaya clicked his tongue *I hardly think so* he then smirked “I don't think they'll ever forget what I did”

Mairu sighed “What did you do?”

Izaya chuckled “I wouldn't worry about it. What did they want this time? Although I'm sure your encounter was more of a pleasant one then ours”

“I suppose so- wait, what do you mean *ours*?”

Izaya grimaced “Shizu-chan happened to be there when she came to my apartment”

“Oh. Can't imagine that was fun for him”

“Not so much. She assumed he was my butler and when I dared to introduce him as to who he was to me, it was exactly the reaction I predicted”

“Which was?”

Izaya hesitated, he didn't want to upset her, because he knew about her sexuality. He warned her a few times to never tell their mother, having only a hunch back then, but now that he knew for sure- he was happy for them that their parents hadn't disowned them, he wanted it to stay that way. “She wasn't exactly accepting”
“Oh...” Izaya could tell that Mairu was disappointed, but he couldn't lie to her

“Sorry Mairu, I did warn you, even when we were younger”

“It's not that, well, not really anyway......”

“Why do I get the feeling I'm not going to like what's next?”

“They started talking about New Year’s, you know, how they always insisted on a family gathering every five years?”

Izaya pulled a sour face, he hated those gatherings, he didn't know why he even went, the last one that he had liked was when he was only fifteen. His grandfather was the only one he had gotten attached to, it was also the last gathering his grandfather attended, having died just after Izaya had graduated. Most of his family hated him, at least, he was pretty sure they did, he'd gotten enough death glares on the last one. Izaya was twenty by then, he had been an informant for two years and his personality had gone through a big change since the last time they'd seen him. He knew that his parents had already made their feelings toward him clear, but he'd noticed it in some of their other family members too. It became noticeable more so since his grandfather wasn't there to ward them off, and of course, he hadn't been close to his sisters back then either, not like he was now. “I knew I wasn't going to like it”

“They insisted we go......um, I kind of told them you'd be coming”

Izaya almost head-butted the table as he lowered his head in agitation “Mairu....” he groaned

“You have to come! You always used to before! And you're different again now!”

“That's not going to make much of a difference to them. I know what they think and-” Izaya paled “Mairu, did you tell them I would be going, or did you say we” Izaya didn't need to explain what he meant by we and by the silence he was most likely right. “As much as I might enjoy seeing our family become little dots as they're thrown across to wherever, Shizu-chan isn't the type to keep quiet, he's incredibly protective- you know this”
“I know but- but if he goes, then you won't be so—maybe they won't want to—”

“Ridicule me?”

“Yes! And- and if you don’t go, it'll just be me and Kururi. We're not kids anymore, what if they think we're not good enough either?”

She had a point, didn't she? If he didn't go this time, that left the girls on their own to fend for themselves, against half of their homophobic family—though he could only vouch for his mother—but he wouldn't put it past them. It was strange though, his dad seemed more open to toward his orientation than she did. It wasn't all that surprising really, since his grandfather was on his dad's side anyway, he never got to meet his mother's dad—having left before he was even born—and he honestly didn't care. “All right. Since you've already told them. I'll go”

“Great!” Izaya couldn't help but wonder whether he'd just been guilt-tripped into it. “Are we seeing you on Christmas?”

“I'll let you know”

“Ok! Love ya!” Mairu then hung up, Izaya shook his head with a sigh, leaning his face against his palm.

“Maybe I can bribe him...” Izaya had no idea how the hell he was going to get Shizuo to go with him, he knew how the man felt about his parents, he wasn't quite sure how he'd take to the rest of them. The whole 'I'll let you be on top' was pointless, since he almost always was anyway. He shook his head, now that he thought about it, bribing Shizuo with anything to do with sex probably wouldn't work on him. He then remembered something, something Shizuo had said when they had spent the previous Christmas together, their first one.

“Let's talk about the 25th.”

“Ok?”

“What do you want to do? I don't really know if there's anything specific that you like to do on that day”
“I don’t really do much. I sometimes visit my folks. But not in the last two years”

Izaya tilted his head and then said “Maybe next year”

“Really?”

“It is a bit short notice this year”

“I know. But I’m more surprised you would even go with me”

“That’s what you said you did. Isn’t Christmas suppose to be about family? I personally don’t care”

“Tst. Yeah, I’ve met your family. Can’t say I blame you”

Izaya smiled, now that was a bribe

Shizuo walked down the street, heading back to their new home, the sun was setting but he was glad to have finished early today. He took out a cigarette and lit it, shoving the lighter back in his pocket. He took a long drag and breathed out the smoke, along with the cold air that had begun to form. “Damn. How do I get him to agree?” Shizuo had just received a phone call from his brother, telling him he wanted to see him at Christmas and that they should visit their folks this year. “Shit” Shizuo wasn’t sure what Izaya would think, he had indicated last Christmas that they could see them one year. He wondered if he’d still want to, after everything that had happened-he wondered if he even remembered. “Hmm, how to bribe Izaya......” Shizuo smirked “Yeah. That’ll probably work, I’m pretty sure he won’t say no”

Izaya looked up from his laptop as Shizuo came through the door, he smiled and waved at him. Shizuo closed the door and Izaya got up from his chair and followed him over to the couch. Shizuo collapsed into the soft cushions.

Their new home was different in comparison to Izaya’s old one. It still had a spacious exterior, the windows spaced into four separate ones along the back wall so there was more lighting. Izaya’s new
desk was longer and separated from Namie's this time. It remained by the windows toward the back, it was just simply how he liked it. He was a little annoyed about his book collection, some of those you just couldn't get again, having collected them overtime. The carpet was a light shade of grey and the walls on the darker side of beige. As it was, the apartment they'd both chosen felt a lot more like a home, their home and it finally felt as if they were together. Shizuo liked Izaya's old apartment, one that had become his own, but this new one, it was theirs, they'd chosen it for the both of them. There were two bedrooms which were on the upper level, this apartment had two floors and it made the place seem even more spaced out. Their bedroom was much bigger than the previous one too, the carpet was a light blue and the walls were white, with an attached en-suite of course. Izaya wasn't a big fan of the colours, but he'd chosen the space and most of the furniture, so he let Shizuo happily pick the décor design. At least the seating areas were black. Their kitchen was bigger also, white and black tiled floor and marbled black walls, island fitted counters and matching cupboards above took up half of the kitchen. A long silver fridge stood at one end and a six-hob stove on the opposite side. The table was glass based and long with six chairs, three on each side, standing on black tinted legs.

At first, Shizuo felt uncomfortable around all the expensive looking furniture, it wasn't really his style. Izaya simply pointed out that he never used to care as much on what furniture he had, as long as it did its job and looked nice enough. He was excited to actually give a damn and they spent a lot of time picking out the right sets. Shizuo wondered, that maybe Izaya was hinting that they'd buy a house one day, with all the nice-looking stuff, it wouldn't surprise him. He didn't dare tell him that though, he couldn't imagine that kind of step just yet, because buying a house-said more than either one was ready for. He felt kind of bad that Izaya had been the one to pay for most of the furniture and the apartment, however, Izaya also told him that he'd received a large lump sum of money due to insurance from the fire. He imagined that some of the people from the building received the same benefits, though he knew some of their families had inherited their money, due to life insurance. The other major change in their lives, was that this apartment, was in Ikebukuro.

Shizuo looked over as Izaya came to sit beside him, he wrapped an arm around Izaya's shoulders, and the informant snuggled against him. Shizuo raised an eyebrow as Izaya subconsciously undid his bowtie. “Hey” Izaya said with a slight grin on his face as he looked up at him, now Shizuo was suspicious.

“What do you want?” Izaya chuckled, busted already, Shizuo grunted as Izaya jumped and straddled his lap. Izaya leaned forward and captured his lips slowly and then his hands roamed to undo his shirt. Shizuo merely watched him, almost mesmerised by him. His shirt opened and Izaya ran his hands down his slightly chiselled abdomen, he then began to unbuckle his pants, Shizuo's eyes widen a little and he grabbed both of his lovers' hands. “Ok. I think I get the message”

Izaya looked up at him, eyes full of innocence, but Shizuo knew better. “No fun today?”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “First of all, I need to shower, second, this is a new couch and third.” Shizuo almost moaned as Izaya grinded against him “Shit. Stop it, that's not fair”
Izaya chuckled “And third?” he asked as he leaned forward and licked across the blond’s nipples.

Shizuo clenched his eyes shut, Izaya was so damn good, he grunted and pushed against his shoulders. “Cut it. I want to talk to you about something”

Izaya grinned, he then noticed Shizuo glaring at him, though he almost burst with laughter at how hard his lover was trying to keep himself composed, especially with the growing discomfort Izaya felt from him underneath. “Ok. I'll stop” Izaya said, still grinning as he remained where he was and sat back slightly, hands finding Shizuo’s and linking them together. “What do you want to talk about?”

Shizuo let out the breath he was holding “All right, now that I have your actual attention” Izaya bit his lip, trying to contain his laughter, Shizuo growled “Stop laughing!”

Izaya laughed loud then “I'm sorry, I can't take you seriously at the moment....”

Shizuo snorted and then shoved Izaya to the side “Fine. I'll shower first, then you won't be distracted” Izaya laughed even louder and Shizuo just got up from the couch and made his way upstairs to their bathroom, mumbling a few curses under his breath.

Once Shizuo was done in the shower and his discomfort was gone, he found that Izaya had calmed down and was in the kitchen making dinner. Shizuo sat at the table and sighed happily, man he loved Izaya’s cooking. He didn't say anything at first, fearing that if he did, it might set Izaya off again, though he will admit, it was nice to hear him laugh like that. “Smells good”

Izaya smiled, turning with a spachelor in his hands “It's just chicken with some veg, nothing exciting”

Shizuo grinned “So it's a hot pot in other words”

Izaya glanced over his shoulder and then turned back to stir the pot “Shut up”
Shizuo chuckled “Still smells good anyways”

“This is not becoming a regular thing you know; I don't want to be known as the 'woman' in this relationship”

Shizuo snorted and then suddenly burst, now it was his turn to laugh “What the hell Izaya....”

Izaya turned back to him, pouting a little, he then rolled his eyes “You just pictured me in some kind of maid outfit, didn't you?”

Shizuo laughed even harder, almost falling off the chair “I am now!” Izaya narrowed his eyes, he then picked a carrot out of the pot and flung it at his hysterical partner. Shizuo growled, stopping his laughter as he quickly took off the vegetable, Izaya grinned at the little red mark it left on his head. “Shit that's hot” Izaya raised an eyebrow, Shizuo chuckled, his laughter calming “The carrot! The carrot was hot- not that I think you would be-in that-” Shizuo growled “Fuck off”

Izaya chuckled and walked toward him, leaning down to steal a kiss and then made his way back to the stove. “No wonder Kanra turned you on”

Shizuo's cheeks turned red “Shut up!”

“Ok ok, jokes aside. What's with the seriousness?”

Shizuo sighed “My brother called today; said he wants to see me at Christmas this year”

“All right, I'm sure we can host, if he doesn't mind the fact that my sisters will be constantly on his heels”

“Err, actually, he's going over to our folks, wants us to go too” Shizuo looked for any sign of tension in him, but he soon saw Izaya's shoulders jolting. “What the hell is funny now?”

Izaya smiled as he turned off the stove, he turned to Shizuo “Nothing. I actually needed to ask you something, you annulled my bribe”
“I did what?”

“My sisters called me today and said that my parents told them to come to the New Year’s family gathering, and the delightful little shits said that we’d be coming too”

Shizuo did tense, he also got the feeling Izaya wasn't too thrilled about it either. Izaya sat down next to him. “Didn't think your family did gatherings”

“It's an event my parents and grandparents started when I was born, my mother more so. I don't know whether it was to show off her first child, though I'm sure that part didn't last long” Shizuo didn't respond to that, he knew Izaya hated pity, so he simply took his hand.

“Didn't you go to New York one year?”

“Yes. But the gathering is only every five years, some kind of reunion, to see the changes in the family”

“Oh. So, you must have been twenty on the last one huh?”

Izaya nodded “It wasn't pleasant, I'm pretty sure most of the family were trying to disintegrate me with their glares. I imagine our mother has most likely been the cause of that. I can deal with insults, I can deal with everyday humans' hate, I'm used to it, but it's different when it's family”

Shizuo growled, hand tightening around Izaya's. “They're not family Izaya, they're barely anything but dickwards. Your family is here, with us, your sisters, our friends-Shinra and Celty, Kadota and the gang, they're your family”

Izaya gave him a smile “Sap”

Shizuo chuckled “Yeah well, it's true. So, if I annulled your bribe, what now?”

Izaya shrugged “I was laughing because to get you to attend the gathering with me, I was going to
suggest going to your parents for Christmas, since you said you sometimes go”

Shizuo blinked, touched by the thought, not even hesitation. “Really? You’d do that?”

“After the way mine treated you, I owe you” Shizuo leaned forward and kissed him, Izaya wrapped his hands around Shizuo's neck. “Special points earned?”

Shizuo huffed a laugh “Definitely. It makes me feel a little bad, I kind of had my own bribe, to get you to come to my folks”

Izaya raised an eyebrow “Curious” he grinned

“Yeah....”

“Well?”

Shizuo pressed his lips close to Izaya's ear and whispered “Fuck me tonight” Izaya's eyes widen in surprise for a moment and then he smirked, who knew. Izaya shuddered at the thought and then pulled back from him.

“I'm becoming a bad influence on you, Shizu-chan”

Shizuo grinned “Just the parts I like”

Izaya chuckled and tutted “Bad boy”

“Look who's talking”

Izaya scooped two bowls of the pot and they ate in comfortable silence, Shizuo telling him about the odd client here and there. Once they had eaten, they cleaned up the kitchen and then made their way upstairs to bed.
Izaya's hand curled around Shizuo's cock as he moved inside him, nibbling on his shoulder. It had been sometime since they'd switched positions, Shizuo had almost forgotten what it felt like. He felt his head spin as Izaya started to pump him, long fingers spread evenly around him.
“Ngh...Fuck....Izaya...”

Izaya thrust upwards, grinning, making Shizuo tense and hiss with pleasure “Hmm? What was that?”

“F-faster....”

“Hm? I can't hear you, Shizu-chan” Shizuo knew perfectly well that Izaya could hear him, he was such a teasing lover, but it wasn't often that they did it this way, so he indulged him.

Shizuo growled “Fuck me damn it!”

Izaya laughed and dipped his index finger into Shizuo's head “Dirty mouth”

“Izaya....” Shizuo warned “I will pull away and take you hard in a minute if you don't stop fucking teasing”

Izaya bit back another laugh, he pressed his other hand flat against Shizuo’s back and pushed him forward. Shizuo grunted at the new position, bent over as Izaya knelt over him. Shizuo fisted the sheets as Izaya pushed inside him deeper, he began to thrust fast and hard into him. This position was easier for them both when Izaya took the lead, since Shizuo was a little taller than him. Shizuo's breathless pants were Izaya's gain, he pumped him faster as he moved inside him with hard jolts.
“Shizu-chan..... come with me...”

Shizuo moaned loudly as Izaya pounded into him and finally, finally hit his prostate, once, twice...Shizuo suppressed a cry of pleasure into the pillow as he released himself into Izaya's hand.
“Izaya!” a muffled scream as Izaya came with a cry of his own and threw his head back. The two collapsed to the side, panting heavily, Shizuo was pretty sure at some point, Izaya had left claw marks on his back when they'd fumbled across the bed. Izaya pulled out slowly and lay on his back, still breathless. Shizuo turned over, feeling very sated and kissed the top of Izaya's forehead. “Wanna
clean up?”

Izaya merely grunted in reply and Shizuo chuckled and lifted him up and then put him on the floor. He looked down at him, it seemed kind of funny to see Izaya just lying there. Izaya opened his eyes to see Shizuo's grinning face. “What?”

“It's funny. You're just, naked on the floor”

Izaya sat up and grabbed a pillow, Shizuo darted backwards and avoided the attack. “You can swap the sheets, I'm getting a shower” Izaya stretched with a yawn, Shizuo wouldn't tell him, but he found it absolutely adorable that Izaya was always really sleepy after sex.

“Don't drown” Shizuo joked

“Tch. You can't drown in a shower. Idiot...”

Shizuo laughed and began changing the duvets and pillowcases. By the time he was done, Izaya came out of the bathroom in a pair of grey pyjama bottoms. He'd put on some of the weight he'd lost in the months Shizuo had been in a coma, but he was still too skinny for the blond’s liking. Izaya flopped across the bed and crawled into the covers, shivering slightly. “Put a damn shirt on if you’re cold”

Izaya looked at him through half lidded eyes “No need” he smiled “You'll do”

Shizuo clicked his tongue and made his way into the bathroom to get his own shower. When he was done, he sighed as he got into the covers, Izaya instantly snuggled back against him, seeking out his body heat. “Better now?” Izaya hummed a response and Shizuo chuckled, kissing his lover's shoulder. “I love you” another hum, Shizuo smiled as Izaya kissed his arm as he wrapped it around him.
15th December

Izaya stood back to admire his handiwork, smiling proudly, it took time, but he was finally done. Shizuo then wrapped his arms around him from behind, smiling up at the very specifically decorated Christmas tree. Colourful rainbow lights wrapped around from the top to the bottom. Red and gold beads hung neatly in a set of four, mixing with one another. Red bows hung at some of the ends and glittered snowflake ornaments adorned the rest, the final touch was a bright gold star which sat perfectly on top. “Nice” Shizuo said beside his ear.

Izaya’s smile broadened “Thanks! Not too much?”

“No. it's perfect”

Izaya sighed and leaned back “Good”

Shizuo hugged him tighter, Izaya turned in his arms with a little grin, holding up one arm. “What?”

“Mistletoe” Izaya's eyes glanced up and Shizuo followed his line of vision, he then returned the grin.

“Hmm, my favourite kind of plant” Izaya chuckled and then pressed his lips against him.

“All right! Enough! Siblings are present who do not want to see where that was heading” Mairu shouted, the two pulled away, Shizuo startled with a blush. Izaya laughed and the two moved to greet the twins. They were spending a couple of days at the apartment since Izaya and Shizuo were going to be away for Christmas. The informant felt bad for leaving them by themselves, but Shinra and Celty said they’d be happy to have them over for the day. The twins understood, it was kind of a big deal for their brother this year, they knew he was a little nervous about meeting Shizuo’s parents. Mairu darted over to the tree, eyes wide with excitement. “Wow! That looks great!”

“It's so pretty” Kururi added and the two set their presents down under it.

“Want some hot chocolate kiddos?” Shizuo asked

Mairu turned, with her hands on her hips “You know, we're not kids any more Shizu-chan”
Izaya suppressed a laugh when Shizuo glared at him, he then turned back to Mairu with a grin “Oh ok.

I guess you don't want a hot chocolate with whipped cream, chocolate shavings, marshmallows?”

The girl’s eyes glinted with happiness, Mairu jumped up and down “No! No! I want! I want!”

Shizuo laughed “Thought so” he then turned to Izaya “Want one?” Izaya pulled a face “Obviously not the diabetic kind”

Izaya laughed and shook his head “I'm good”

“Tea?”

Izaya nodded and then turned to the girls “Your room is ready, why don't you put your things upstairs and then come down and we can open presents”

“Ok!” Mairu and Kururi ran upstairs and Izaya watched them go before heading into the kitchen.

“The gifts were a good idea” Izaya told him as he leant against the counter, watching Shizuo make the drinks.

“Well, they are right, they're getting older now, so I figured they'd appreciate it more”

“I kind of dread to think what they've gotten us”

Shizuo chuckled “I can't imagine it's sentimental. But they might surprise you” he placed all the mugs carefully on a tray and carried them into the living room, Izaya following after him. The twins came barrelling back down the stairs, already hyper without the drink they were about to devour. “Well at least we know the childish nature runs in the family” Izaya pouted and they all sat on the long corner couch, Shizuo placed the drinks on the table. “I saw that”

“Shut up”
Mairu and Kururi happily dug into their special drink, starting by plucking the marshmallows off, then eating the cream and then gently sipping on the creamy texture. “Oh yeah. That's so good!” Mairu exclaimed loudly

Shizuo laughed “Well thanks”

“Shizu-chan is the best hot chocolate maker” Kururi commented

Shizuo smiled, remembering how Akane had very much enjoyed hers when he'd made it for her. A part of him still wished that they'd adopted her for themselves, he couldn't help but feel that they'd make great parents. Izaya lay his head on Shizuo's shoulder, smiling contently. “Ok! Presents time!” Mairu suddenly shouted and then shimmied over to the tree and back again. She handed Izaya his first, it was squared with gold wrapping and a silver ribbon wrapped around it, tied into a bow at the front.

“Do I have to go first? It's kind of intimidating”

Mairu rolled her eyes, she then smiled, her brother had changed so much over the last two years. She didn't know how they'd ever live without him in their lives now. “Don't be dramatic” she told him. “Just open it, it’s from the both of us, it’s kind of-a little soppy, but it took a long time to put together” Mairu bit her thumb nail “I hope you like it”

Izaya raised an eyebrow, since when did they get so nervous? He then pulled at the ribbon to untie the bow. He raised the corners up with his fingertips and pulled back the paper, he tilted his head at the black folder.

Mairu sighed “Open it”

Shizuo leaned over as Izaya opened the first cover page. As he did so, he found many neatly placed pictures of the three of them, starting from the early days. There were a couple of him holding the girls when they were born, then some as they got older and he was attending high school and they had just started elementary. There were fewer pictures after that, but Izaya wasn't even aware that they had this many. The last pictures were that of last year, their Christmas and new year’s pictures, some of these included Shizuo too. The end picture had all four of them in, Kururi was holding Izaya's arm and Mairu was sitting on top of Shizuo's shoulders sporting a peace sign, the two men
were linked by the fingers and both smiling. At the bottom of the page, it said 'Merry Christmas, love Mairu and Kururi' in gold lettering. “That's pretty cool” Shizuo commented

“It took a while; we didn't even know if we had enough to make an album” Mairu explained “It was Kururi's idea at first”

Izaya bit his lip, trying to contain his emotions, he would not let them see how touched he was. Shizuo nudged him in the shoulder, making him realize he hadn't said a word since he'd opened it. “It's- I wasn't aware there were this many pictures of us” Mairu smiled, she looked at Kururi and they both got up from the floor and crawled onto the couch. Izaya moved his arms as the girls hugged him, he smiled and rested his hands on their backs. “Thank you”

Shizuo smiled and then chuckled as he flipped the book to the front again. “I can't believe you were such a little runt, what happened?”

Izaya snorted “Shut up, I was a kid once you know”

Shizuo grinned, tilting his head “Just once? I think your body grew up, but you didn’t”

“Ha ha, hilarious”

Shizuo pointed at the third picture “Seriously, look at you, your little spiked hair”

Izaya clicked his tongue and shut the book “That's enough, picking on me time is over”

The three laugh and the girls bounced off back to the floor and then handed Shizuo his. “Your turn” Mairu said happily. “We really weren’t sure what you would like, sorry”

“Don't worry about that. Let's see what we got” Shizuo lifted the lid off the square white box. It wasn't wrapped like Izaya’s, but the box was fancy enough. He whistled when he saw its contents. Izaya looked at them and chuckled.

“He's certainly not going to grumble about those” Inside the box, divided into five sections, were five freshly made cakes. There was a chocolate sponge with a milk chocolate centre and a strawberry for
decoration. A round meringue with fresh cream through the middle. A long pastry based, with a cream filling and a chocolate topping. A round pie with fresh kiwi and raspberries on top of a strawberry sauce. The middle one was the most special, it had two layers, each layer had cream swirls through it, the layers were made up of soft light sponge; the top, had a smooth layer of vanilla icing and was decorated with sprinkles. “Death by sugar” Izaya teased and Shizuo laughed with a light shrug.

“These are really good. There’s not a lot of places that make these kinds of cakes. They’re not cheap either. You shouldn't have gone to the trouble....”

Mairu smiled “Wow, you really like them?”

“The middle one is my favourite. How did you know?”

“Your brother gave us the idea. He said you liked puddings, told us the story about when you tried to hurl a refrigerator at him cause he stole your pudding cup”

Izaya looked at him “Seriously Shizu-chan?”

“I was a kid. It had my fricking name on it”

“No wonder you used to throw trash cans and vending machines at me. If all it took to set you off was stealing a pudding cup, you must have really been pissed at me. Not that I didn't already know that, but hearing that, street items sound pretty mild to what you could have thrown”

Shizuo growled lightly “Shut up. I couldn't help it all right, and you did provoke me” Izaya laughed

“Anyway” Mairu interrupted “He told us a couple of your favourite bakery's, so we did a little window shopping first. This one seemed like the best, and the lady who made them gave us discount too when we mentioned your name”

“She knew me?”

“Yeah. She said she hasn't seen you since you were young, but she remembered your name. She also
Kururi took the hint and removed the bottle of milk from the bag and handed it to him. Shizuo took it slowly, noting there was a note attached to it. 'I never did thank you for saving my life. What happened wasn't your fault, keep strengthening those bones alright? :) Shizuo blinked. That young woman, from the store, but I thought she- I thought she'd be afraid of me

“Shizu-chan? What's wrong?”

Shizuo shook his head with a small smile “Nothing. Just someone I used to know when I was a kid”

“We got them on the way here, so they're very fresh” Mairu told him

Shizuo placed the box to the side and shimmied off the couch, bringing them both in for a hug. “They're really great, thanks”

Izaya smiled at them, whatever that milk bottle was all about, it seemed to make Shizuo happy. “You might want to put them in the fridge” he advised, Shizuo nodded and left to do so. Izaya then turned to the girls. “What bakery was this?”

“Not far from here. It's near the Toshima ward elementary school. It's called Anderson I think”

“Did you catch her name?”

Kururi tilted her head, trying to recall, Mairu placed a finger to her chin “Um, maybe.... Kira?”

Izaya was intrigued, he read over the note and it didn't take his intellectual mind long to connect the dots. Shizuo came back and the three fell silent, he sat down back next to Izaya and said, “Did I miss something?”

Izaya smiled and replied “No, just waiting for you”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow but shrugged and Izaya curled against him for a second. “You’re
“suspicious”

Izaya rolled his eyes “And you’re paranoid”

“Oh!” Mairu suddenly shouted “Our turn now! Gimme gimme!” Mairu held out her hands with an excited smile.

Izaya got up from the couch and retrieved two small square boxes from under the tree. He moved back over to Shizuo, handing one over to him and then sat down again. “These are from the both of us” he said as the two handed the presents to the girls.

Kururi turned to her sister and said “We should open them together” Mairu nodded with gleeful eyes and they began to unwrap the gifts. Once the wrapping was torn off, they held a dark red velvet box. Lifting the lid up carefully, figuring out it was most likely a piece of jewellery, they gasped at the items. Mairu held up a silver chain, at the end was a black diamond with a small silver diamond within and it curled to one side. Kururi held the same chain and the same style, except the bigger diamond was silver and the smaller one was black. If they were to place them side by side, the necklaces fit into a perfect yin yang.

“Wow! These are perfect for us! They’re awesome!” Mairu exclaimed happily.

“They’re so beautiful” Kururi added, the two of them then took turns and helped one another clip the chain around their necks.

“I take it you like them?” Shizuo asked with a smile

Mairu nodded and the twins soon bombarded them with hugs. “Thank you so much!”

“They’re really great” Kururi said

“You’re welcome” Izaya replied

The rest of the evening was spent ordering curry takeout and playing games, followed by a cheesy Christmas film. Eventually they retired to their rooms when the twins fell asleep next to their brother, Shizuo carried them to their room one by one and then having to carry Izaya when the informant
jumped playfully on his back.

Shizuo lay in the bed with an arm wrapped around Izaya as the raven-haired man lay upon his chest. His mind drifted to the upcoming days, this year was a big deal for them, sure he’d met Izaya’s parents before—as unpleasant as that experience was. This was different, this was introducing them as a family, as their partners. “Nervous?” Shizuo asked against the silence of the room.

“About what?”

“Meeting my folks” by the slight shift and the tense of the man’s body, he already knew the answer

Izaya shrugged “Not really”

“Well I know you’re lying”

Izaya sat up a little with a smile “What have I got to be nervous about? From what you’ve told me, they seem normal, and nice”

“Well, they are, I suppose”

Izaya grinned “Maybe it’s you that’s nervous?”

Shizuo wasn’t sure how to answer that without causing offence. “I’m not even sure Kasuka told them I was bringing someone”

Izaya chuckled “Well that was a lame attempt to avoid the question. But in response to what you just said, I’m sure they’re used to extra people showing up around this time of year”

“You have a point there” Shizuo then sighed and tightened his hold a little as Izaya lay back down to
get comfortable, he craned his head though when he felt Shizuo’s hold change.

“Shizu-chan?”

“They know you caused a lot of trouble for me at school”

“Who doesn’t” Izaya teased

“I’m not sure if they know you by name, they just know of you, I think”

“Is that why you’re nervous?”

Shizuo bit his lip “It doesn’t matter. If they can’t understand, or look past that, then I suppose I just won’t see them again”

Izaya’s eyes widen, well great, now he was nervous. No pressure Shizu-chan, idiot “I won’t ask you to do that”

“Then don’t ask”

“You can’t do that. I won’t let you, it’s not fair”

“I’m not really expecting it to happen, but you are the most important person in my life”

“Just don’t do anything you’ll regret. I really don’t think they’re going to make you choose, even if they don’t give us some kind of blessing. Besides, Kasuka has already accepted us, so I’m sure there’s nothing to worry about”

“You’re probably right”

Izaya leaned up “I can be rather charming, I won you over didn’t I?”
Shizuo snorted “It was more like I won you over, after a lot of damn patience, stubborn ass hole”

Izaya chuckled “Worth the wait”

Shizuo kissed the top of his head “Wouldn’t have said yes otherwise”

Izaya smiled “Sap”

.................................

Izaya and Shizuo stepped out of the cab to stand in front of Shizuo’s family home. The house was a suburban terrace on the outskirts of the city, hidden from the main road in a small cul-de-sac. There were wooden steps leading up to a porch and white columns held the first section of the dividing white factious roof above the door. To the left of the house, appeared to be an extension, indicting a possible conservatory, or a living room. It wasn’t quite what Izaya had expected, not that he pictured the house as poor looking, quite the opposite. The house wasn’t big, but it was beautiful and everything about it said homely. He looked up, seeing a small window on another divided section, judging by its size, it could be an attic. Izaya pondered on whether it might be Shizuo’s old room. He wondered what Shizuo was going to think of his own family home, in comparison, this house was small, but the difference between the two wasn’t the size, it was the memories. Izaya found himself a little envious, this house was a home, a place you’d want to come back to for visits. He couldn’t think of a reason why he’d ever want to visit his childhood home; he was only going this time for the sake of his sisters.

Shizuo looked back, noticing Izaya hadn’t been following him. “Oi. You coming?”

Izaya blinked, realizing he’d zoned out and nodded with a smile “Just admiring the view”

Shizuo shrugged “It’s not a mansion or anything, just a simple house”

“Simpler things are sometimes the better ones Shizu-chan” Shizuo didn’t even want to question what the hell Izaya even meant by that. Even now, the man still confused him sometimes, and he had given up trying to solve his riddled tongue. The two made their way to the steps of the house, Shizuo stopped and Izaya turned to him. Shizuo was once again amazed by him, he wasn’t even wearing his fur jacket—not that he could anyway, since it had gone up in flames along with the rest of their apartment. He was wearing a light grey sleeved shirt with black trousers and a long black coat, well,
he had made the effort anyway. “What?”

Shizuo blinked and then smiled “Nothing. You, you look-“

“Hot?”

Shizuo smiled “Well, yes”

Izaya chuckled “Hands and eyes to yourself, I don’t think you want your parents to meet me for the first time seeing you try to grope me on your porch”

Shizuo laughed “Probably not” as Shizuo raised his hand to knock, he then hesitated. There was a couple of things that he hadn’t considered before and had neglected to think about. They’d been so busy with work and planning out their holidays, they simply slipped from his mind, Izaya was going to freak. “Um…there’s a couple of things I forgot to mention”

Izaya looked at him “Such as?”

“I- well, it’s been quite some time since I’ve seen them so- and I’m pretty sure Kasuka wouldn’t have told them…”

Izaya’s eyes narrowed a little “Spill”

“They don’t exactly know that I’m gay”

Izaya’s eyes widen, fucking terrific Izaya pulled on Shizuo’s arm and dragged him off the porch. “What?” he hissed “That’s not something you neglect to tell your lover about”

“I know that! I didn’t think about it, it’s not like I had much time to tell em”

“So not only do they not know your sexuality, they’re also unaware that it’s me and to top it all off, you’re also engaged. Talk about bombarding them”
Shizuo sighed “I know. I should have told them. But Kasuka wouldn’t have invited us if they were like that”

Izaya tilted his head “Like mine you mean?”

Shizuo frowned “They’re definitely not like yours”

“I’m sure they’re not. They’re normal”

Shizuo grinned as he teased “Coming from you?”

Izaya shrugged and took a deep breath as they retraced their steps to the porch, wondering how the hell Shizuo had forgotten to mention this to his parents. Then again, Izaya hadn’t exactly told his parents either, though he had an idea they already knew. He then pulled on Shizuo’s arm again, slightly concerned. “You said a couple of things, what’s the second?”

As Shizuo knocked on the door, a muffled bark answered the question for him. Shizuo froze with his hand in the air. Shit

Izaya’s eyes widened and he stiffened “You’ve got to be fucking kidding me”

“Damn. Kasuka said my folks were excited about a new pet, but I didn’t really dwell on it”

“Do you ever?” Izaya backed up a step

Shizuo turned to him “Do you want to go?”

Izaya bit his lip, this was important to Shizuo, he knew that. “No. I’ll be fine, I think”

“Are you sure?”
Not really Izaya thought, but he nodded instead, his knuckles turning white from clenching his fists.

“You know. It doesn’t sound very old, it’s probably just a pup”

Izaya didn’t give an inch, staying glued to the column “That doesn’t make me feel any better. Puppies are worse, they jump”

Shizuo sighed, he felt a little bad, he knew how Izaya was around dogs, yet the man was willing to stick around for his sake. Shizuo knocked again and the bark was louder as they heard it scratching at the door. The bark was followed by the sound of a woman’s voice “Door’s open!” The moment Shizuo opened the door, the dog barrelled out, almost skidding across the porch. The excited puppy chose its first human to greet, unfortunately, that human was Izaya. Shizuo thought the man was going to have a heart attack as the dog jumped up against him, pawing at his clothes. Izaya was frozen stiff, his heart almost leapt into his throat. Shizuo blinked and then reached for the puppy as the woman come outside. “Shizuo! You came! It’s so good to see you”

Shizuo smiled over his shoulder as he dragged the puppy away “Hey. Sorry, he um…. he’s kind of scared of dogs”

The woman noticed how pale Izaya was “I’m so sorry!” she then pats her knees “Come on girl! In the house” she pointed, and the dog shuffled out of Shizuo’s arms and ran into the house.

Shizuo looked over at Izaya, trying his damned hardest not to laugh, Izaya looked like he was going to faint. “You ok?”

Izaya barely managed a nod, a hand raised to his chest.

The woman smiled and wrapped her arms around Shizuo for a quick hug. “So good to see you. Kasuka mentioned that you might bring a friend this year” Izaya composed himself, calming down after his almost terrifying experience, he took a step forward, testing his wobbly legs to make sure he didn’t collapse.

Shizuo scratched the back of his head sheepishly “Yeah. Sorry about that. I hope that’s ok”
The woman smiled “Absolutely! The more the merrier! There’s plenty of room” She looked at Izaya “I’m sure you wouldn’t mind sharing Shizuo’s old room for a couple of days”

Izaya smirked “I’m sure I wouldn’t”

Shizuo glared at him smartass he then turned to his mother “Is Kasuka here yet?”

The woman shook her head “Not yet. I hope there are no delays in his flight. I’m sure he’ll get here; he always does you know?” Shizuo nodded “Come on in. shouldn’t be standing out here, it’s freezing” the woman smiled at Izaya “Don’t worry. I’ll put Luna in her pen for now, give you time to get settled. I’ll have to let her out later though”

Izaya smiled “Thank you. I’ll be all right. It’s your home”

The woman turned and lead the two into the house, shuffling Luna into the pen as she began to run circles around her. Izaya stiffened a little and then relaxed again as they made their way through the house after toeing off their shoes. “Kichirou! Shizuo is here!”

They passed by the living room and then made their way into the kitchen. The kitchen was a perfect square sized room, with light brown walls and grey surfaces with yellow cabinets above them. The refrigerator was situated by the door and Izaya wondered if it was the same one that Shizuo tried to hurl at his brother. There was a sliding door to the back that lead out into the garden area and the long brown table was set in the middle. In the left corner, there was Shizuo’s dad, prepping away for their Christmas meal tomorrow. He was currently basing the large turkey, next to all the fresh veg yet to be sliced. The oven below was preheating and it smelt wonderful. Kichirou turned around and smiled “Son!” he wiped his hands clean and Shizuo moved to greet him, shaking his hand. “Glad to see you”

“Thanks. I hope one more to the table isn’t a problem”

“There’s plenty of food, to be honest, I thought I’d overdone it this year”

Shizuo shook his head with a chuckle. Izaya wondered how Shizuo was going to explain the situation to them, would he just blurt it out like it was no big deal? He doubted it. Shizuo was confident about a lot of things, but this wasn’t work or day to day life occurrences, this was a big deal. “So. Are you finally going to introduce us?” his mother spoke.
“Oh, yeah, sorry” hearing Shizuo stutter, Izaya took his cue to do the introducing for him. He took a deep breath, first impressions were crucial, and you only get one, at least, in this case.

Izaya held his hand out to the mother first “I’m Izaya Orihara. It’s an honour to meet you”

She smiled and took his hand “Well. Aren’t you polite” she giggled “I’m Namiko and this is my husband Kichirou, welcome to our home”

“Thank you. I hope my arrival wasn’t too unexpected”

“Don’t be silly! Kasuka mentioned Shizuo might bring someone. Though we assumed it might have been a someone” Namiko giggled “You know”

Izaya cringed inwardly, though he took note they she referred to their assumption as a someone, not a specific gender, the obvious being a female.

“We don’t get to see Shizuo’s friends, not even in his younger years, he has a bit of trouble in that regard, I just don’t know why” Izaya smiled, Shizuo’s parents seemed so understanding, a true example of unconditional love, it made him a little uncomfortable if he was truly honest, but if anyone deserved that, it was Shizuo himself. “Izaya Orihara. You know, your name sounds kind of familiar…”

Shizuo tensed, he always wondered whether his parents had some idea of who Izaya was, but until now, he didn’t care. Before he could intervene, Izaya spoke again.

“Actually. We went to the same high school; I imagine my name came up quite a bit…”

Shizuo looked at him, wondering how the hell he was so calm, when he himself was sweating bullets.

Kichirou clicked his finger “That’s right! I remember now. You were the same one that caused quite a bit of trouble for Shizuo in your high-school years”

Shizuo snorted and after
Izaya’s heart picked up, but he remained calm on the outside “For that, I can only apologise for whatever turmoil I might have caused”

“Relax. You were kids. Teenagers. You’re suppose to get into trouble every now and then, while you’re young. Seems to me like you’ve both grown out of whatever issues you had. I didn’t really know what you looked like, just heard your name being cursed through the house most of the time when Shizuo came home”

Izaya chuckled “Understandable” he then sighed “I did cause him a lot of trouble. You should know that-”

Shizuo lightly grabbed his shoulder “Izaya. It’s ok, you don’t have to say anything else”

Izaya gently shrugged him off “I do” he then turned back to the parents “I was the one that got him arrested after we left high school, I was the one responsible for him losing the first job he loved, I’m truly sorry about that. I saw his unnatural strength and unpredictable personality as though he was a monster. It wasn’t until two years ago that I realized I was wrong when he saved my life”

Shizuo in took a sharp breath, for a moment, he thought Izaya was going to out him at first. He was also very touched that Izaya would openly admit such things. Maybe now was his cue, but he needed to wait for their response first.

Namiko smiled and took Izaya’s hand “It’s ok. It takes a lot for someone to confront their mistakes and I can tell that you meant it”

Kichirou placed his hand on his shoulder “We appreciate your honesty, I can see that you’ve long since made amends, that in itself is reason enough to forgive”

Izaya wasn’t expecting that, but he nodded and said “Thank you”

Shizuo smiled, grateful to his parents, they really were the best. He shuffled his feet “Actually. Before we go any further, there’s something you both need to know”

Izaya looked at him *he really is just going to blurt it out*
“I should have told you both a lot sooner. But it’s been a tough two years. I’m-I’m gay”

There was silence for a few seconds and Namiko clapped her hands together and then jumped in excitement “That’s wonderful! We’re so proud of you! You need not have worried about what we would think” She hugged her son, Shizuo blushed in embarrassment before hugging her back and then pulling away to meet his Father’s smiling face.

“Proud of you son, you have nothing to worry about” he then looked at Izaya “So, am I correct in thinking that you’re not just a friend?”

Izaya shifted uncomfortably, well that was a rather good guess, and why was he the centre of attention all of a sudden. Before he could answer, Shizuo spoke first.

“That’s right. It happened shortly after I saved him. It was a long and complicated process, it didn’t happen overnight, but we’re in a good place now, it’s pretty serious…. Shizuo took Izaya’s hand, the informant just wanted to die of embarrassment. “I love him, and we’re engaged” Shizuo held up his left hand, showing them the ring.

Damn you Shizu-chan, you really are a six-foot one sap of a man

“That’s great! I’m so happy for you!” Namiko hugged Shizuo again and then proceeded to hug Izaya, whom returned it awkwardly. “Welcome to the family!” She told him “I can tell that you make a great couple, I’ve not seen Shizuo this happy in a long time”

“Congratulations. Whoa, what an unexpected turn. I’m so happy for you, it really is great to see you so happy”

Shizuo blushed again, he imagined Izaya was just as flustered too. “Thanks”

“Come on! Let me take you into the living room, leave the head of the kitchen to his cooking” Namiko told them.

Izaya looked at the preparations and then at the already set table, there were red napkins set on top of white china plates with silver cutlery placed either side, crystal looking wine glasses and red candles
in between holly decorated holders. “I don’t mind helping”

Namiko feigned a shook expression “Nonsense. You’re a guest”

“Actually Mom,” Shizuo started “Izaya is a good cook”

“I really wouldn’t mind helping” Izaya reoffered

“I believe you both. But he’s a little proud of his work, he doesn’t let anyone help for Christmas dinner, especially our guests”

Kichirou laughed “Nothing personal. I like to host!”

Namiko rolled her eyes and then lead them through the corridor and into the living room. The room had a cream coloured suite that matched the fluffy carpet, there was one long couch in the middle of two armchairs that slanted inwards and sat directly opposite the large dark oak fireplace. The room was cozy and warm due to the fireplace being lit, and the lights were dimmed. Their silver Christmas tree sat snugged in one corner of the room, it’s blue lights stood out a glow. Picture frames sat neatly on top of the mantel piece and a larger one hanging on the wall above it. “Please, make yourself at home Mr Orihara”

Izaya nodded and then smiled “Please. Izaya is fine”

Namiko shrugged “If you insist” she smiled and then moved across the room to open a large cabinet that sat on a long media centre, matching the colour of the fireplace. Left and right bookcase cabinets on either side, with three wood-framed glass shelves, three long cupboards attached below and a large space in which Izaya assumed a tv set was meant to go, in place of that however, there was a sound system. “My husband likes his technology, though he contradicts himself by choosing such antique looking décor. I personally am not so big on tech, too modern”

Izaya nudged Shizuo as they sat down next to each other on the long couch. “I know what parent you take after” he whispered teasingly

Shizuo elbowed him in the side “Shut up”
Izaya chuckled. He looked to the right and there was another set of sliding doors, which lead out into the open conservatory. Namiko came back with two crystal glasses filled a quarter way with what looked like whiskey. She handed one to Shizuo who took it gratefully, it wasn’t often he got the chance to have the good stuff, generally because Izaya didn’t drink. Shizuo looked over. Oh. Izaya-didn’t-drink. Namiko proceeded to hand Izaya his glass, she winked at him and said “It’s the good stuff”

Izaya smiled politely “Thank you” he looked at Shizuo for a moment, unsure what to do, he didn’t want to offend anyone.

“Um. Sorry Mom. Izaya doesn’t drink”

Namiko raised her hand to her mouth “I’m so sorry. I didn’t think to even ask, I can get you something else, what would you like? We have all kinds of things”

Izaya shook his head “It’s all right. I’ll accept the drink. You went through all the trouble of making it, I don’t want to be rude”

“Don’t accept it if you certainly don’t drink, it was rude of me to assume”

Izaya chuckled “It’s ok really. My tolerance for alcohol isn’t very good, that’s mostly the reason, and I’ve never had much interest in it. But this is a special occasion, one drink won’t be a problem. I’ll nurse it”

Namiko smiled, she loved him already “Are you sure?”

“Like you said. It’s the good stuff. I don’t want to waste it”

“You’re a keeper” she said, winking again

Izaya looked over at Shizuo as Namiko went back to the cabinet to make herself and Kichirou a drink. “Hear that? I’m a keeper”

Shizuo grinned “Is that so?”
“Must be my charm”

Shizuo shook his head “You don’t have to drink it; you won’t offend her”

Izaya shrugged “Don’t worry about it. First impressions are important”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “We made a hell of an impression on each other, didn’t we?”

Izaya chuckled “You threw a fist and I drew a knife, what’s wrong with that?”

“Just about everything possible”

Izaya grinned and quickly kissed him “We’re good now”

Shizuo snorted “Yeah, only took like, ten years”

“Eight”

“Whatever. Those years aren’t important anyway”

Kichirou stretched as he came into the living room, joining his family after finishing the last of the dinner preparations. He sat down on the empty armchair; his glass of whisky held in his palm. “So. Izaya. Tell me about yourself”

“Kichirou, don’t badger the man like that” Namiko scolded
“What?” Kichirou laughed “I thought it was a natural question. Should we not take an interest in our future son-in-law?”

Shizuo covered his face with his palm “God damn it”

Izaya chuckled “It’s all right. I don’t mind”

Kichirou lifted his hand in their direction “See?”

Namiko shook her head “Honestly” she then looked at Izaya “Sorry about him. He’s nosy”

Shizuo snorted “So is Izaya. They have something in common”

“I’ll ask a less absurd question. Do you have any siblings Izaya?’” Namiko said

Izaya simply swirled the liquid gently and took the tiniest sip before replying. “I have two sisters, they’re actually twins. Mairu and Kururi, they’ve just started their second year of high school”

“How cute! Were they much trouble as kids? I bet they bothered you a lot”

“Sort of. I was mostly the one to look after them when we were younger. But they’re pretty independent girls, so I need not worry much about them now”

“I just bet they’re inseparable”

“They are. Very much so”

“So, what is it that you do for a living?” Kichirou asked

“I’m an information broker”
Kichirou’s eyes widen with interest “Really? What’s that like?”

“The job suits me rather well. I enjoy it”

“You must be well known then”

Izaya smiled and replied regretfully “You could say that”

Shizuo clicked his tongue “That’s an understatement”

“Do you have some kind of rules?” Namiko asked “Or can anyone come to you for information?”

Izaya was waiting for that one “Well. It used to be that I accepted almost anyone as a client. I dealt with a lot of Yakuza groups, or petty gangs. I try not to associate with them much since Shizuo and I got together. In all honesty, I was kind of an asshole, I didn’t care who it was that came to me or what info they wanted, as long as it seemed like it was entertaining” Shizuo wondered how Izaya was coping on the inside, he didn’t like being questioned much on his personal life, he was shocked and proud at the same time, that he was being so open with them.

“I see” Kichirou said “It’s understandable, if you’re well known and you’re good at what you do, then you’d no doubt get some sketchy people coming to you for help”

*Sketchy isn’t quite the word I’d use*

“It sounds like your job can be rather dangerous on occasion” Namiko said with genuine concern, considering his own mother would probably wish him dead.

“It’s- it has its moments, I do tend to shall we say, annoy a lot of people sometimes”

“Sounds like you need a bodyguard, seems like you get into a lot of trouble” Kichirou said
Izaya smiled “I already have one. Unintentionally”

Shizuo blushed a little “Yeah. I can be kind of-protective”

“It just makes you a good person Shizuo” Namiko told him

“I can often take care of myself truthfully. But I know Shizu-chan will be there if I need him”

Namiko awed with a squeak “Shizu-chan. That’s so adorable!”

Kichirou chuckled and Izaya shifted on the couch, he’d held back from saying it for so long, it slipped out unexpectedly. His cheeks tinted a shade of red.

“That” Shizuo started “Has been my nickname since we fricking met. Regardless of whether he hated me before”

Izaya shrugged “It stuck. It was better then what you called me”

Kichirou laughed “Oh! So, you’re ‘the flea’”

Izaya rolled his eyes and elbowed Shizuo in the side as the blond started laughing. Izaya was about to retort when Shizuo’s cell phone started ringing. Shizuo mumbled an apology and fished it from his pants pocket. “Oh, it’s Kasuka” the blond got up from the couch “Hey bro. where abouts are you?” Shizuo moved to stand out in the corridor, always feeling awkward talking on the phone in front of people, even though he was related to two of them.

Namiko turned back to Izaya “I’m kind of curious. When you said Shizuo saved your life, is that figuratively speaking or quite literally?”

Izaya tilted his head, unsure how to answer that “Well. I don’t want you to freak out”

Kichirou shook his head “Don’t be absurd”
“Of course, you don’t have to tell us, if you don’t want to” Namiko added

“It is the reason me and Shizu-chan got together, so you should know” Izaya glanced over at Shizuo, still talking on the phone. “I was knifed”

Kichirou almost choked on his whiskey “What!?"

“You were knifed!? Why?” Izaya could practically feel Namiko’s motherly instincts kicking in, it was kind of sweet, in a way.

“Like I said, my job can be dangerous, and I did a job for this one man, not so nice man. I won’t go into details, but he didn’t like the outcome and-well, he got revenge”

“Damn. Shizuo must have found you then I take it?”

“Not at the time. I was found by our mutual doctor friend, Shinra. He took me to a hospital, and I had stitches and recovered. Unfortunately, I discharged myself too soon, so when I was spotted by your son- he chased me like he always did, but I wasn’t healed, I pulled my stitches and collapsed down an alley. Shizu-chan didn’t react like I’d expect, he hauled me into a cab and took me back to the hospital”

“Well. That’s quite a story, not exactly your normal get together tale. I’m very happy it worked out for you both”

“That’s all it took to get him to not hate you. How strange” Kichirou said

“I thought so too. It seemed that after the event, it triggered something else inside. He wanted to protect me, instead of trying to beat the crap out of me” Thinking back on past events, Izaya wondered whether Shizuo’s parents had been informed about his coma, he wasn’t going to say anything encase they didn’t know. “We’re really well known in both this city and Shinjuku, so after that first event, it seemed like we were destined for a long list of trouble. Mostly on my part. That’s not the only time I’ve been stabbed either. I’ve also been shot, twice”

Namiko gasped “It’s no wonder he’s so protective of you. It’s a miracle you’re still walking around”
Izaya grimaced and then huffed a laugh “There’s kind of irony in that”

“Did I say something wrong?”

“No, it’s ok. I was kind of stupid. I was trying to stop a group of teenagers from gaining a lot of power. I had help from a friend, who, let’s just say she’s got some unique abilities. She tried to lure one of the teens away from me since I had already been shot, he cornered her on a roof. I managed to get to her and knock him out, but he regained consciousness faster than we expected. He came at us, but I didn’t have much time to think, I pushed her out of the way so that he didn’t hurt her. We fell off the roof and I landed down into another building. I did more damage since I got up and tried to walk around. I broke my leg in two places and I also fractured the lower part of my spine. It took a lot of painful therapy to get back to normal”

The two were speechless, they’d never known someone to get into so much trouble. Kichirou cleared his throat “I’d say you’ve got nine lives there kid”

Izaya tilted his head in thought, as if to count how many close calls he’d had already. Excluding the random attacks from his apartment and the club. “If that really is the case. I still have four to spare” he smiled

“Seems like you both are trouble magnets”

“Things have calmed down so far, there’s not been much trouble lately”

Shizuo came back into the room “Kasuka said he’s not long arrived home. He’s gonna stay at a hotel and come here in the morning, he sounded pretty tired”

Namiko shook her head “He works too hard sometimes”

“So, what’d I miss?”

Izaya grinned “Just swapping war stories”
Shizuo sat back next to him, reaching for his drink from the side table. “And you managed to fit them all in, in such a short time?”

Izaya shrugged “Your mother inquired as to how exactly that you saved me when we got together”

“God why…”

“I told her I was knifed- “

Shizuo looked at him with wide eyes “You can’t just blurt out things like that!”

“I didn’t go into details. Just that you saved my life when I collapsed in the alley way”

“Doesn’t sound like the first time either” Kichirou said “You two should try and stay safer, it’s dangerous these days”

“We’re only worrying” Namiko said with a warm smile. “I’d hate to have anything truly serious happen. You need to stay out of trouble. I think that goes for you especially Izaya”

Shizuo laughed and Izaya glared at him “Yeah. Trying to get him to stay out of trouble is a losing battle”

For the rest of the Christmas eve, they swapped stories and caught up on their everyday lives. Izaya and Shizuo told them about the little girl they’d saved together and found a loving home for her.

The house was dark now, after such a long and eventful day, they’d gone to bed not long after ten. Izaya’s eyes fluttered open as he felt Shizuo kiss his forehead, damn, he was almost asleep. “Thank you” Shizuo said

“For what?” Izaya responded quietly, closing his eyes again, he was pretty sure it was the whiskey he’d drank that was making him so tired.
“For today. My parents really love you. I think they loved you even more because you were honest with them. You didn’t have to do that”

“I did. It was necessary. First impressions Shizu-chan, I made a mistake once, I wasn’t going to do it twice”

Shizuo chuckled “You say that now”

Izaya laughed “I know. But still, they’re your parents, they deserve better”

“It went really well, didn’t it?”

“Minus the dog”

Shizuo tightened his hold “Yeah. But he’s just a pup. I don’t think he’ll hurt you, he seemed to like you on the porch”

“I almost had a heart attack”

Shizuo laughed a little “I thought you were going to pass out”

Izaya turned himself so that he could look at him, as much as he could in the dark. “I love you. Shizu-chan. I know I don’t say it much…..but I do”

“I know you do. You don’t have to keep saying it. I think you’ve proved it enough times” Shizuo frowned and then pulled him in to kiss him. “I love you too. Idiot”
Izaya stirred awake, he looked over at Shizuo, still asleep, nothing changes. He smiled and sat up with a long stretch, despite the bed being smaller than he was used to, he slept better than he had in days, months even. Izaya didn’t care to question why, maybe it was the warm feeling in his chest suddenly, he didn’t expect to be accepted so quickly and so openly. Shizuo’s parents were everything Izaya found ‘boring and ordinary’ yet he couldn’t come up with a reason as to why he didn’t mind. “Tch. You’ve made me soft Shizu-chan” he muttered; he couldn’t even say that with any venom in his tone. “Protozoan” he added

There was a shift in the bed and a low growl erupted from the other occupant “I heard that…. flea”

Izaya chuckled and rolled himself on top of the blond, Shizuo grunted and forced his eyes open. Izaya was grinning down at him. “I was just blaming you”

“Yeah?” Shizuo pushed gently and rolled them so he soon towered over the smaller man, pinning his hands beside him, linking them together with his own. “What are you gonna do about it?”

Izaya leaned up and crushed his lips to Shizuo’s. They moaned deeply as their bodies grinded against each other. Shizuo’s mouth left Izaya’s to trail kisses down his neck, his collar bone and then…. “Wait. not here. That’s really not a good idea…. Shizu-chan”

Shizuo leaned up and came back to face him “Scared?”

Izaya clicked his tongue “This is your home Shizu-chan, your family home. Your parents are across the hall and this is too much like a high school relationship-discretion cliché”

Shizuo rolled his eyes, since when did Izaya care about discretion? “We’re not in high school. We’re twenty-five-year olds”

“Yes. But somehow I still think we’d get ‘the talk’ stay safe and be gentle”

Shizuo laughed “I wouldn’t put it passed them. How embarrassing would that be?”
“I’d rather go to hell”

Shizuo clicked his tongue “Now that’s a bit dramatic. Besides-” Shizuo kissed him again “The walls are soundproof”

Izaya shoved him back playfully “You really expect me to believe that?”

Shizuo grinned “Yes?”

“Tch. You know. When we first started dating, I always had to be the first to initiate our-”

Shizuo tilted his head “Sessions?”

Izaya raised an eyebrow “Sessions? Really Shizu-chan?” Shizuo shrugged “Whatever. I was always the first one” Izaya then grinned “What happened there?”

Shizuo chuckled “It’s your fault. You shouldn’t be so damn addictive”

Izaya laughed “You really are quite something. Despite that, it still isn’t a good idea. Show a little restraint”

Shizuo grinned “Yeah. Maybe you’re right. You’re always too loud anyway, which is a little ironic, since I always stand out because I shout so much and lose my temper”

Izaya smiled and raised his hand to the blond’s face “Only because your clients deserve it. But I know better. You’re gentle and I would never change that about you”

Shizuo kissed him again “That anger will never reach you. You know that right?”

Izaya rolled his eyes, how many times must he reassure him? Ever since their memories had been returned, Shizuo felt so guilty, for hurting him. “Yes Shizu-chan. You seriously need to forget about it. It’s over now, ok?” Shizuo nodded, he knew that, of course he knew that. “And-” Izaya removed one of his hands from Shizuo’s so he could slap him on the back. “I’m not that loud”
Shizuo laughed “You really are. Seriously. You should hear yourself”

Izaya narrowed his eyes “Shut up”

Shizuo’s laugh died down to a chuckle “We better get ready”

Izaya smiled “Merry Christmas…Shizu-chan”

Shizuo leaned in and kissed him slowly and then replied “Merry Christmas Izaya”

……………………

After getting changed into some formal wear- Izaya wore a long black shirt and black skinny jeans, Shizuo wore a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up and dark blue loose-fitting jeans- the two soon made their way down into the kitchen. They were greeted first by the smell of almost cooked turkey, stuffing, roast potatoes and sautéed vegetables. Namiko smiled brightly when she looked up at them both as they entered the kitchen. She was placing the finishing touches to the already Christmas looking table. Glass cocktail dishes had now been placed below the main course china plates. “Don’t you both look so handsome!” she chimed. Hearing his wife’s sudden voice, Kichirou turned to greet them.

“You certainly complement each other” he grinned

Shizuo scratched the back of his head, blushing lightly, Izaya tilted his head and smiled at Namiko “Not so bad yourselves. It’s obvious where Shizu-chan gets his looks from” Shizuo rolled his eyes.

Namiko giggled and then brought them both in for a hug “Merry Christmas boys!”

“Merry Christmas Mom, Dad”

“Merry Christmas son”
“Merry Christmas” Izaya simply said with a smile, not really used to such kindness, sure, he was getting used to it from Shizuo, but to receive genuine care and kindness from the blond’s parents, when he didn’t even receive that from his own—it was overwhelming. He suddenly glanced around, scanning the room. Namiko chuckled.

“Don’t worry. She’s playing outside”

Izaya shuffled his feet a little, slightly embarrassed that he’d been caught. “Sorry bout that”

Namiko smiled “It’s quite all right. It’s not your fault’

The doorbell soon rang, Shizuo smiled “That’s Kasuka. I’ll get it”

Izaya leaned on one of the chairs “Can I do anything to help?”

Namiko smiled “You’re stubborn, aren’t you?”

Izaya smirked a little “It’s been mentioned. In all honesty, I’m not really one to stand around without doing anything. I promised Shizu-chan I was taking some time off from work for the holidays, so I can’t really check up on anything”

Namiko chuckled “I see. I can understand that. It sounds like you’re somewhat of a workaholic hm?”

Izaya shrugged “Maybe. More so because I tend to take multiple jobs”

“It’s not surprising, the city is full of all kinds of different events and people”

Izaya almost laughed, ha, he knew that better than anyone, but he refrained from saying anything witty, they’d been too kind to him.

“Not a bad thing” Kichirou said “Working a lot I mean. It shows dedication, and loyalty too”
He certainly was dedicated, wasn’t he? “So. What can I do?” Izaya asked again with a cheeky grin.

Namiko shook her head and chuckled “Ok. You win. Why don’t you help me make the cocktails for the starters? I hope you’re not allergic to any fish?”

Izaya chuckled “Not at all”

“Great. Let’s do it”

Izaya followed her to the other side of the kitchen, there was a long countertop on the right-hand side. Namiko placed two bowls with a bag of prawns and crab meat on either side of them. “Darn! I forgot the sauce! Kichirou?”

“Yes dear?”

“Did you happen to pick up that aurora sauce for the cocktails?”

Kichirou sighed “No. sorry”

Izaya pondered, he hadn’t made many fancy meals, but he knew enough about cocktails to know what ingredients one could use in place of things. “Do you have any Ketchup and Mayonnaise?”

Namiko smiled brightly and clapped her hands “You are definitely a keeper! Why didn’t I think of that? Oh I love your quick thinking” Izaya chuckled at her enthusiasm, really, it wasn’t all that hard to figure out, he didn’t solve anything special, he was sure she would have come up with it soon.

“Thank you” he really was surprising himself, it seemed that he didn’t find it as hard as he thought, suppressing his usual sarcasm that is. Namiko retrieved the condiments from the fridge and they soon began preparing the starters. “I thought we were suppose to leave all this to him” Izaya whispered with a small smirk

Namiko chuckled “Normally. But he really prefers the main cooking” Namiko’s voice quietened more “He really kind of sucks at cocktails”
Izaya laughed under his breath.

By the time Shizuo and Kasuka made their way into the kitchen, Izaya and Namiko were already hands deep in sauce and fish. Namiko glanced to the side, smiling widely as she saw her second son approach. “Kasuka! It’s great to see you. I’d hug you, but- kind of messy at the moment”

Kasuka’s face remained passive, but his eyes gave away what might have been a smile as he leaned down. “That’s quite all right” he pecked her on the cheek and made his way to greet his dad.

Shizuo then raised an eyebrow, when he took note of his mother and Izaya. He leaned against the countertop next to his partner. “What the hell are you doing?”

Izaya grinned up at him, stopping mid-mixing, his hands-which were covered with food prepping gloves-were covered in a light pink sauce. “What’s it look like? I’m making cocktails”

Shizuo blinked, it just looked odd, seeing him cook with his mother. “Why?”

Namiko laughed “He insisted. He looked kind of bored just standing there. Besides, if it weren’t for his intelligent brain, we might not even be having cocktails”

Izaya huffed a laugh, smiling at Shizuo who looked so confused. “What? Are you jealous Shizu-chan?”

Shizuo snorted “Ass hole”

Namiko gasped “Shizuo! Language, you’re lucky I’m covered in sauce”

Izaya smirked at him “Yeah Shizu-chan, dirty mouth”

Shizuo glared at him, but Izaya could see the playfulness in his eyes. Shizuo leaned in close to Izaya’s ear and whispered “You know exactly what this dirty mouth can do” Izaya blushed a little and moved to try and kick him in the shin, Shizuo jumped away to avoid the hit with a chuckle. “If
you used a spoon, you might have been able to get me”

Namiko shook her head “Using your hands is better for the food, you don’t damage the texture as much”

Shizuo shrugged and let them be, making his way to the other side of the kitchen.

The family were sat in their preferred seating arrangements along the table. Izaya tried his best to ignore the dog sat beside them, since she was inside now and chowing down on some turkey. Luckily, Luna was the other of the table, but he always remained aware of her.

Their cocktails finished. Dishes of all kinds of food were now set among the table; stuffing, vegetables, sauces, salads and of course, a large turkey that was placed right in the middle, with its golden texture and glistening delicious skin coating, you could practically smell the chestnut. Kichirou stood up, ready with a carving knife in one hand, and a glass of champagne in the other. “Today is a special day, it’s been almost four years since our family has been in this kitchen all together for Christmas. It’s even more special, since we’re welcoming a new family member” Izaya shifted in his seat, obviously a little uncomfortable about being the topic of Kichirou’s speech. “One that, by all accounts, makes my son extremely happy” Shizuo sunk a little in his chair, clearly embarrassed “And I know that from now on, that whatever Christmas we have together, Izaya will be part of it. So welcome to the family Izaya, and congratulations to both him and my son on their engagement”

Shizuo looked at Izaya, who seemed to be a little embarrassed himself, he slipped a hand under the table and placed it into Izaya’s. Izaya looked at him and Shizuo smiled ‘I love you’ Shizuo mouthed to him, Izaya didn’t say it back, but he smiled and squeezed his hand.

Kichirou tilted his glass toward them, coaxing the rest to do the same, except Izaya raised his glass of water. “Merry Christmas”

“Merry Christmas” a unison of voices followed after

Once Kichirou had carved the meat into slices, they began filling their plates with all the food.
After clearing all the plates and dishes once they were sure they were satisfyingly stuffed, they remained seated at the table, with new empty plates in front of them, ready for dessert. Namiko opened another bottle of champagne. “Are you sure you don’t want a glass Izaya?”

Izaya smiled with a shake of his head “No, I’m all right”

Namiko smiled and proceeded to fill everyone else’s glass, then her own. “Dessert will be served soon” she said as she sat back down in her seat. “So. How did you propose Izaya?”

Shizuo screamed inwardly, his parents were so open about their questions. “Well, we were on our best friend’s roof” Izaya told them. Shizuo blinked, well, Izaya obviously didn’t have a problem with it.

“You know, I thought it might have been Shizuo to ask the question, you know he can be impatient”

Shizuo growled a little “Seriously mom….” He muttered

Izaya chuckled “I was surprised myself. I didn’t think I was ready for that kind of commitment. But, with everything that happened, it was pointless ignoring what I initially didn’t understand”

Shizuo could crawl under the table, why were they talking about it? It was so embarrassing.

Izaya almost laughed, he could clearly sense Shizuo’s discomfort, it was so amusing and damn right adorable. “It was a New Year’s Eve party, hosted by our friend’s. I asked him as they were counting down the seconds. It was a little cliché, what with the fireworks and everything”

Namiko’s eyes sparkled “So cute! Nothing wrong with clichés” Namiko looked over at her son “What’s wrong Shizuo? Are we embarrassing you?” she chuckled
Shizuo grunted and tried to compose himself “No….”

Izaya laughed then, “That’s what you get”

Shizuo knew he was referring to the statement earlier when Izaya was making cocktails. He snorted and then placed his hands behind his head. “All right, dessert time” Izaya rolled his eyes, not only because of his sweet tooth, but the poor excuse to change the subject. Dessert. It was then he realized, he hadn’t told them about his dislike for sweet things. Shizuo sensed his worry and placed his hand on Izaya’s shoulder. “Don’t worry about it. You won’t offend her”

Izaya shook his head “Who the hell refuses dessert on Christmas day?” he hissed quietly

“Lots of people”

“No they don’t”

“Sure they do”

Namiko tilted her head as she came back to the table with a large glass dish. “Something the matter you two?”

Kasuka, not normally one to get involved, seemed to understand the issue and felt he should say something. “I don’t think Izaya likes desserts” Shizuo and Izaya looked at him, he just blurted it out, just like that.

Izaya chewed his lip “Sorry. I should have mentioned that last night when my dislike for alcohol got brought up”

Namiko shook her head “Don’t be silly. It really isn’t a problem; you should never feel the need to apologise for your taste in food or drink. Is it just desserts in general?”

“I just prefer the taste of bitter foods. I don’t like sweets or confectionary items”
Namiko smiled “Well, that’s completely opposite to Shizuo, that’s for sure”

Izaya smiled “I know. You should have seen the box of fresh cakes my sisters brought him for Christmas”

Shizuo shrugged “I have a sweet tooth. So what”

“You know. I have a grapefruit in the fruit draw of the fridge. Will that be ok?”

Izaya blinked “Are you sure?”

Namiko laughed “Of course. At least now I know for next time”

………………………………

Once dessert was finished, they had made their way into the living room, sitting comfortably among the cosy warmth of the fire. “Thanks for the meal. The food was great Dad, Mom” Shizuo commented

“Our pleasure. It was nice to have you here for Christmas this year” Kichirou replied

“It was nice to be home” Kasuka added

“Christmas is about family after all. Everyone should be with someone” Namiko said

Izaya didn’t say anything, simply laying his head on Shizuo’s shoulder. Shizuo looked down at him, nudging him a little. “You ok?” he whispered

Izaya smiled “Fine” Shizuo noted how content he actually was, he’d be willing to bet though, that Izaya was thinking back on all the other Christmas’ how different it was back then, wondering how lonely it might have been.
Shizuo tightened his hold around him, letting him know without having to say anything, that he wasn’t alone anymore, that he had family that loved him.

…………………………..

Izaya and Shizuo were lying in bed, still slightly overwhelmed with the day’s events. Tomorrow they were going to head home, but Shizuo almost didn’t want the warm feeling in his chest to end. “Shizu-chan?”

Shizuo startled, not expecting Izaya to speak, he thought he’d fallen asleep already. “Yeah?”

“Your parents are nice people”

Shizuo noticed he’d said people, not humans, they must have really made an impression. “Well, they love you, that’s for sure”

Izaya shrugged as he playfully replied, “Who wouldn’t?”

“Tch. Should have met you before”

Izaya smirked “I still think I’d have won them over, I am rather charming, even back then”

“Like I’d have let you take two steps into my house, or even my fricking yard”

Izaya chuckled “Probably not. I don’t think I’d have been that stupid to try”

Shizuo laughed “Wouldn’t put it passed you though”

“Shizu-chan….” Shizuo could tell something else was bugging him, he’d sensed it in the living room too.
“What’s wrong Izaya?”

“I just—New Year’s Eve won’t be like this”

“Like what?”

Izaya sighed “Nice. It won’t be anything like this, warmth and kindness”

Oh. That was what was bugging him. Izaya’s family. Shizuo tightened his hold, wrapping his strong arms protectively around him. “Maybe not. But I’ll be there, and your sisters will be there. But you know, we don’t have to go, I’m sure my parents would— or even Celty and Shinra might throw another party—”

Izaya shook his head “No. I have to go, for them”

Shizuo kissed the informant’s head “I know. Just know that, you’re not alone this time, ok?”

Izaya shifted so that he could snuggle closer into Shizuo’s embrace. “I have a present for you. By the way, s’at home” Shizuo chuckled “Did I say something funny?”

Shizuo almost laughed even more that Izaya became offended Damn it, he’s too adorable sometimes “No. I wasn’t laughing at you. Just, I have a present for you, I didn’t bring it with me, wanted to spare us the embarrassment of exchanging gifts in front of my parents”

Izaya chuckled then, “Aren’t we the thoughtful ones. I’ll tell you what I got, if you tell me yours”

Shizuo clicked his tongue “Kind of ruins the element of surprise when you open it though, doesn’t it?”

Izaya hummed a response “Not really. Not like I went to much trouble, it’s in an envelope after all”
Shizuo huffed a laugh “That’s weird. D’you write a poem or something?”

Izaya snorted “As if”

Shizuo laughed lightly “Didn’t think so” Izaya shifted and reached over to flick the bedside lamp on. Shizuo squeezed his eyes shut, protesting the sudden light. “What are you doing?”

“Just wait” Izaya then opened the draw and rummaged through its contents until he found what he was looking for.

“A pen?”

“Just wait” Izaya repeated “Your mother was right. You really are impatient Shizu-chan” Shizuo rolled his eyes. “Give me your hand” Shizuo was sceptical; but did as told. Izaya grabbed his hand and lay his palm out flat against his own. He began to write on him.

“The hell?”

“Shh”

“Why couldn’t you find a piece of paper?”

“It’s more fun this way”

“You’re writing on my hand”

“Almost finished~” Izaya sang quietly. He then sat back with a smile on his face “There” Shizuo then looked at his hand. “That’s what was in the envelope. Though it looks more eloquent then that, but it’s the basic idea that counts”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “It says June 15th”
Izaya clapped sarcastically “Very good Shizu-chan!” back in the day, that would have really pissed him off, but now, Shizuo just rolled his eyes.

“Ok asshole. What’s on June 15th?”

Izaya tilted his head, smirking a little. “It’s not going to be as fun if I have to tell you”

Shizuo huffed, he was way too tired to figure out what Izaya was up to. For some reason, the informant seemed wide awake now, great. “Izaya-seriously, what’s on June 15th?”

Izaya sighed “You’re hopeless Shizu-chan”

Shizuo growled “Izaya”

Izaya chuckled “Ok. I’ll give you some hints” Shizuo sighed, clearly disliking the game. Izaya poked him lightly in the chest as he straddled him. “You. Me. A little building. Suits. Signing of paperwork-” Izaya searched Shizuo’s expression for any kind of recognition. “Are you getting this yet, or do I need to continue?”

Shizuo sat up slightly, finally piecing it together, his mouth hung open. “Izaya- are you- what are you saying?”

Izaya smirked “June 15th, that’s the date we’re going to get married”

“You’re not kidding, are you?”

Izaya shook his head “No Shizu-chan. For once, I’m not. I think we’ve waited long enough; a lot of obstacles keep getting in the way, it’s like something is trying to keep us from it. I want to do this with you, before it might be too late”

Too late, what the hell does that mean? Shizuo frowned “Don’t talk like that” Izaya sensed the blond’s distress and leaned down to kiss him.
“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean it like that”

Shizuo growled low in his throat “You’re not going anywhere”

Izaya felt bad, for making him get upset, he knew how Shizuo felt about this kind of thing, especially what had happened to them recently. He tried to chuckle “Well, I’m not dying or anything” Shizuo glared at him, Izaya sighed, so much for the light joke. “Shizu-chan, I’m not going anywhere. I didn’t mean for it to sound like that. But you know what I was talking about before, something always tries to come between us. I want to marry you, before anything like that happens again” Shizuo tensed “If. If it happens again. Ok?”

Finally, Shizuo calmed down, then he broke into a full smile. “You really want to do this?”

Izaya nodded “Yes. I asked, didn’t I?” Shizuo pulled Izaya down and kissed him, all his emotions driving him. Izaya then pulled away. “First though. What’s my present? Secondly, there’s also the last obstacle to overcome too”

Shizuo nodded “New Year’s”

Izaya grimaced and then smirked again “Present first”

Shizuo laughed “Child”

“Well?”

“I’ll give you a hint” Shizuo smirked, Izaya pouted. “It’s something you lost. And you love the damn thing so much, you always had it on everywhere”

Izaya nearly gasped “Shizu-chan…. did you find my jacket?”

“Well, obviously not the original, but I found a replica, at least, I had one made anyway”
Izaya couldn’t believe it, he really loved that jacket and Shizuo just- “Are you serious?”

Shizuo shrugged “I know that I got you one kind of similar last year, but I know this one meant something to you, or it had more value. I figured; you’d prefer that I tried to replace that one rather than the one I got you before”

Izaya leaned down and kissed him again, he hadn’t expected Shizuo to go to all that trouble, just for a jacket. Who knew Shizuo would pay attention to the trivial things so much, like oddly strange attachments? Then again, Izaya would replace Shizuo’s bartender outfits if he happened to lose them all somehow. It was just pure luck, that their friends moved Shizuo’s things from Izaya’s apartment that day, they’d been spared from the fire. However, since then, they’d learned from it, they kept their most valuable possessions in a safe deposit box, somewhere in the city. Which reminded Izaya that he needed to put that album his sisters gave him in there. “Thank you” he finally said as he then snuggled against him.

“I’ll think of something new next year, I swear”

Izaya laughed “It doesn’t matter. Isn’t it suppose to be the thought that counts?”

“Yeah. I guess”

“Good” there was silence for a moment, Izaya closed his eyes, finally ready to sleep.

“Izaya?” or not

“What?”

“Don’t take this the wrong way. But I’m glad you got stabbed”

Izaya laughed, if he were anyone else, that would have made him extremely annoyed. But he knew exactly what Shizuo was talking about, that day, if Gok hadn’t have stabbed him in that alleyway, the two of them most likely would have never gotten together, nor would they have ever become friends. They’d have continued hating each other until the end of time. Izaya smiled and linked his hand with Shizuo’s. “Me too”
Shizuo then grinned “Should send him a thank you card”

The two laughed together at the strange notion, only the two of them, could ever be grateful for something so absurd.

Chapter End Notes

Phew! like I said, full of fluff! hope you all enjoyed it. :)

Also, I realize that same-sex marriage isn't quite welcome in Japan (I looked it up) but I really want it to be lol
“How’s this?” Shizuo asked as he stepped back from their closet. Dressed in dark blue jeans and a grey button-down shirt and Izaya could just see a white vest top underneath. The raven sighed, Shizuo was nervous, that much was obvious, and his ability to hide that fact sucked. “Too much?”

Izaya shook his head “You don’t have to wear that” he told him as he grabbed a dark red long-sleeved top and pulled it over his head. He then proceeded to sit on the bed to pull black pants over his long slender legs. Shizuo mentally shook his head, Izaya was still so skinny, but he wasn’t going to comment, he knew he was trying. “Besides” Izaya continued, he then placed his two silver rings on from the nightstand. “I don’t care what they think of you’’

Shizuo frowned, the man was acting weird, he wasn’t his usual teasing self, in other words, he was kind of being an ass. “Well I do”

Izaya shrugged, walking around the bed, he touched Shizuo’s chest for a moment and then headed for the bedroom door. “We already know what they think of you” he said as he grabbed his fur jacket from the back of the door, it was obvious to Shizuo then, that Izaya didn’t care about the impressions they’d make. He didn’t blame him, if Izaya’s family already hated him, then the informant was going to continue to make sure they did. Shizuo then blinked, as if the words Izaya spoke only just registered with him.

“That doesn’t mean I’m ok with that” he growled, clenching his fists. Izaya glanced down, seeing him do so, he then leaned against the door frame, hands in his jacket pockets. Shizuo knew he was fiddling with his switchblade, it wasn’t like either of them would hurt the other, he knew it was out of reflex, that Izaya did that, just a natural response on his part.

“No need to take what I said out of context Shizu-chan. You don’t have to make a good impression when they didn’t seem to care before; don’t go to the trouble, is all I’m saying”

Shizuo relaxed a little, unclenching his fists, trying to calm down. “Yeah. I guess I just didn’t want to cause anymore hassle for you, I don’t want to do anything that might reflect badly on you”

Izaya raised an eyebrow, was he fucking serious? He took his hands out of his pockets and stopped in front of him, leaning up to press his lips against Shizuo’s. “I’m not ashamed of you Shizu-chan. I’m not embarrassed by you; I actually can’t believe you would think that”
Shizuo shook his head “Sorry” he muttered “I don’t think that. But from you’ve told me about your family, they’re going to think that, I guess I just don’t want them judging you for it”

Izaya sighed, annoyed and yet touched by Shizuo’s protectiveness at the same time. “Are you sure you want to go?”

Shizuo tilted his head “Is that what you’re really asking?” he gave him a small grin “Or are you asking if I’m going to be able to keep my temper under control?”

Izaya shrugged “Either”

Shizuo folded his arms “Yes. And-we’ll see, I’ll try my best” he then patted his front shirt pocket. “As long as my smokes last” he joked. Izaya smiled and they walked out of the bedroom, toward the front door where they proceeded to toe their shoes on. “Do you really need that?” Izaya looked at him and then understood what he was talking about. His switchblade. It seemed ridiculous to take it, but it felt strange not having it in his jacket. It wouldn’t do them any good, for him to threaten anyone out of instinct with a knife. He took it from his pocket and placed it in the draw of the side table next to the door. “I wasn’t saying you couldn’t take it with you, I was just asking”

Izaya grinned “They’re not that bad. But it would be best for me to leave it here. Just as well there’re are no signs or posts available”

Shizuo snorted “Shut up”

“Of course, you can always chuck a car at them” Izaya chuckled and they made their way out of the apartment.

Shizuo stared at the house, awestruck. It was twice the size of his own family home. The large gravelled pathway led up to a black metal gate which had been left open on one side for cars to pass through. Among that, a clear view of the house could be seen. The outside design was modern, white textured panel based structured walls. Large open-faced windows and a steel framed black door adorned the front of the house. Flower beds decorated the edging around the house and
stepping-stones marked the path leading around to the back of the house. Izaya chuckled as he noticed Shizuo’s expression. “Relax. They’re not millionaires Shizu-chan”

Shizuo shoved his hands in his pockets “Tch. Could have fooled me”

Izaya wondered if Shizuo was intimated by the whole thing, it wouldn’t surprise him, Shizuo was accustomed to simple pleasures. He enjoyed the not-so-modern lifestyle, which made him think of their own home, wondering if Shizuo had felt just as uncomfortable as he did now. Izaya’s taste certainly reflected the house before them, though he wasn’t one to flaunt; to him though, this was nothing more then a business home. “I told you. It’s sometimes the simpler things that matter the most”

Shizuo nodded, finally understanding just what Izaya meant that day. “I know what you mean now”

“Seems as though we’re not the first to arrive. Mairu and Kururi are probably here already too” there were many parked cars along the gravelled driveway, leading up to the house. Shizuo tried not to think about it, he expected a few, it was a family gathering after all. The closer they got to the house, the more he become nervous, mostly because he didn’t do so well with crowds, especially when he was certain that he was going to be the topic of conversation among them. Judging by the outside, he’d be willing to bet that the inside was just as modern, if not more so. The two were about to make their way inside, the door had been left open to all visitors, when someone called their attention.

“Izaya!” the two turn to the voice, a man sporting a dark blue suit, short brown hair and a neatly trimmed beard made his way toward them. He was average in size and was roughly the same height as Izaya—if a couple of inches shorter. “Almost didn’t recognise you”

Izaya almost snorted as if he then grinned and placed his hands in his jacket “How’s the liver?”

Shizuo looked at him, blinking at the random question, he then looked back at the man in front of them. What an odd thing to ask

The man didn’t seem to appreciate the question, he frowned and then walked past them without another word. Izaya laughed quietly, maybe he could have some fun at this gathering after all. He caught Shizuo looking at him and his laughter became louder. “My question was pertinent. He has a drinking problem. He’s basically an alcoholic”

“Oh”
Izaya chuckled “He thinks he hides it well. He also didn’t think I was aware, that’s why he didn’t respond”

“He didn’t look drunk” Shizuo said, looking to where the man had gone through the door.

Izaya shrugged “It’s early. Give it a few hours, and he’ll be the most wasted out of them”

Shizuo looked back at Izaya “Should I be worried?”

“About?”

It was Shizuo’s turn to shrug now “Dunno. Like, he gonna get violent or something?”

Izaya chuckled and then walked into the house, beckoning Shizuo to follow him. “Who knows”

The two walked into the house, Shizuo had been right on his assumption, the place was just as modern. White walls, light grey tiled flooring that was just a little too shiny, art paintings decorated the walls and a grandfather clock sat in the middle of the hallway, up against the wall by the staircase. The hallway followed through on the left into the large living room, and just ahead of them was the kitchen that then followed through to the open back yard. All the floors were laminated or tiled; Shizuo didn’t say a word, because he just wasn’t capable of describing it. A long island counter was sat in the middle of the kitchen, it looked like a small bar, full of all kinds of bottles that looked somewhat expensive, Shizuo guessed they’d been brought over by all the guests. “Think we should have bought something?” he said, gesturing in the counter’s direction.

Izaya looked and rolled his eyes “Like they need it. Besides, they’re just lucky we’re here”

Shizuo looked around, and then his eyes took in the yard, it had to be at least 30 feet in length and half that in width, he was also pretty sure that the garden extended round, so who knew how big it was. There were people strewn about, chatting away and sitting on the many brown leather patio chairs. The garden was well maintained, short cut grass with few garden ornaments standing along the edges. A large patio deck on the left. In the kitchen, on the right-hand side, there had been plenty of food cooked and set up for the guests. “Are you sure they’re not millionaires or something?”
Izaya shook his head, he didn’t blame him though, for being a little impressed. To Shizuo, the house was probably what every average person could dream of, to Izaya, it wasn’t a home or somewhere luxurious to live. It was lacking in every aspect of the word ‘home’ “I wonder where Mairu and Kuri are?”

Shizuo pointed a thumb in the garden’s direction “Probably outside somewhere”

Izaya pulled out his phone, sent a quick text to Mairu and placed it back in his pocket. :We’re here, in the kitchen: “Do you want a drink?” he waved at the countertop “Help yourself”

Shizuo noted the many kinds of bottles, from whisky to vodka, from cocktails to shots and liquors. Beside them, there was a large cooler that contained an assortment of beers. Shizuo grabbed an ashri and popped the cap with his thumb, he then proceeded to pour the contents into a glass. Izaya raised an eyebrow at him then. “What? I gotta at least be a little civilised”

Izaya chuckled and they made their way through the back door. “One thing” he said as they stepped outside. “If you don’t want to be making drinks all night, don’t mention you were bartender”

“Yeah. I had thought of that already. Your mother already thought I was your butler”

Izaya grinned “Well we soon fixed that, didn’t we?”

Shizuo smirked, remembering exactly how Izaya had told his parents that day. “So. This all your family?”

“Most of them” Izaya looked around, hands in his pockets as they both leant against the wall for a moment. There were a few kids running around down the back of the garden. The males of the family were mostly standing around with beers, or glasses of whisky. The women were sitting around the patio, with champagne in their hands. It felt more like a wedding then a New Year’s party, how everyone seemed to just divide themselves. Shizuo also started to feel like maybe he was underdressed. “Let’s see now” he heard Izaya speak again. The informant nodded his head in the patio’s direction. “My Aunt Kaname and my Cousin Fumiko are sat furthest to the right, my Mother’s side. From there, there’s Hanaka and Jenai, twins of my other Aunt Nanaka, My father’s side”

“Twins run in the family or something?”
“You could say that” he replied and then nodded at the few men standing beside a fountain statue. “The man on the left, that’s Kaname’s husband Hiroji”

“That’s the alcoholic right?”

Izaya laughed “Right. My mother’s brother”

“So that makes him your uncle”

Izaya nodded “Next to him, Nanaka’s husband Teichi and their eldest son Yusuki”

Shizuo’s head was already spinning “You know I’m bad at name’s, right?”

Izaya grinned, “You could always nickname them. Make it easier to remember them”

Shizuo huffed a laugh “Like alcoholic Hiroji?”

“Seems to help” Izaya nodded back to the twins “Twins actually run on my mother’s side”

Shizuo became confused then “What?”

“Jenai and Hanaka are actually Hiroji’s”

“Are you serious?”

Izaya shrugged “It’s true. Nanaka, my father’s sister, had an affair with my mother’s brother”

Shizuo shook his head “That’s disturbing. I take it no one found out”
“No one except me” Izaya grinned

“How the hell did you find out?”

“I overheard them. I was only ten at the time, but I was old enough to understand. When Nanaka showed up at the reunion fifteen years ago with new-born twins. Hiroji obviously freaked out, she never told him of course”

“So what, they all just shrugged it off as a coincidence?”

“I suppose so, twins don’t have to run in the family for them to be born. Anyway, Hiroji writes a check to Nanaka once a month, just to make sure she keeps quiet”

“So he’s an alcoholic and a cheat”

Izaya laughed “Welcome to the family”

Shizuo snorted “No wonder you don’t drink”

“You’d think, with a family like this, I’d be prone to ne?”

Shizuo shook his head “Dunno. You don’t strike me as the influenced type”

“Just the opposite. I’m the influencer” Izaya grinned

Shizuo chuckled “Well. Despite that. Mairu and Kururi turned out ok”

Izaya shrugged “I don’t think she sees it that way” he said as his mother walked out of the house. She looked over at them then, locking eyes with her son for a moment.

“The least you could do is mingle a little. I’m actually surprised you’re here, so I guess that’s a
“Always nice to see you too” Izaya sighed but he grinned at her anyway.

Kyouko snorted with a hand on her hip, she then looked at Shizuo, tilting her head. “It’s you, from the apartment that day”

Izaya watched Shizuo step forward, walking up to his mother with a hand extended. Honestly. He didn’t know why the hell he was trying exchange pleasantries. *She’s not worth it Shizu-chan*

“Hey. I’m not sure if maybe we got on the wrong foot when we first met. I’m Shizuo Heiwajima”

Kyouko looked down at his hand and placed her own in his. “I don’t care for first impressions, nor do I care what you are to my son, I obviously went wrong at some point of raising him. But at least he has good taste” she then walked away and stepped up onto the patio.

Shizuo clenched the fist that wasn’t holding his glass, unsure what to do, he felt Izaya’s hand wrap around it. “Does she seriously have a problem with us?”

“I told you. As two individuals, maybe not. But for us to be a couple is unfathomable, she’s probably burning us a cinder with her mind”

Shizuo growled “That’s really the issue? Because you like men?”

Izaya shrugged “No. Well, it is now. But she wasn’t too thrilled about the way I turned out, even before she knew that”

Shizuo sighed “She said you had good taste at least”

Izaya grinned “She’s right, I don’t just go for anyone, at least, not now”

Shizuo snorted “Well, you seem to have a thing for blond’s”
Izaya’s grin widened and he poked him in the chest “Yes. Tall, strong and gentle one’s. but they’re rare you know? One of a kind”

Shizuo rolled his eyes “Good save”

“Thank you”

“Izaya! Shizu-chan!” there was only one voice that could belong to. The two turn their attention to the left, to see Mairu and Kururi running up to them. “You’re here!”

Shizuo smiled, finally, someone that didn’t patronize them. He was aware of the regular stares they were getting, be it from Izaya’s mother, Hiroji or one of the aunt’s, and he could practically feel his ears burning. He ruffled Kururi’s hair. “Hey kiddos”

Mairu giggled and she hugged them both “We’re glad you’re here”

“Couldn’t let you fend off the family on your own now, could I?” Izaya said with a small smile

“S’not so bad. We’re just playing with the little ones, but apparently we need someone to play ‘the monster’ that chases everyone” Mairu explained

“Don’t look at me” Izaya warned, he wasn’t exactly the greatest with kids, he then looked at Shizuo and elbowed him. “Shizu-chan’s good at playing ‘the monster’”

Shizuo glared at him, but Izaya just grinned “Maybe they’d prefer a bloodsucker instead”

Izaya tilted his head, wondering what that was even suppose to mean, he then laughed “I don’t look scary enough. Bloodsuckers aren’t that intimidating, they’re too small” Shizuo continued to glare, not really getting the joke, he then shoved him forward. “You’re good with kids. Just go play. I should probably ‘mingle’”

Shizuo looked at him then, feeling as though he should stay by Izaya’s side. “Are you sure?”
“Unless of course, you want to try again with my mother?”

Shizuo snorted, he’d rather drink poison, but he wouldn’t say that, at least, not in front of the girls. Mairu and Kururi pulled on his arm. “Come on. They’ll love it. Just act all crazy and scary, chase us around a bit” he didn’t have much choice as he was dragged away to the bottom of the garden. He had been right, the garden stretched out further then it appeared, it was no wonder they couldn’t spot Izaya’s sisters right away. Izaya smiled as Shizuo was forced to chase the kids around, disappearing every now and then.

Izaya stared around the garden, the less time he spent around his mother and Hiroji, the better. It was best to talk to those he knew he could at least have a slightly civilised conversation with, ones that weren’t going to scrutinize him the moment he opened his mouth. He really couldn’t understand it, he couldn’t care less what the humans thought of him, more often then not, he was amused by their reactions. So why was it, that when it came to these family gatherings, he simply just couldn’t take it. He couldn’t fathom out why they hated him so much, yes, he was oddly differently to everyone else, he knew that, but still.

Shizuo was nowhere in sight now, off chasing the kids, he almost wished he’d asked the blond stay with him after all. Then again, with just how protective Shizuo was, and that temper of his, it’d probably make the situation worse. Izaya looked back into the house, staring at the alcohol, wondering if a drink might help him relax. He shook his head, probably not a good idea. When he turned back to the garden his eyes fell on someone he didn’t recognise, approaching him with two glasses. “Looking for anyone in particular? Or do you normally just stand around by yourself like this?”

Izaya raised an eyebrow, was that a pickup line? What the hell? “You are?”

The young man laughed “Relax. We’re not related or anything”

Izaya was pretty sure that wasn’t what he asked, “You think I wouldn’t know if I was related you?”

“I suppose you would. You seem like the know-it-all type”

Izaya wanted to laugh, was this guy for real? “You’ve got guts. Showing up here, friend of the family perhaps?”
“I work with your dad. I’m an intern. I met your Mom at the Christmas party last week, she invited me”

This time, Izaya did laugh. “You know she’s a homophobe, right?”

The guy tilted his head “She is?” he turned to the patio, Kyouko was laughing at something and then she looked over at them, raising her glass slightly. He turned back to Izaya. “Are you sure?”

Izaya groaned inwardly, damn this guy was naïve, and incredibly boring. “I am her offspring, I would know”

“Well that’s true. But I’m just wondering exactly why then, that she sent me over to talk to you”

Wait, what? Izaya wasn’t exactly sure what was happening right now, he looked over and his mother was approaching them. “She sent you over here?”

Kyouko smiled as she stopped in front of them. “I trust things are going well?” she said

Izaya looked at her, trying to fathom out her intentions, she hated the fact he was gay, she had made that perfectly clear right? He couldn’t even find the right words to form his question.

“Well” the guy spoke “There hasn’t been much in the way of conversation, I guess that’s expected, we just met after all” he laughed.

Izaya grimaced, god that laugh, what the fuck? He sounded as if something was stuck in his throat. Why the hell is he even talking to me?

“Izaya. This is Daijon. He’s an intern of your father’s-”

“Yes. I got that part” Izaya replied, cutting her off “Why is he talking to me? He told me that you sent him over here” Izaya glared at her

Kyouko sighed in frustration. “It’s clear you won’t come to your senses. So, if you’re going to be
that way, the least you could do is set your standards higher. So as not to embarrass the family further”

Suddenly, Izaya knew exactly what she was talking about. So she hated that he was gay, yet she was ok if he chose someone different, someone that she approved of, someone that obviously wasn’t Shizuo. You conniving, condescending -. Izaya bit his tongue, narrowing his eyes at her, he couldn’t believe she was this conceited. He had to walk away, before he reached his limit, he didn’t want to show them all how much they got to him. He clenched his fists. “Shizuo is everything more then anyone will ever be. No one is a more perfect match for me then him, nor ever will be” Kyouko glared at him and he glared right back.

Sensing the tension, Daijon quietly backed away and disappeared out of their line of sight. Kyouko snorted with a hand on her hip. “I seriously wonder how you turned out this way. I blame your grandfather, he was too doting on you, too encouraging”

Izaya’s eyes widened a little, too encouraging? Doting? Izaya’s fists clenched tighter, yet he grinned “I think I turned out just fine. You’re just mad that people almost feel sorry for you, because your only son didn’t turn out to be the prodigy you hoped for, they pity you I bet ne?”

Kyouko seethed and Izaya felt the sting of a slap across his face. He scowled, his body shook with anger, he needed to calm down before he did something stupid. He glanced around, silence filled the garden, he looked further down, no sign of Shizuo, which meant he was clearly still having fun-possibly anyway. In a way, that was probably better, who knew what the blond would have done if he saw that or heard any of the conversation that had just taken place. Feeling very much the centre of attention-not the kind he liked-he strolled into the house to get away from the stares.

Kyouko stared after him for a second, gritting her teeth “Ungrateful bastard” she muttered under her breath and then placed a smile back on her face as she walked back to the patio. The silence diminished, though tension now filled the air as mutterings of those around her reached her ears. Her eyes almost glistened as she tried to listen to what her sister in law was saying. Hiroji tapped her shoulder, almost swaying a little.

“Oi. What the hell did he do this time?”

Kyouko smiled at him “Nothing Hiroji, just a disagreement is all”

Mairu ran up the garden, smiling and laughing, her laughter died when she caught the loud voice of her uncle. It was then she noticed the tension among everyone else. “The hell?” she mumbled and then heard her uncle again.
“He fucking made you cry; he lacks respect, and someone oughta teach him some”

Mairu rolled her eyes and then frowned, she then began searching for her brother, who seemed to be absent. She only came up here to get a drink. The others were waiting for her back down the yard, she smiled for a moment, Shizuo seemed to be enjoying himself, he was a natural with kids. Mairu made her way inside the house, she knew that if Izaya was the cause of their mother’s anguish, something had obviously ignited the fire. It could have gone either way, because she wouldn’t put it past their Mom to be the one to start it.

Izaya stood in the living room, hands in his jacket, merely to hide how much they were shaking. He stared up at the large mantel piece, he was surprised the picture frames were still where he remembered them being. He was surprised by the concept five years ago, and he was still surprised now. The two picture frames, the ones that held the only images of his grandfather. One of himself with him, and one of the twins. Even though this house was originally his grandfathers, he had basically handed it over to Izaya’s parents a coupe of years after Izaya was born. He’d retired, yet he spent most of that looking after Izaya, to which the informant had been grateful. Since his parents were always away, he’d spent more time with his grandfather then his own dad. At least, up until a certain point; once the twins were born, their responsibilities fell on him. When Izaya was fifteen, the last family gathering had been the last time he saw his grandfather. Izaya wondered why he hadn’t come to his graduation, eighteen by then, but still, he was the only one Izaya had ever gotten attached to. He found out afterwards, that he was ill, and his parents had somehow neglected to tell him. By the time Izaya found out, and he’d rushed to try and visit him at the hospital where he’d been for the last year, it was too late. Izaya wasn’t one to grieve like normal people back then, he’d gone to the memorial of course, but after that, he never thought about it anymore.

Until now, now that he had gotten a little time, his emotions were Shizuo’s fault, he hadn’t been this way before, he was sure of it. He glanced at the picture frame, the one that held the image of himself, with his grandfather. Since he’d gotten into Raira, Izaya left home almost immediately after, it was the first time he experienced a great deal of freedom. After that, he didn’t get much time to visit, his goals set for himself required a lot of his time. His grandfather was unsure about his life choices, and that he was always getting into trouble, but he never scolded him for it, nor did he reproach him, he still supported him. “I’m sorry” he said, still looking at the picture. “For not visiting much when I left, I just…” Izaya gave a lopsided smile “I guess I was having too much fun” he wondered, when he’d left the memorial that day, whether his grandfather was proud of him or not, he only ever pondered that thought once, out of curiosity. “You might be wondering where I’d gone if you were still here. I’ve changed you know?” Izaya smiled sadly “You’d like him I bet. Shizu-chan would have liked you too, he’s the simple type, but I imagine you’d have bonded over a cigarette and whiskey, or something like that. I don’t belong in this family anymore, but I’m doing ok…”

“Izaya?” Izaya startled, not expecting anyone to come looking for him. “Who are you talking to?”

He knew his sister’s voice well enough that he need not see who was behind him. “I was just
thinking out loud” He turned to grin at her, instantly the emotions were gone from his expression. “Lose Shizu-chan or something?”

Mairu shook her head “No. I just came to get a drink. But I overheard our Uncle yelling and-” Mairu’s eyes widen a little, and for a second, Izaya thought that he’d been crying, that didn’t happen right? He was sure he’d have known if he was. “You’re bleeding!”

Izaya tilted his head “What?”

Mairu pointed to her own lip “There’s blood on your lip”

Izaya turned to glance in the reflection of the glass cabinet. “Ne. nothing to worry about really, it doesn’t hurt or anything. Her ring must have caught it”

Mairu walked toward him and then sat down on the couch “Mom hit you?”

Izaya shrugged “She didn’t like what I said. I probably pushed her” Izaya chuckled “I’m surprised she hasn’t slapped me before now”

Mairu frowned “It’s not funny”

Izaya laughed, he’d calmed down since he’d come in here, lost in his thoughts. “Don’t worry. Nothing else happened”

“What did happen?”

Izaya sighed “Mairu, it’s fine, go back outside before Shizu-chan starts wondering where you are”

“More like where you are” Mairu slumped “Mom’s lucky he didn’t see”

“Shizu-chan’s temper is a problem, but he wouldn’t have hurt her”
Mairu nodded “I know. But still, something would have gotten a taste of his rage”

Izaya chuckled “Probably a garden statue”

Mairu patted the space next to her, Izaya raised his eyebrow and she rolled her eyes with a huff. “Just sit”

Izaya did as she asked, she then pulled out some tissue from her pocket. She wiped his lip gently and you could barely tell he’d just been slapped. “See? Not that bad. Barely a scratch”

Mairu smiled “Reminds me of when we were little. Remember? When Kururi grazed her knee outside? It was the first time she rode her bike without stabilizers. She fell off and you carried her all the way back to the house”

“It was raining. I told you not to ride your bikes there, the ground was too slippery. But did you listen?”

Mairu giggled and then shrugged “Would have been all right if she didn’t hit the rock. She tried so hard not to cry though. Always trying to be brave in front of you”

Izaya looked at the floor “I didn’t care”

“Yeah I know. But she didn’t want you to see anyway-”

“No. I mean. I didn’t care. At least, not the way a brother should. I looked after you because I was suppose to”

Mairu smiled “We know you were just looking out for us in your own way, we know you cared, it didn’t matter how”

Izaya smiled at her “You trying to tell me I did ok?”

Mairu nodded “Anyway. When you finished cleaning her up, you said ‘see? Not that bad, barely
even a scratch”

“You remember that?”

Mairu’s smile brightened “Of course. We grew apart after you left, to the point we pretty much hated you” she leaned against his shoulder “But we never stopped remembering the good times. Even if it wasn’t for long. I’m glad we had you growing up, cause I don’t think we would have turned out this awesome otherwise”

Izaya chuckled “If you say so”

Mairu stood up, “It’s true. We’re badass”

Izaya shook his head, oh yeah, he’d been a great role model. “Let’s go find Shizu-chan and rescue him from the other kids and your sister”

Mairu laughed “Ok. But first, you tell me what happened”

Izaya huffed “Seriously?”

Mairu folded her arms “Come on, out with it, I’m not a kid anymore, so you can talk to me about things ok?”

Izaya stared at her, she was right, his sisters were so grown up now. “She sent someone over to talk to me after Shizu-chan went with you”

Mairu raised an eyebrow “Why?”

“Apparently to try and set me up with someone”

Mairu blinked “But- you’re gay and engaged”
Izaya laughed “That’s the funny part. It was a guy”

Mairu had to sit down again “Huh?”

Izaya shrugged and leaned back on the couch “Don’t ask. She said if I’m to be that way, the least I could do is set my standards higher, to not embarrass her or the family further”

Mairu narrowed her eyes “She said what?”

“Don’t get angry Mairu, I know what you’re like”

“How could she- Shizuo is the best thing that’s happened to you! Doesn’t she realise that? And- and just because you’re gay it doesn’t mean the end of the world”

Izaya moved his hand to hold hers but she yanked it away and stood up “Mairu? What are you doing?”

“I’m telling her!”

Izaya’s eyes widen “What?”

“I’m telling her right now! See if she shuns me in front of everyone” Izaya got up from the couch, running after her.

“Mairu no!”

Mairu ran into the yard, located her mother and stormed up after her. She turned to smile at her. “Hello sweetie, having fun?”

“Don’t hello sweetie me!”
“Excuse me? Who do you think you’re talking to young lady?”

“Clearly a homophobe!”

Izaya stopped below the patio, urgh, now everyone was looking at him. *Damn it Mairu*

“What are you talking about Mairu dear? What your brother and I had was just a disagreement”

Mairu glared “You slapped him in the face! Just for being gay!”

“I did not say or do such a thing, I slapped him because he’s ungrateful, not because of his ‘phase’ to which he hasn’t grown out of”

Izaya cringed at the words, narrowing his eyes up at her

Mairu’s eyes glistened for a moment, but she was too angry to cry “Well you know what? I’m bisexual! And I have been for some time, are you going to shun me now!? For the way I turned out? I bet you’re not so proud of us either”

“Mairu, that’s enough, it’s ok” Izaya said, approaching the patio steps

“No it’s not! It’s not fair. Mom! Being gay isn’t a bad phase, or even embarrassing”

Kyouko stared at her, blinking as everyone fell silent again. The second time today, her kids had caused her this grief.

Shizuo and Kururi were making their way back up the yard, when they noticed everyone’s attention was on those standing on the patio. “What’s going on?” Shizuo asked. When Mairu hadn’t returned for some time, they figured she’d gotten distracted and decided to come and search for her.

“I don’t know. Everyone is all quiet” Kururi replied
“We miss something?” Shizuo searched for Izaya, not taking him long to spot him, he was the only one with that fur trimmed jacket after all.

Kyouko then turned to her son, taking a step forward. “This is your fault. Your influence, you made her this way, because of you, she’s got this-this thing”

Izaya glared “You can’t catch it. It’s not a fucking disease!”

Shizuo clenched his fists as he started to approach them all, Kururi not far behind, wondering how long his temper was going to hold out.

“I knew it was a mistake to let you around them for that long. Look at what you’ve done now!”

Shirou, who was standing on the grass beside his nephew, looked over at them, this was clearly getting out of hand. “Kyouko, calm down” he said

Mairu stomped her foot, getting her mother’s attention again “He did a better job then you ever would have! I’m glad he was there, Izaya was always there for us, if he didn’t look after us, we might have turned out like you!”

Kyouko turned and scowled down at her daughter, “You ungrateful little-” Izaya’s eyes widen as she raised her hand, was she seriously going to- before Kyouko could go through with her idea, Izaya grabbed her wrist.

Shizuo stopped, clenching the garden lamp, bending it in half, someone was going to get this in their face. Kururi looked at him, surprised he’d held back this long, he was practically shaking with rage.

Kyouko glared up at her son “Take your hand off me”

Izaya narrowed his eyes, he wasn’t joking around anymore “Lay one finger on either of my sisters, I’ll make sure you regret it. I might deserve what you say or do to me, but they don’t. Don’t you ever tell them they’re not good enough, it’s you that’s not good enough, understand? You conceited, homophobic bitch”
Kyouko yanked her hand away, her eyes watering as she gritted her teeth. “Get out of my house!”

Izaya snorted “I’d be glad to” he then looked across the yard, locking eyes with Shizuo, he smiled.

“You cocky- hn- I’m gonna kick-hn-your ass-hn- show some respect-hn-damn it” Hiroji stumbled past Kyouko and pushed Kaname out of the way when she tried to calm him down. His eyesight was blurry, and he’d clearly had way too much to drink. Izaya looked away from Shizuo when his uncle slurred out his name in a-what was suppose to be a hateful tone.

Izaya stepped forward, grinning at him

Shizuo pulled the lamp post from the ground, it didn’t make much of a sound, since it was in the grass. Nobody noticed apart from Kururi. She knew better then to try and stop him, her focus was on her sister and Izaya, unable to believe their mother would actually strike them. Just fucking try it, I’ll wrap this post around your body and throw you like a javelin. Touch one hair on his head, I fucking dare you Shizuo was seething inside, it had been a long time since he’d been so angry at someone.

“You might want to back off” Izaya told him quietly, taking another step forward, so no one else could hear him. “Unless of course you’d like me to inform Jenai and Hanaka that they’re really yours” Hiroji didn’t need to be sober to understand what Izaya meant, he clenched his fists angrily.

“Don’t you threaten me you little shit. You don’t know what you’re talking about, so shut your god damn mouth”

Izaya chuckled darkly “I always know what I’m talking about. Your little check that you write once a month? I’m sure everyone would like to know”

Hiroji grabbed a fist full of Izaya’s top and pulled back his other, but that’s as far as he got. He felt a strong hold on his fist, looking up, his eyes fell onto a certain blond’s. A vein was close to popping on Shizuo’s forehead, he lifted Hiroji off his feet, growling. “JUST WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU’RE DOING HUH!?"

“let go! Put me down freak!”

“OH I’LL PUT YOU DOWN ALL RIGHT” Shizuo hissed “BUT NOT BEFORE I BEAT YOU SENSELESS” Shizuo shook him hard, nobody moved an inch, too afraid, they’d never seen such
rage in a single man.

“Shizu-chan-” Izaya knew it was futile, Shizuo wasn’t going to listen to him, not when he was this angry. It was only half-heartedly that he was trying anyway, the other half would gladly watch Shizuo pummel his uncle to a pulp. Shizuo cracked his head against the man’s forehead and threw him halfway down the yard, breathing heavily, trying to calm down. Izaya stepped forward then, placing his hand on Shizuo’s shoulder. “It’s ok. No one got hurt” he then looked at his unconscious uncle. “Well, no one that matters” Shizuo then looked at him, as if just noticing Izaya was there. Izaya smiled and linked his hand with Shizuo’s. “Let’s go, ok?”

Shizuo sighed, taking a deep breath as he tightened his hold, he then grinned “No one touches my flea”

Izaya smirked and then lead Shizuo toward the house, “Mairu! Kururi! Let’s go!” he shouted behind him.

The twins ran after them “You walk out of here now and you’re not welcome here either!” Kyouko shouted

Mairu and Kururi stopped and looked at their Mom, Izaya and Shizuo stopped in the doorway. Mairu then grinned and stuck her middle finger up as she shouted, “See you in five years!” and she took hold of Kururi’s hand and followed her brother and Shizuo out of the house.

………………………….

Shinra looked over at Celty and smiled “I wonder how they’re doing?” Celty looked at him and he continued “Shizuo and Izaya I mean, I doubt Shizuo’s temper will last, Izaya’s family are pretty mean”

[I’m sure Shizuo will be ok. he wants to make a good impression after all]

Shinra shook his head “You’ve not met Izaya’s parents. So you wouldn’t know. His whole family, they’re not very nice people, not very accepting to those who are different than them”
Shinra smiled “I’d known all along, you know? When I first met him, I could tell. It bothered him more then he let on, he wouldn’t have told his parents at all back then, not even after high school. I didn’t say anything to him either, we didn’t have that kind of friendship. But if he wanted, I’d be all ears if he wanted to share”

Shinra nearly laughed, it was so strange to hear Celty talk so ‘human’ yet at the same time, it wasn’t all that strange at all, not anymore. He nodded. “You know. Not everyone approves of someone that likes the same gender. ‘It’s wrong’ or ‘it’s not the natural way’ well, Izaya’s mother is the type to think that way, he didn’t hide it from anyone else, just from them”

Shinra shook his head “No. but they didn’t know about that until recently. I think they were disappointed, with just how Izaya turned out in general”

Celty slumped as if remembering how Izaya used to be [Yeah. He was a little-]  

Shinra tilted his head “Eccentric? Kind of a dick?”

Celty shrugged [It’s still no reason not to accept someone’s preference]  

Shinra smiled, he was forever falling in love with her kindness and openness. He looked around, it was so quiet, so peaceful, just the two of them. He laughed. “Last year, this place was filled with friends, we threw a party last year. Things have changed again since then”

“Now?”
Shinra placed his hand over hers “I like that it’s just you and me”

And then the doorbell rang, [that was a coincidence, I swear]

Shinra and Celty shuffled into the hallway and unbolted the door, they opened it and to their surprise, Mairu and Kururi ran through the door. “Hey!” they shouted and ran into the apartment. Shinra blinked and then turned to see Izaya and Shizuo.

“What are you guys doing here?” he asked

“It was Shizu-chan’s idea” Izaya mumbled quickly

“No it wasn’t! don’t pin the blame on me!” Shizuo shouted in defence

[Aren’t you suppose to be at your reunion thing?]

Izaya grinned, spreading his arms out “Just like every family event, it always ends with a brawl, so we left”

Shinra stepped aside and then shut the door after his two friends passed them. “What happened?”

“Long story” Shizuo grumbled

“So what’s the short version?”

Izaya span around, hands in his pockets “I don’t think we’ll have to go to another reunion again”

“Oh”
The four made their way into the apartment, the twins had already made themselves comfortable on the couch. They sat around the table. [what happened?]

Izaya shrugged “My mother is a homophobe, and my uncle is an alcoholic, words were exchanged and Shizu-chan threw my uncle across the yard”

Shinra’s eyes widened “What?”

Shizuo growled “Yeah. Only because he threatened you”

Shinra then looked at Izaya “He threatened you?”

Izaya smirked “I threatened him first. Not with violence, but still”

“You wouldn’t have had to if he didn’t intend on approaching you in the first place. I’d have crushed him if he actually hit you”

Izaya sighed “I can defend myself you know. Although, you made me leave my switchblade at home”

“I didn’t actually think you’d need it! Besides, you don’t listen to me anyway, so why would you then?”

“Sounds like some reunion. Sorry I missed it” Shinra said with a smile

“It was great!” Mairu piped in “Shizu-chan totally flattened my uncle, cause he’s a jerk, and Izaya was all like,” Mairu held up Kururi’s arm for effect “Lay one finger on either of my sister’s and I’ll make sure you regret it”

[Your uncle threatened you too??]
“Huh? Oh, no. That was my Mom”

“What?” Shinra gasped

Mairu smiled “Yeh. But it was so cool, cause Izaya and Shizuo were all protective and stuff, it was real cute”

Izaya and Shizuo shared a glance, smiling, Izaya slightly embarrassed. “I was just caught up in the moment” he tried to explain, as if any of them would believe him anyway.

“When we left, we were at a loss about where to go, just cause it’s New Years and Izaya said we should come here”

Shinra looked at his friend, who was avoiding his gaze, seemingly embarrassed about wanting to be here. There was a sudden flash in his eyes. [Shinra. It’s not too late. We can still throw a party”

“But.” Shinra looked at her, how could he say no? and it wasn’t like his friends had such a great time, since they’d come away early, only to wind up here, where-they-belongs. Shinra then smiled, it was true, they were like family. “Ok. let’s throw a party”

Mairu and Kururi jumped in excitement “Wow really!”?

“Why not”

“Yes!”

Shinra then turned to Izaya “You’re good at getting the message across, wanna text everyone to ask?”

Izaya pouted “That’s a complete misuse of my skills as an informant”

Shizuo grinned and ruffled his hair “But you’re so good at it” Izaya glared at him and then shoved a hand over his face.
“Protozoan” he mumbled and then took his phone out, clicked a few buttons and then placed his phone back in his pocket.

Shinra blinked “That was quick. What’d you say?”

Izaya shrugged “Party at Shinra’s”

Shinra sighed “Seriously?”

“You told me to get the message across”

“Did you have to be so blunt?”

Izaya tilted his head “I thought bluntness was implied when getting the message across?”

[it doesn’t matter. The important thing, is that we spend it with those we care about, with our family]

Shinra sighed again “You’re right”

……………………………………

It didn’t take long, and soon enough, Shinra’s and Celty’s apartment was filled with people. All their friends were delighted to come, each bringing with them some drinks and snacks. Music began to play, and everyone was either dancing, laughing or chatting away, talking about the long year they’d had. Shizuo looked out on the balcony, finally spotting the person he was looking for, he excused himself away from Kadota and made his way across the room and stepped outside. The cold night air visible on his breath. “Hey” he said, stepping beside Izaya. “I was looking for you”

Izaya smiled, not taking his eyes off the city. “Sorry. I just needed some air”

Shizuo leaned over the railing. “I best not smoke then, huh?” Izaya chuckled and then lay his chin on his arms as he leaned down. “You ok?”
Izaya nodded “I was just thinking”

“‘You thinking is dangerous’ Izaya looked at him and Shizuo shuffled his feet ‘That didn’t come out right’”

Izaya laughed “Nothing in particular. I was just pondering on everything that’s happened” he then set his gaze across the city once more. “A lot has changed, you know?”

Shizuo stared across the city, it’s vibrant atmosphere ever present. “Any regrets?”

Izaya stood straight “Hmm, not since” there was silence for a moment and then- “I’m sorry”

“What for?”

“My parent’s”

“The hell do you need to apologise for?”

“Your parent’s, they were so kind and understanding, they were so good to me. You didn’t deserve any of what mine did”

“Tch. You didn’t either. Nor Mairu and Kururi. I think it’s safe to say, that you know who your real family are. My mother certainly thinks of you as such already”

Izaya smiled a little “She’s just as protective as you, Shizu-chan”

Shizuo shrugged “I guess. Maybe the next time you get yourself into trouble, I’ll set her on you” Izaya chuckled

“I’ll never hear the end of it”
Another minute of silence passed, Izaya shivered and stood closer to Shizuo for warmth. “Kind of a crappy year…..” Shizuo said

“It’s kind of a blur”

Shizuo wrapped his arm protectively around him, pulling him close. “I almost lost you”

“You too…..”

“God I hope this year is better. I don’t wanna go through something like that again”

Izaya looked up at Shizuo and smiled “It doesn’t matter. Because I’ve come to realise something”

“What? How can it not matter?”

“It doesn’t matter because, whatever happens to us, however bad the situation gets. We’ll always come back to each other, like nothing can keep us apart. No matter how much they try”

“They fucking do try, don’t they?”

Izaya smirked “But they’ll always fail, every single time, because it’s us, we’re basically unstoppable”

Shizuo shook his head and then smiled “You really believe all that? That we’ll always come back to each other?”

Izaya shrugged “They took our memories away and we still ended up together, kind of”

“You jumped off a fricking roof!”
Izaya almost shuddered at the memory and then grinned “But we’re still here, it’s just fate Shizu-chan”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow, Izaya was being unusually strange, he thought the raven didn’t believe it fate and destiny like that. Maybe he just wanted some reassurance, something that kept him positive, that made him believe that everything would really be ok, as long as they had one another. “What about after?”

“After what?”

“You know. When we’re gone”

“Are you asking me if I believe in the afterlife?”

Shizuo shrugged “Not sure I believe in it. Just a nice thought, I guess”

Izaya looked back out over the city “I used to question it a lot. I feared death, sometimes I still do, if I think about it. But it’s not something I have any control over-”

“At least not when you can’t help it”

Izaya smiled “Dangerous lifestyle aside of course. But if we’re talking about what’s after. I like to think that we’ll be reborn, as someone else, to start again”

“Yeah. That’s a nice thought too, sounds a lot more logical then just- everyone goes to heaven or hell”

“But if that is the case-see you there”

Shizuo snorted “Speak for yourself”

Izaya poked him “You wouldn’t follow me?”
Shizuo tilted his head up in thought “I’ll visit” Izaya pouted “But I’d probably drag your ass back up with me” Izaya smirked at him

“Angels be damned”

Shizuo laughed “So, back to the afterlife, if what you say about us is true. Does that mean we’ll end up together in our next life?”

Izaya smiled “Sounds like fun, doesn’t it?”

Shizuo snorted “Can’t wait. I might even promise not to try and kill you the first time we meet”

Izaya smirked and wrapped his arms around him “Naw. That’s so romantic!” he laughed and Shizuo shook his head. Suddenly, they could hear their friend’s shouting and counting down behind them.

“It’s going to be a good year. I can feel it” Shizuo said, hands on Izaya’s waist.

“Coming from you, that’s got to mean something, your gut feelings are always right”

Shizuo smiled “I don’t know. I’ve gotten it wrong once, took me a while to admit it though”

Izaya leaned in close “You got there Shizu-chan”

“3!”

“2!”

“1!”
“Happy new year!!”

Shizuo crashed their lips together as fireworks and shouts in the street were heard, their friends shouting and laughing behind them, and Izaya, there in front of him, like he always would be.

Chapter End Notes

I know this chapter might seem like it's the end, but it's not :) I actually can't believe I wrote another chapter in such a short time. Go me!

I know Izaya's parent's might not be this horrible, but you never see them or really hear much about them, so. meh
I now pronounce you-civil partnered

Chapter Notes

I spent so long researching the whole civil partnered thing. I couldn't find any differences between the ceremony of what it would be like in Japan to England, so I used the references for. But the basic partnership is the same, and I really hope I did well in portraying it to the best I could.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shizuo slammed his fist against the desk, extremely frustrated by now, though Izaya didn’t even flinch, he leaned back with a sigh. “Please don’t break my desk” he told the angry blond.

Shizuo glared at him but unclenched his fist, running a hand through his hair, honestly, he didn’t think this was going to be so complicated. Izaya had been going through with him all the procedures that they needed to in order to receive-what the equivalent of a marriage certificate was-a civil partnership. It wasn’t as if they could just get married, no of course not, that would have been way too simple, wouldn’t it?

Izaya was aware that Shizuo hadn’t quite acknowledged this certain fact, a same-sex couple could not get married, not like they wanted. He probably should have mentioned this to him way before, but he honestly thought Shizuo knew at the time. Paperwork covered the desk, and two piles of documents sat neatly to one side. “Shizu-chan, it’s not that complicated-”

“The hell it isn’t!”

Izaya watched him get up from the desk chair and storm out of the apartment. “Seriously?” he shook his head, of course, he knew that Shizuo’s temper wasn’t because of the paperwork, going through all the information-though that probably didn’t help the situation, it was because of the cold hard fact that they wouldn’t be technically ‘married’. Izaya didn’t really let it bother him, it was just the law, and who knows, maybe they could turn their civil partnership into a marriage certificate one day. This was as close to it as they were going to get, so he didn’t know why Shizuo was so angry over it.

June 15th. That was the date he’d set for them, that was plenty of time, he had already phoned ahead, asking many venues if they were available that date. He’d only come up with two, but he’d yet to show them to Shizuo. Izaya stretched in his chair, there was still so much to go through, so maybe it was best to just let him sulk for a while. Izaya got up from the chair and made his way into the kitchen to pour himself a tea. His cell phone rang, he leaned against the counter and clicked to answer it.
“Orihara” saying his own surname, struck him with another thought, they hadn’t even discussed whether they’d take either of each other’s names. “What can I do for you?” Izaya listened to the woman on the other end of the phone, she sounded young, maybe just in her twenties, and she sounded rather frightened. “It sounds like you’re being stalked. You should probably notify the police, I’m an informant Miss-” he waited for her to confirm her name, since she had yet to even do so. Why was they always coming to him with something like this? He wondered sometimes, if they even knew what an informant was. He then froze the moment she’d said her name.

“It just, I don’t know, I always think I’m getting away from him. But he just seems to know where I am all the time. I don’t know what to do, if I go to the police, it’s going to take too long and- I feel he’s just going to know”

Fuck. Izaya tightened his hold on the cell phone. “Where are you now?” ha, as if he didn’t already know that.

“Erm, I’m at a payphone box right now, outside the sunshine complex”

_of course you are “Walk down the street across the road and go into the mall opposite, lose yourself in the crowd and go into one of the cafes”_

“He’ll follow me for sure”

“He won’t. I’ll lead him off trail. If you do exactly what I said, he won’t be able to spot you”

“But- how will you lead him off trail? You don’t even know where he is, or even who he is”

Izaya sighed. “His name is Miwasaki, you met him once at a bus station and then again a few days later in a park”

“What?”

“Maybe you don’t remember. It was probably only for brief moments. Do you remember helping anyone with directions, or change maybe?”
“Yes. I do, the bus station, he asked if I had any spare change, he said he’d been clumsy and lost some, I felt sorry for him”

“And the park?”

“It took me a while to recognise him again, but he just asked me for directions, he just seemed like the type to just forget things”

“Some humans often play on that, because they know someone like yourself, will buy it”

“What does that mean?”

“This was probably when he started stalking you. Learning everything there was to know about you”

“How do you know all this?”

“Because I’m the one that’s helping him keep track on you. I’m the reason why he can always seem to find you”

“You- what?”

Izaya sighed. It was true, but at the time the man approached him for help, he’d already known a lot about the woman. “He came to me to help find you. I was under the impression you were an item. He used the story of the bus station and the park as to how you met. He said that you were in trouble and he just wanted to help find you” Izaya was surprised himself, that the man seemed to have tricked him somehow. It wasn’t as though he was looking for it, he couldn’t investigate every single client that came to him, though he didn’t exactly have a lot of free time right now, what with the partnership and other jobs he’d had at the time.

“You’ve been helping him stalk me!?”

Well she certainly went from frightened to angry real quick. Izaya tilted his head up in exasperation, putting it like that made him cringe, like he was up to his old schemes. “Go to the mall. Lose yourself
in the crowd” he repeated his instructions from earlier. He would help her now, now that he knew the situation he’d put her in.

“Why should I trust you? You’re just going to tell him where I am again”

He couldn’t blame her for thinking that, he wouldn’t trust him either. “I’m going to meet you”

“Why?”

“To help you. It’s the least I can do”

“How do I know that for sure?”

“You came to me for help in the first place, right?”

“That was before I knew you were helping him”

“That wasn’t my intention. Well, it was, but not to stalk you. Let me help you now, when you get into the mall, give me your location”

There was silence for a moment and Izaya began to think she’d hung up and then “Ok”

Izaya sighed in relief. the two hung up and Izaya walked out of the kitchen to grab his jacket from the door, he wasn’t one to get involved, she could have just contacted the police. But it was his mistake, and if she did, he’d be in trouble too. Had he just unintentionally broken his promise? He shook his head, not willing to think that much on the subject, it wasn’t his fault. As he toed his shoes on by the door, Shizuo came back. Izaya couldn’t help but smirk. “Are you done sulking?”

Shizuo glared at him and then rolled his eyes “I wasn’t sulking”

“All right, are you done throwing a tantrum?”
“I wasn’t throwing a tantrum!” Izaya raised an eyebrow at him, still his smirk was plastered on his face. It was then Shizuo noticed Izaya’s jacket and shoes. “Going somewhere?”

“Yes”

Shizuo blinked “That’s it? Just yes?”

“I answered your question, didn’t I?”

Shizuo narrowed his eyes, becoming suspicious almost instantly “What’s with you?”

Izaya hated it when Shizuo was so perceptive, he didn’t remember him being this way before. “Nothing, I just have to be somewhere real quick”

“You said we need to sort this civil thing. So why the sudden rush out?”

“I just have to settle an issue. Work Shizu-chan, nothing to worry about, I’ll be back soon”

Izaya reached for the door and Shizuo grabbed his wrist “Izaya” Izaya looked at Shizuo, he knew that tone, the tone that said that he knew something wasn’t right and that he could tell Izaya was lying.

Izaya grinned “Don’t make me late now”

Shizuo shook his head “Do you think I’m that stupid?”

Izaya tilted his head “No?”

“I’m not letting go until you tell me” The informant pondered his options, he then smirked and leaned in to kiss him, Shizuo snorted and placed his hand over Izaya’s face. “Come on. Give me some credit’
Izaya moved his hand away with a huff, he heard his phone bleep, probably a text, he also knew that before the woman rang him, that Miwasaki would have been nearby. He pulled out his phone, Shizuo still hadn’t taken his hand off his wrist.

:I’m in the mall, second floor café:

“I really have to go Shizu-chan” he should have been over there by now, by the time he’d made his way to sunshine city, he’d have received her text in good time.

“Just tell me what’s going on, you’re acting all damn skittish”

Izaya laughed then, “You don’t have to worry Shizu-chan, I’m not in trouble, I just have to go fix something”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “What did you do?” ha, one minute he was worried about him, then in the next breath he was scolding him.

Izaya sighed, he wasn’t going to let this go, was he? “I made a mistake”

Shizuo then let go of his wrist, and for a second, he thought Izaya was going to bolt out the door. His eyes widened then and he started to panic. “Izaya, are you- are you having second thoughts? Because I didn’t mean to get angry, I just-” Izaya placed his finger on Shizuo’s lips to hush him.

“Calm down. I wasn’t talking about that. How did you even get to that conclusion?”

Shizuo sighed “Dunno. Cause you’re acting like-” Shizuo swallowed the lump in his throat “Like back in the alley, or something”

“Like back in the-” Izaya narrowed his eyes then “You think I’m going to do that to you again? Disappear or play you?”

“No! I just-I” Shizuo clenched his fists, what the hell was he even thinking? He knew damn well how Izaya felt about him by now. Maybe he was getting cold feet? Was that a thing? He was sure it was, but the ceremony wasn’t until June, who even got cold feet five months before?
“I have to go, I’ll leave it up to you whether you actually trust me or not” Izaya then walked out of the apartment without another word, leaving Shizuo feeling incredibly guilty now.

Shizuo growled and then slammed his fist against the wall, a small crack soon emerged. “Damn it!”

……………………………….

Izaya walked into the mall, hoping the young woman was still there, he stepped onto the escalator, there was a frown showing on his features, he couldn’t believe Shizuo could think that, even for a second. That time in the alleyway, it seemed so long ago, even then he was a different person, still trying to work out why he was changing so much, trying to figure out his feelings. After everything they’d promised, all the shit they’d gone through just to keep one another, what would be the point in leaving now? He’d deal with that when he got home, there was something else more important right now then Shizuo’s ridiculous accusations. Promises….. maybe that’s why he’d gotten annoyed before, why he couldn’t tell Shizuo what was going on, because he felt like he’d let him down. It was all unintentional, but Izaya couldn’t help but feel responsible, it was like his subconscious was just secretly still screwing people over. He stepped off as he reached the top, hoping he wasn’t- Izaya suddenly saw him, talking to someone, talking to her-too late. Well, maybe not. He quickly pulled out his phone and started to send a quick text.

“I was just wondering something; we seem to bump into each other quite a lot-”

She shifted in her seat, glancing around, trying to stay calm, she then smiled up at him. “It seems that way, doesn’t it?”

Miwasaki smiled, it was certainly not a genuine smile, that much she could already tell. “Maybe we should stop dancing around each other and do something about it?” he leaned close to her, grinning then. “I mean. I feel like I already know everything about you”

The woman shuddered, frowning inwardly, she began to wonder whether the man she spoke to was lying when her cell phone rang.

Izaya peered around the corner of a column, just outside of the café, he had hoped to reach her before Miwasaki caught up with her. By leading her into the mall, he was going to throw the man off
her trail, but of course, Shizuo caused that to fail. He stayed hidden but he could see the two from his
position. He watched as the woman dug her cell phone out of her purse and glanced at the man as he
watched her do so. “It’s me. I’m sorry that I’m late. I was hoping to be with you before he
approached. Listen to me, get up from the table, act like it’s an important phone call, excuse yourself
outside. He won’t do anything rash in front of a lot of people; he knows my face, so I can’t come to
you, but I’m close by”

She feigned a shocked expression, like she’d received bad news or something, she stood up, the guy
eyeing her suspiciously. She bowed politely and then edged herself away from the café. “I’m sorry, I
have to take this outside”

“Good girl” Izaya said as he watched her carefully and then glanced at the man to make sure he
wasn’t approaching, he’d stood up, but he hadn’t made a move to follow yet. “Keep walking away
and keep talking” all the while Izaya kept both his sights on them, feeling a sudden rush of
adrenaline, who knew that helping someone could have just as much of an effect as what he used to
feel when he caused havoc. Maybe Satoshi was right, that he could work wonders if he started
working for him. Izaya shook his head, he liked being his own boss, he liked being an underground
informant, nothing was going to change that. If that happened, then that meant admitting that he
enjoyed helping people. He couldn’t abandon the last piece of himself that made him unique, his love
for humans wouldn’t change, so he’d rather just keep working this way. He was only helping this
young woman, to rectify his own mistake, just like the reason he’d put an end to Tainted and got rid
of Nakura-in a way. Akane was a special case, he initially only wanted to screw around with the
parents, but as it went, he’d ended up saving her and protecting her, and found her a new home.
Most of that was Shizuo’s doing, his partner was hardly going to let him walk away without making
sure she was safe. “Now turn around and turn right, don’t look back at him” he instructed, he
watched her do so and then grabbed her wrist, she almost yelped as he pulled her into where he was
hidden. “It’s ok, your safe now”

She looked up at him then, tilting her head, as if trying to put the voice she was talking to on phone
and the face of the one in front of her. “Izaya?”

“That’s right. I told you I would help, I’m sorry that I got here a little later then I expected” he then
moved in front of her and slightly peered round the corner, seeing the man had walked outside,
standing just a mere few feet from their position.

“What now?”

“If you move now, he’ll spot you” Izaya moved away from the column. “Stay here, don’t move”

“But-“
“Don’t worry, this is all part of the plan” he then smirked and walked toward the guy with his hands in his jacket. “Miwasaki”

The man startled and turned to the voice; he raised an eyebrow as a familiar person approached him. “Oh. It’s you Izaya. What are you doing here?”

“Helping out a friend. Lose someone?”

“I thought I found her. I guess it wasn’t her, I’m just so worried”

“She’s probably long gone by now”

“I swear she was just here-you said she was around sunshine city; I could have sworn she came in here”

Izaya shrugged and then pulled out his cell phone when he heard it bleep. :I’m outside: Izaya smirked and placed it back in his pocket. “The phone call must have been important, for her to leave so quickly”

“She couldn’t have gotten far, I almost had her-” the guy then realised his slip up and Izaya’s smirk deepened. “Shit. I mean-” feeling a little thrown off, Miwasaki shook his head and then he wondered something. “Wait, how did you know about the phone call?”

Izaya laughed “Because I’m the one that called her” His laugh continued as he watched the expression on Miwasaki’s face change from panic to anger in a few seconds. “That’s right, I know you’re stalking her, that she’s not your girlfriend” Asumi peered around the column, watching, for a moment, she was worried that Izaya might tell him that it was her that contacted him. “Do you really think that I’m that stupid? That it would be that easy to fool me? I knew all along that you weren’t really her boyfriend, I just needed to bide my time, just waiting for the right moment, I couldn’t wait to see the look on your face” she was surprised, he didn’t give her away at all, and she knew then that she could trust him, that what he’d told her was true, that he had no intention of causing her any harm.

“You- Son of a bitch” he gritted his teeth, Izaya grinned at him
“Gotta bounce!” Izaya then dodged an oncoming fist and ran off, he looked back and laughed. *He’s actually following me, what an idiot* Izaya ran and sharply turned right and jumped down the stairs a section at a time, he stopped when he reached the bottom, smirking up at Miwasaki, just waiting for him.

“You’re fricking dead informant!”

“I’m still waiting!” Izaya shouted back at him, fully aware of the scene they were now making, since the people around them had stopped to stare. Miwasaki clenched his fists and ran down the steps, Izaya waited until he got to the very last one before laughing and running off again. They approached the mall’s entrance, and both ran outside the doors, Izaya stopped again, causing Miwasaki to stop abruptly in front of him. Izaya sighed dramatically. “You shouldn’t have underestimated me. What a shame, you must have thought you were so smart ne?”

Before the man could even take a swing, he was grabbed by two cops. “What the!”

“Good timing!” Izaya praised, clapping his hands and then placing them in his jacket. “I do love your punctuality Satoshi”

Satoshi shook his head “Tst. You’re impressive as always Izaya, but I hope you got evidence”

“Oh I have no doubt that she will testify, I’m sure that’s all the evidence you’ll need”

Miwasaki struggled in the cop’s grip “No! he helped me! He helped me stalk her! He should be put away!”

Izaya smirked, well, maybe they didn’t evidence after all. He then rolled his eyes, like that was going to work anyway, Satoshi knew him too well to fool for that. But Izaya thanked god he did, because in truth, that was technically exactly what happened.

“Well thanks for the confession there, you’ve even got that stalker look about you” Satoshi told him as the two cops dragged him away.

“Izaya!” they turn to see Asumi run toward them from the building, she then slowed down and spotted Miwasaki being thrown into a cop car. “You- you did it”
Izaya smiled “You’re safe now, he won’t be following you anymore” Satoshi then approached them.

“If you would like to come with me Miss”

Izaya motioned for her to follow “This is Satoshi, he’ll take care of you now, get your statement and make sure you’re safe”

Asumi bowed “Of course, I’m very happy to do that” she then turned to Izaya “Thank you. You really did want to help after all”

Izaya shrugged “Just part of the plan” she nodded in understanding, and Izaya knew that she’d tell them exactly that, for her own protection as well as his.

“Thank you” and then Izaya watched her walk away with Satoshi and then watched the cars drive off.

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Izaya walked slowly into the apartment, shutting the door and toeing off his shoes, he then spotted the crack in the wall. He clicked his tongue and set his keys on the table beside the door. He then turned and soon spotted Shizuo on the couch, the man obviously knew he was home, but refused to acknowledge it. Izaya sighed and walked toward the couch and sat beside him. Shizuo was frowning, staring at the floor. “Shizu-chan-” he was about to explain himself when-

“I’m sorry” Izaya hadn’t expected him to apologize first, not in this case. “I shouldn’t have reacted the way I did. Whatever happened in the alley was a completely different situation. I guess I just panicked, it just felt familiar, you were acting really odd, I got suspicious, but I didn’t mean for you to think I didn’t trust you. I do, I trust you Izaya, I’m so sorry about what I said I-”

Izaya hushed him by grabbing his wrist, causing Shizuo to finally look at him. “Perceptiveness suits you Shizu-chan. You were right though,” Izaya sighed, looking away from him, feeling his heart constrict for a moment. “I messed up. I broke our promise…”

Shizuo looked at him, blinking in confusion “What do you mean?”
Izaya let go of his wrist, his head now in his hands “Ah. I don’t know how to explain it”

Shizuo frowned, that familiar feeling coming back, but he squashed it down. “Talk to me”

“I got a phone call while you were outside sulking” Izaya almost smirked at Shizuo’s grunt of protest that he wasn’t sulking. “It was a young woman, asking for help, once she explained her issue, it sounded as though she was being stalked”

“That’s nothing to do with you, should have just gone to the police”

“That’s what I said. But-” Izaya bit his thumb nail, and Shizuo knew there was something wrong. “When she told me her name, I knew that what she said was true. I knew because I was the one that was tracking her”

“What? You helped someone stalk her?”

Izaya grimaced “Yes. I messed up. I- I didn’t realise, he told me that she was his girlfriend, that he was worried about her, that she was missing. He already knew a lot about her, indicating he’d already done his research, to make it believable” Izaya clenched his fists, still annoyed over the whole thing. “I was unknowingly helping him stalk her” Shizuo didn’t say anything at first, he honestly didn’t know what to say. What the hell? he felt like he should be angry, that Izaya would do something like that, that he’d clearly done so in the past-kind of. But seeing his reaction, seeing how frustrated and upset he was over it all, it was obviously no fault of his own, it was just-hard to believe. Izaya was clearly more annoyed with himself, that this guy managed to act so believable that he’d tricked him. “I broke our promise” he heard him say again, head in his hands once more.

Shizuo could tell Izaya was feeling incredibly guilty, it wouldn’t do him any good to get mad now. If Izaya said it wasn’t his fault, then he’d believe him, and why wouldn’t he? If he had done it on purpose, then Izaya wouldn’t be acting like this now. He’d be bragging about it, smirking that sinister smirk he used to wear back in the day. Something else came to mind, and he found himself asking the question before he could rethink it. “Izaya, where did you go?”

Izaya looked up at him then “Go?”

“Earlier, you were gone a while”
“Oh. I told her to meet me at the mall. That I was going to help her, correct the mistake I’d made”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “Did you tell her it was your fault?”

“Yes. I knew exactly where she was anyway, and I also knew that the stalker wasn’t too far behind either. I was hoping to catch her before he found her again, but he was already there when I got there” It was then Shizuo realised that Izaya had basically gone off to rescue the woman he’d unintentionally put into danger. His eyes began to roam over his body, searching for something that Izaya knew too well what that was. Izaya smiled at him “I’m fine”

Shizuo shifted uncomfortably at being discovered, truth was, that he did this nearly every single time after Izaya came home, making sure he was ok, that nothing seemed wrong. He’d probably notice the most insignificant bruise or scratch, no matter how minor, Izaya laughed, as if he didn’t know, as though Shizuo thought he had been so discreet about it. Of course, he wouldn’t tell him he knew, that this wasn’t the first time Shizuo had done it, he’d keep that to himself. Shizuo then locked eyes with him and then pulled him onto his lap, Izaya let out a surprised squeak at the sudden movement. Shizuo held him close, embracing him. “It’s not your fault you know”

Izaya bit his lip “Shizu-chan…”

“It’s not your fault” Shizuo repeated “You didn’t break our promise” Izaya tensed and reached his hand up to grab the back of Shizuo’s shirt. “You helped the guy sure, but you didn’t know, and you went and corrected your mistake as soon as you realised. You told me you had to fix an issue and I should have just trusted that, not made you think that what you did would somehow piss me off” Shizuo tightened his hold “You didn’t break our promise, ok?”

Izaya closed his eyes, relaxing under Shizuo’s warmth. “I should have known”

Shizuo shook his head, shifting them so he could look at Izaya properly “You can’t always know everything all the time, give yourself a break, don’t blame yourself, it’s not exactly your job to know how shady people are. They come to you for info, you don’t have to know their background too”

“But I used to want to. Know everything about everyone, it’s just fun”

Shizuo smiled knowingly “Is that what this is about? Whether or not you’re still an asshole?” Izaya grinned, but Shizuo could see that it was forced. “Izaya. You’ve got nothing to worry about, just
because you’ve changed, that doesn’t mean you’ve stopped being you, I would never change that about you, because you’re the one I fell in love with, you can be everything you want to be, and I would still love you because I know that underneath, there’s something a lot more then what’s on the surface”

Izaya couldn’t find the words to reply, Shizuo just always caused this kind of reaction in him, he was just simply awed everyday by the sheer unconditional love the blond gave him. He leaned forward and pressed his lips against his, the hold on his shirt loosening as he pushed his hands up under it. He let all his movements say what he could not express verbally.

Izaya’s short fingernails dragged across Shizuo’s back as he was pushed closer and closer to his limit. Breathless moans drew from his lips as Shizuo thrust deep inside him, gentle but with just enough force to create such pleasure. Izaya tilted his head back, Shizuo nibbled at his neck, his breathing just as fast. “Shizu-chan….I’m close” Shizuo moved up and kissed him, stopping a moan escaping his lover’s lips as he began to pump him vigorously. “Ngh…shit….” Shizuo threw his head back as he thrust and came hard, Izaya cried out as Shizuo stroked him fast until he too released his orgasm. Breathing heavily, Izaya tightened his hold for a moment, riding out his pleasure. Shizuo gently pulled out and shifted to one side, he looked at Izaya, a hand was over his face.

“You ok?”

Izaya chuckled, as if he just asked him that “You…..wear me out, Shizu-chan…..”

Shizuo smirked “Sorry about that”

Izaya clicked his tongue when he glanced at him, seeing Shizuo’s smirk. “Like hell you are….” He then gave him a smirk of his own “You’re pretty proud of yourself, aren’t you?”

Shizuo laughed “I suppose I am”

Izaya shook his head, Shizuo wouldn’t know it though, but he was the only one that could do this to him, cause him to writhe in pleasure like this, push him to new heights. But he wouldn’t admit that, it was just something he wanted to keep to himself, it felt more special that way. He sat up, wincing as he did so, it was the good kind of feeling, sore but oddly satisfied. He then snorted a laugh when he saw Shizuo’s back as the blond shuffled off the bed. “That’s a good look on you”
Shizuo looked over at him and then got up and turned to try and glance at himself in the mirror. “Tst. Proud of yourself?” Shizuo asked, mimicking the same question the raven asked a minute before.

“Very. It’s not the first time though, but that doesn’t make it any less fun”

Shizuo shook his head “Animal” Izaya laughed and swung his legs over the bed and then stood.

“Like you’re one to talk. You don’t realise it, but every time we do this, you get more possessive, it’s kind of like you’ve got this animalistic side to yourself; it just comes out”

Shizuo blushed “Don’t be ridiculous”

“It’s true you know” Izaya moved toward him and kissed him slowly “I like it”

Shizuo shoved him off playfully “Shut up”

Izaya chuckled “Don’t be embarrassed Shizu-chan. I’m very desirable, it’s only natural that you’d want me to know I’m yours”

“That’s not what I was doing-”

Izaya smirked and splayed his fingers over Shizuo’s back “No? that’s what I was doing”

Shizuo blushed deeper “I don’t even know I’m doing it; I know that I don’t own you”

Izaya laughed harder “Relax Shizu-chan, you make it sound like it’s a bad thing. Some humans do act like they own their partners, but the way they do it isn’t quite the same as what you do. I told you, you’re just animalistic, it only happens in certain- situations”

“Is that suppose to make me feel better?”
“It was suppose to, yes. Let me give you an example. Remember in the club?” Shizuo clenched his fists and Izaya knew that it was probably a bad idea to bring that up, not entirely willing to talk about that situation either, but he continued anyway. “Before *that*. When those others approached me, you threw one of them to the floor?”

Shizuo remembered that, he then snorted “I remember you laughing”

Izaya chuckled “I was still getting to know you, we hadn’t been together that long, it was funny”

“Is that one of the situations you were talking about? When guys approach you?”

Izaya somewhat shrugged “I suppose. It’s not like you go around beating up everyone that even dares to look at me, not like that, but more so when needed, like then. It’s more like a protective instinct, rather than possessive, maybe that was more the correct term”

“I didn’t really think about it at the time, I was too pissed at you”

“Let’s not talk about that anymore, we’ve come a long way since then, but those are the kinds of situations I was talking about, that and sex” Izaya then grinned at him

“I guess I see what you mean. That still doesn’t mean I’m aware of it, it just happens”

“I really don’t mind” Izaya leaned forward and kissed him “I’ll always be yours”

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Shizuo sighed in frustration, he was getting one hell of a headache. Izaya looked over at him, they were sat on the couch, paperwork splayed out on the coffee table. “The hardest part is over, we’ve presented our details and our documents to the registration office, of our intention to register our partnership. It’s full proof. Now we just need to figure out everything we want for our ceremony”

“But they said there’s a twenty-eight-day waiting period, you seem pretty confident that nothing is
going to happen”

“Why would it? Everything we provided is good. There are no legal reasons that either one of us can’t go through with this. So stop worrying” Izaya picked up two sheets of paper. “Now. These are the two venues that I could get for the date I gave you. They’re both relatively close, I was just wondering which one you prefer”

Shizuo looked them over, he really wasn’t all that bothered, he was going to ‘marry’ Izaya regardless, so he didn’t care where they were. But the raven seemed kind of excited about it all, even though he’d never voice it, so Shizuo would indulge him. He pointed to the one on the left, it looked nice and it felt right. “That one”

Izaya looked it over again, the hall was big, so there was plenty of room and it didn’t seem all too much like a church. The place also held other events, such as conferences and business parties, so they might not even have to be in that exact hall. They didn’t really need all that room, but it didn’t matter either way. He’d spoken with both venues and each of them had said they could decorate it to their liking, Izaya wasn’t bothered all that much about that, but if they could rearrange some of the furniture in one of the rooms- like the conference room, that would be a much better setting for them, he didn’t want to go overboard, and he bet Shizuo didn’t either. “Good. It seems like the better one out of the two, I was pondering on this one too. I spoke with both, and they’re going to hold the booking date for the twenty-eight days. That way, we know they’re both available when we receive our document”

Shizuo smiled. *when* we receive our document, not *if* Izaya really had that much confidence. “Ok. that makes sense. So what other things do we need to figure out?”

Izaya then picked up a notepad and pen “Guests”

Shizuo grimaced, he couldn’t imagine standing in front of a load of people while they declared their feelings toward one another. He knew they’d both prefer this whole thing without a ceremony, but some of their friends, they deserved to share the moment with them. “We don’t have to have that many, right?”

Izaya shook his head, it wasn’t as if he wanted a massive audience either. “No. just the one’s that our closest’ Izaya then drew a line down the middle of the page, writing their names on either side of the divided space. He began writing names down on his side. Mairu, Kururi, Shinra, Saki, Anri

“What about that other kid? The one that’s with Saki? And what about Namie? And Satoshi?”
Izaya sighed “If I start inviting everyone I know, then this short list is going to become long very quickly”

“Oh. I get your point, I doubt Namie really wants to see it anyway” Shizuo laughed

“Probably not. I don’t think she’ll be all that offended if she doesn’t get an invite. I just want this to be small, as much as it can be”

“Good” Shizuo then took the notepad from him. Izaya didn’t need to put Celty down on his, because he knew Shizuo would. Izaya peered over as Shizuo began writing down his guests. Kasuka, his parent’s, Tom, Celty.

“Are you sure that’s all you want?”

Shizuo shrugged “Like you said, we don’t want everyone. I was going to put Kadota down, but that would then mean the others would have to come and well, I know there’s one among them that won’t be able to contain themselves”

Izaya grinned “Erika. I know, I thought of that too, it was the same reason why I didn’t write him on the list either”

“They’re not each going to get a plus one, are they?”

Izaya chuckled as he shook his head “No. that’ll defeat the purpose of a small ceremony wouldn’t it?”

Shizuo laughed “I guess so”

“Well, that wasn’t too hard. The hardest part, might be the witnesses”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “Witnesses?”
Izaya picked up another document, which told them everything they’d need for the signing. “There has to be two witnesses. Including the registrar. Those two will be signed onto the schedule document, along with our own names. I think, and you might agree, that we treat it as if they were our best man. One witness for each of us. I already have mine in mind”

“Already?”

Izaya tilted his head with a smile “It’s not all that difficult for me, I haven’t asked him yet, but I’m sure he won’t object. He’s the only one I would want; of course, if you don’t want to see it as a best man, it can be a woman too”

“I get the basic idea. I just- there’s a few people I would consider”

“I know. But, there’s a lot of other things for us to consider. If which ever one you choose, we can involve the other in something else, if you want”

“Oh? Like what?”

“Well, there are options for a reading” Izaya picked up a folder and opened it across their laps. “I got this from the Ivy hall, there’s one for the other too, but this is obviously the one we’ve chosen. There are different readings in here, that whoever we choose, can read this out. It’s a guide, the readings are suppose to be what’s allowed to be said, since it can’t be anything religious. I skimmed through a few, I think the basic idea is that it relates to us, as if we’re saying the words ourselves”

“Kind of like vows?”

Izaya nodded and then gave him a knowing smile “I don’t know about you, but I don’t exactly feel very comfortable saying all that in front of people, regardless of who they are”

Shizuo laughed, in complete agreement. “I definitely agree with you there. So we’ll just pick something and have someone else read it out?”

“Why not? Saves the embarrassment, right?”
Shizuo nodded “ Seems like whoever is coming, can be involved somehow”

“They don’t have to be, and don’t just agree with everything I say, I can tell that this whole thing is confusing you” Izaya teased, oh yes, he knew very well that Shizuo would just go along with it, just so he didn’t have to think too much on the ideas.

“Shut up. Like you said, the hardest part is done anyway. I’ll give my input, I promise”

Izaya nodded and then they moved on. “We also have the option, that we either walk in together or we go separately, like we don’t see one another before the ceremony starts, if that’s the case, one of us would go with the guests and the other would wait somewhere else, we’d arrive at different points, so that neither of us would see the other”

Shizuo instantly disliked the very idea “I’m not walking in there by myself!”

Izaya chuckled at his outburst, it was clear Shizuo objected it “You don’t have to be the one that walks in by yourself”

Shizuo looked at him “Seriously? You’re telling me that you would walk in there, knowing that everyone’s attention would be on you and-” Shizuo caught Izaya’s smirk and he snorted “Yeah. That sounds exactly like you”

Izaya chuckled, and then something else came to his mind, something he’d read. “On second thought, let’s walk in together”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow, “Why the sudden change of mind?”

Izaya picked up yet another piece of paper “These are some suggestions for the ceremony. They often suggest music, you know, like certain songs” Shizuo couldn’t believe Izaya was actually considering that option, then again, when he thought back on it, their very first time, Izaya had played a song. Shizuo smiled. huh, Izaya could be romantic after all. Izaya caught him smiling and raised an eyebrow “What?”

Shizuo shrugged “Nothing. I thought you weren’t the romantic type” he grinned
Izaya rolled his eyes “Shut up. It’s just a suggestion”

Shizuo nudged him “Yeah right. Sounds like you already have a song in mind”

Izaya’s cheeks tinted a little, damn him and his knowingness. “There’s input on when we can have the songs play. As we walk in, when we sign the document, when we leave, when we’re saying the declarations….”

“Seems kind of a lot. Maybe just a bit much. If you want to, which I can tell you do, and you can act like you don’t all you want, how about just two? One when we walk in, and one when we sign the document?”

Izaya shrugged “If you want”

Shizuo shook his head “So what song did you have in mind?”

“It should be a surprise. I have one, for the signing I mean”

“What is it?”

“A surprise”

Shizuo huffed, “Since that’s your angle, I’ll go ahead and pick the song we walk in to”

Izaya chuckled “You know how childish that sounds?”

“Shut up. I actually think it’s a good idea. It’s kind of like the readings, they’ll be a representation of how we feel” Izaya raised his eyebrow with a smirk, Shizuo glared at him “I know what I said! You don’t have to act like I don’t know big words like you do” Izaya laughed at him.

“It was just the concentration on your face just now, it was funny” Izaya then crawled onto his lap. “But it was hot”
Shizuo smirked “Is that so?” Izaya hummed and captured his lips, wrapping his arms around Shizuo’s back. “We should finish the planning stuff first” Izaya pulled away, a disappointed pout on his face, Shizuo laughed and Izaya shuffled off his lap. “What else can we have?”

“Well” Izaya picked up the suggestions sheet again “We don’t have to walk in alone”

“I know, we just discussed that”

“Tch. Let me finish, I meant, that others can walk in with us. I think, like with the witnesses, it’ll be like having bridesmaids”

Shizuo pulled a face “Isn’t that kind of- feminine?”

Izaya laughed loudly “I had a feeling you’d say that”

“Like you didn’t think of it either”

Izaya’s laughter calmed down “That’s true. But I still think it’ll be kind of fitting, it’s a good role to play, don’t you think so?”

“Tst. You make it sound like we’re in theatre”

Izaya shrugged “I just figured, since you got so worked up about this not being as simple as getting married, I thought you might want it to feel like that as much as possible. The ceremony itself has given us that freedom at least”

Shizuo nodded, he now knew why Izaya wanted all these extra inputs, he was right, they had to grab the opportunity while they could. “Well, it’ll definitely have to be females that walk in with us, I can’t really see any of our guy friends doing that” Izaya chuckled in agreement “We’re doing rings, right?”

Izaya raised an eyebrow at him, well that an almost nervous question. “I thought that was the basic
point. The rings are as close to a marriage as we’re getting, so no need to be nervous about it.”

“I wasn’t, I was just asking”

Izaya knew him too well, “Uh-huh. Anyway, I think we’ve got everything covered; we should pick someone to oversee the music too”

Shizuo nodded “Good idea. Least then we’ll know they’ll get it right”

“Since we are doing rings, we can give those to the witnesses, least then we won’t have to worry about them too much”

“Ok. is that everything?”

Izaya smiled “I think so. We just have to let the registrar know about all the arrangements, and of course, send out the invitations, or we could just.” Izaya didn’t get to finish his sentence since Shizuo’s lips was now pressed against his. All thoughts left the raven’s mind as he was pushed back against the couch cushions. “Something on your mind, Shizu-chan?” Izaya grinned at him

“Something…” Shizuo groaned out as he began kissing his way down the informant’s jawline and down his neck.

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“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me” Shizuo heard Izaya curse from where he sat at his desk.

“What’s wrong?” Izaya was frowning, glaring even, whatever was on that screen in front of him, was clearly the cause of his anger. “Izaya?” Shizuo got up from the couch and walked over to him, he saw Izaya’s fists clench, wondering what the hell had gotten him so pissed. “Oi, talk to me”

Izaya leaned back in his chair, honestly, he wanted nothing more then to shove his fist through the screen. “Remember when we put in the paperwork, and the registry office told us that if there are no
legal reasons found, or objections made, during the twenty-eight-day period, that we’d receive the schedule document?"

“Yeah. What are you getting at? You telling me they found a legal reason? How is that possible?”

Izaya shook his head, almost wishing that were the reason, he might not have been as angry. “No. that’s not it”

Shizuo gripped the back of Izaya’s chair “Then what?” he already knew what the other reason could be, but he didn’t want to believe that was true.

“There’s been an objection”

Shizuo knew, of course he knew, as if they had the nerve “Who?”

Izaya leaned forward, linking his fingers, trying to stop them from shaking in anger. “My mother”

“Are you fucking serious!?” Izaya just nodded in response, he was fuming inside, but he wasn’t one to let it show too much, not like Shizuo. “There’s only two days left! Doesn’t that count for something!?”

Izaya shook his head “Apparently not. They said they’re going to look into it”

“What happens after the twenty-eight days though? Even if it gets fixed, would we have to wait another twenty-eight days?”

“I don’t know. I don’t think so, but it’s possible”

“Is this her way of basically telling us, that she’s won?”

Izaya stood up and walked away “I don’t know” he really was angry, and he’d rather not take it out on Shizuo.
“Izaya! Where the hell are you going?”

“Out. I need some air, I don’t care if you come, I just want to not think about it right now”

Shizuo stared after him, Izaya was clearly distressed about it, and he’d be damned if he was going to let him walk out of here on his own. “All right, I’m coming” maybe some fresh air would do them some good.

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Shizuo stared at the bar’s neon lights, the sign in the window, reading out in bright blue were the words Eagle Tokyo. He didn’t even know why they’d come to Shinjuku, considering they both now lived in Ikebukuro. Though it wasn’t the city that he questioned, it was their location. “Izaya. This isn’t really what I pictured when I followed you, why are we here?”

“I told you. I just want to take my mind off it for a while” It was then Shizuo realised that Izaya was planning on coming here, whether Shizuo was with him or not. “I know what you’re thinking, so don’t even say it, it’s just a bar. It’ll be quiet around this time anyway”

Shizuo snorted, like that made him feel any better, as if Izaya was just going to come here by himself. “You really would have come here, if I didn’t follow you, I mean?”

Izaya looked at him “Yes?”

Shizuo felt like he was being tested, if he got angry now, then it would look like he didn’t trust him, and he never wanted Izaya to feel that way again. He needed to show him, wanted to show him. Besides, he used to work in a bar, so it wasn’t as if he should hate going into one, like he couldn’t say it wasn’t his thing. “All right, we’re out now anyway, might as well do something”

Well, he certainly passed the test. Izaya thought that Shizuo would get annoyed about him coming here, especially by himself, but the blond surprised him. He then grabbed Shizuo’s wrist and lead them into the bar, there was a set of stairs at the entrance, the whole place had a blue UV light appearance. The two made their way down the steps, there were a few people around, some in groups, some in pairs, and some just by themselves. Shizuo followed him to the bar, getting the impression that this wasn’t the first time Izaya had been here either. “I haven’t been here since before you and I got together” Shizuo blinked
“How do you do that?”

“Do what?”

Shizuo shook his head, Izaya knew exactly what he was talking about, Izaya laughed. “I honestly can’t read minds”

“Stop that! It’s creepy”

Izaya laughed again “Shizu-chan, you give yourself away just by your expressions, I know you too well”

“It’s still creepy”

Izaya then ordered them both a drink, Shizuo stared at the drink and then at Izaya. “Don’t say a word”

Shizuo growled, for once, not caring that Izaya just read his mind again, he was more concerned with what was in Izaya’s hand then anything else. He slid his own drink toward him, both the same, sake, and by the smell, it was a double. For Izaya to even consider drinking, what his mother had done must have really upset him, not in the literal sense, but he knew Izaya was extremely angry. He wasn’t as good at reading the raven, but he knew enough to know that at least. Their drink’s in hand, they simply sat on the bar stools, just enjoying the casual vibes of the place, if he was honest, Shizuo liked this place a lot better.

Eventually, music began to play quietly to liven the place up a bit. “Wanna dance?” the two look to the voice, and Izaya almost burst into laughter, the one who had spoken just now, actually had the guts to ask Shizuo to dance. He was more amused then jealous.

“Are you blind!? Can’t you see I’m with someone!?”

The guy practically ran off in fear, Shizuo glared at him and then turned to see Izaya laughing. “That was good Shizu-chan, very smooth”
“Shut up. How the hell can you laugh about that?”

Izaya was still laughing “Cause it was funny”

“I need a smoke” Shizuo grunted and pulled his pack of cigarettes out

“Oi. Not in here. out back, there’s a smoking area” the barman told him, seeing him about to light one.

“Yeah. All right” Shizuo looked at Izaya, the raven grimaced

“I’m not coming with you. I hate the smell, you know that”

“I’ll be back in a minute”

“I’ll be waiting” Izaya gave him a little wave and Shizuo walked toward the back of the bar, stepping outside. He turned back to the front, it had been a long time since he’d been to this place, he seemed as though it had changed since the last time he was here. Izaya scanned around the place observing the different kinds of people, his eyes soon fell upon someone familiar. The guy instantly locked eyes with him and recognised him in a second, Izaya watched him walk toward him, he took a sip of his drink, feeling the odd taste burning down his throat.

“No way. No actual way, Izaya Orihara. I can’t believe it’s you, I haven’t seen you in like forever” the man smiled and leant against the bar, he was just as Izaya remembered him being, blond, just a few inches shorter then him, sporting a blue waist coat and black jeans with a white shirt. Huh. Maybe he did like blond’s after all. “Where have you been? I was beginning to think you’d just disappeared from the planet or something”

Izaya grinned a little, swirling his drink before taking another sip. “I don’t live around here anymore. But I’ve been busy”

“Man. You were always a workaholic. So what’s with being here then?”
“Just taking a break from the world”

The man chuckled “Just like old times huh?” Izaya shrugged and downed the rest of his drink, resisting the urge to shudder at the strong taste. It was then the man noticed the other drink set on the bar. “Company?” he motioned to the glass, Izaya looked at it and for a split second, he almost forgot Shizuo was with him. He looked down at his now empty glass, well that was enough of that, he placed it back on the bar behind him.

“He’s outside”

The man smiled at him “Hope you’ve given him a little heads up”

Izaya narrowed his eyes then “Meaning?”

“Come on Izaya. We both know you’re not the normal relationship type”

“Things change”

The guy leaned forward slightly, not buying it for a second. “Not really a coincidence that you came here, you always came here, to take a break from the world, to find me”

Izaya scowled at him, they’d had a little fling, occasionally, nothing that ever insinuated otherwise. “Are you sure it wasn’t you? seeking my attention? I’d have probably left with someone else, but you were always approaching me first” God, Izaya was starting to feel disgusted with himself, he was making himself sound like he slept around a lot. That wasn’t the case, not really, it was just an escape, that’s all.

“We can have some fun now. I’m not with anyone”

Izaya laughed, seriously? This guy was really that stupid, he began to wonder why he’d even gone with him half the time. “I am”

The man blinked at him “You’re serious, aren’t you?”
He shook his head, as if he really didn’t believe it, he’d always thought, that Izaya would be one of those he’d just keep going back to, no ties, just as long as it was them. “Damn. Maybe you’re right” he laughed nervously “Maybe it was me that always looked for you”

“I don’t blame you for that” Izaya smirked

“And you don’t look a day older, still as hot as ever…” Izaya leaned back on his stall, was he seriously going to try and kiss him? He was about to reach for his switch blade, pressing his back to the bar to distance himself as far as possible. It was then, in a flash the guy was floored, a crack was heard as he was punched hard in the face. Izaya looked to his right, not really needing the confirmation, he then flinched under his glare, whoops. He heard the man start to groan in pain, Shizuo probably broke his nose, ha.

Shizuo walked over to him, towering above the writhing man, he pulled him up by his jacket. “Go near him again, and I’ll break every bone in your fricking body, understand!?” he then head butted him and everyone in the bar flinched as he threw him to the floor. Izaya stood up, hands in his jacket, he really didn’t need Shizuo’s help, but he didn’t blame him. Shizuo stalked back to the bar, grabbed his drink and knocked it back, noticing that Izaya had already finished his. He shook his head. “Can’t ever leave you alone for five minutes” he growled out and then turned to leave.

“Shizu-chan-” Izaya huffed as he started walking off “Déjà vu” he muttered, but loud enough for it to reach Shizuo’s ears. The blond stalked back over to him, grabbed him by the wrist and dragged him to the exit. “Wha-”

“I’m not taking any chances this time” Shizuo told him and Izaya smiled, they were soon stood outside, great, it was raining now. “God damn it” he folded his arms and then looked at Izaya, who’d zipped up his jacket and pulled his hood up.

“Are you mad at me?” Shizuo rolled his eyes, he honestly wasn’t, he could see Izaya protesting the advances the moment he stepped back into the bar, not that he really needed to see to know he would anyway. Izaya stepped toward him and hugged him, it surprised him for a moment, he just wasn’t expecting the sudden affection, especially on the street. “Animalistic” Izaya said quietly, making Shizuo laugh a little, yeah, maybe that was true after all.

He wasn’t sure, but he could feel Izaya shaking a little against him, he looked up, the rain was
getting heavier now. He wrapped his arms around him then, wondering what had gotten into him, was this the reason why he didn’t drink? Izaya had been annoyed when they came here, he sighed, tightening his hold. “It’ll be ok you know; it’ll work itself out”

Izaya shivered and clenched his fists into Shizuo’s shirt, “Let’s go home now”

Shizuo nodded, it’d probably be better for them to get a cab, he didn’t want Izaya getting fucking sick again.

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Izaya grinned as he dangled an envelope in front of Shizuo’s face, the blond just got through the damn door. He blinked and shut the door behind him. “Are you always this excited to get mail?”

Izaya chuckled, in too good of a mood to retort back to Shizuo’s sarcasm. “This came today” he said and extended the envelope toward him.

“So I can tell” Shizuo raised an eyebrow, Izaya was certainly in a good mood all of a sudden.

This time, Izaya rolled his eyes “Just open it”

Shizuo laughed “All right, sorry” he took the envelope and Izaya followed him to sit on the couch. Shizuo took the contents out and his eyes scanned over the document. “Is this-”

“That’s our schedule” Izaya grinned

“But- I thought” Shizuo looked at him for an explanation

“I got an email a few days ago, that the objection was denied, due to the fact there was no real reason for it other than my mother being her usual wonderful self, apparently ‘because the idea is ridiculous’ wasn’t a plausible argument” Izaya chuckled “I’m sure that wasn’t quite the words she used, but you get the idea”
Shizuo sighed in relief, “So it’s ok? this is the final document we need?”

“We just have to take it to the venue on the day and sign it”

Shizuo huffed a laugh, feeling so happy, this was it, they were actually going to do this. Izaya smiled and took the document from Shizuo and placed it back in the envelope, and then placed it on the coffee table. The moment he did, he was flattened to the couch, his wrists bound above his head as Shizuo held them with both hands. “This is happening, it’s actually happening, isn’t it?”

Izaya couldn’t help but find Shizuo’s excitement adorable, he’d never seen the blond so happy. “If you still want to, yes”

Shizuo leaned down and captured his lips “I love you Izaya, I love you so fucking much”

Izaya laughed, he couldn’t help it, he really didn’t think they’d get so far, he was surprised and overwhelmed, yet he was so happy, never thinking that Shizuo could ever make him feel this way. He leaned up and brought their lips together again. “Are you sure you want to do this?”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow, seriously? He was actually asking him that, now? He then grinned “Til death do us part, right?”

Izaya chuckled “Maybe not even then”

Shizuo smiled, how had this happened? He couldn’t even remember when, he just couldn’t imagine his life without the raven underneath, figuratively speaking or in the literal sense. This man, this annoying, confident, strong minded, adorable man, Shizuo just wanted to hold him tight and never let go, he wanted to make him happy, protect him forever.

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The room had been lightly decorated with streams of blue, red and black, hanging from the ceiling, Shizuo’s and Izaya’s favourite colours. Indeed, they’d chosen the conference room to hold their ceremony. Chairs had been rearranged into two dividing sections; each section had five chairs each in a row. On the left, sat left to right Tom, Namiko, Kichirou, Kasuka, a space reserved for Celty
beside him. On the opposite side, sat left to right was Shinra, Anri, Saki and two spaces reserved for Mairu and Kururi. The carpet was blue, and the walls were white, there were single white roses attached to the podium stand in front of them, and a long red piece of carpet had been laid out straight through the middle. Everyone had taken great effort in their formal attire, the men were in suits, some grey, some black. Namiko wore a light green long dress with a small black jacket over it. Saki had a long black skirt and a white blouse, Anri had a knee length red skirt and a light grey shirt. The registrar smiled as he stood up on to the podium, clearing his throat to get everyone’s attention. Shinra looked over at Celty, she was there, stood to the side, she waved over at him, she had been asked to control the music, and she felt honoured for even that much; to be involved in something so special. Izaya and Shizuo had considered everyone’s involvement and how they might feel about it all, they knew Celty wasn’t really the type to want too much attention on her. It seemed fitting that she’d be the one to play the music, and only she knew what the songs chosen were, Izaya and Shizuo weren’t even aware, keeping it a secret from one another.

The registrar cleared his throat to get their attention. “Good morning ladies and gentlemen, my name is Reija Sama, on behalf of Chinto Hirogawa and myself, I would like to welcome you on this special occasion. When Izaya Orihara and Shizuo Heiwajima will affirm their love and publicly declare their commitment to each other. Izaya and Shizuo have chosen to pledge themselves to each other by committing to a legally binding contract”

Outside the doors, Mairu and Kururi stood with their brother and Shizuo, dressed in the same dress but different colours. Mairu’s hair was wavy and in a half bun, her long dress was yellow. Kururi’s hair had been straightened slightly and her long dress was dark green; both were wearing their necklace. Izaya realised just how grown up they looked now, still as troublesome as ever though, but he was so proud of them. Mairu smiled at him “What?”

“Nothing. I’m just glad you’re here”

Mairu giggled “You’re not getting all mushy on us, now are you?”

Izaya chuckled as he shook his head “Wouldn’t dream of it” the girls chewed their lip; they just couldn’t believe this was happening. Wearing a black tuxedo, with a white shirt and a single red rose attached to his pocket. They both reached up and he drew them into a tight hug.

“We love you” Mairu whispered, feeling a little emotional suddenly.

“I’m so proud of you both, you know that, right?”

Kururi nodded her head. Shizuo smiled at the touching scene, even he couldn’t believe how grown
up they looked. They pulled away and Izaya wiped a tear from Mairu’s cheek with his thumb. They then turned to Shizuo and he embraced them tightly, leaning down to their level. “We’re really happy for you” Kururi told him.

“You better take care of him” Mairu said, even though she knew he would, there was humor in her voice.

“I will” Shizuo replied “I promise. I love you, you’re great kids” Shizuo then huffed a laugh. “Well, young women now, I guess, almost”

The twins pulled away, smiling up at him, his tuxedo suit was white with a black shirt underneath, and he also had a single red rose attached at the pocket. The registrar that was with them smiled and said, “Are you ready?”

Izaya looked at Shizuo and the blond smiled at him, taking his hand to link them together. “We’re ready” Shizuo said and Izaya nodded. Unable to speak, he wouldn’t admit it, but he was nervous, now that they were here, it was real.

Reiji smiled and nodded over to Celty, indicating that the first piece of music should be played on cue. “Would everyone please take a stand, as we await the couple to enter and join us”

Chinto opened the doors, and everyone stood up, Celty pushed the play button as Mairu and Kururi was the first to enter. Shizuo felt Izaya’s hand tighten and he looked at him. “It’s ok to be nervous, but I’m here ok?”

Izaya chewed his lip, he then took a breath and smiled at him with a nod, as they soon joined the twins and entered the room.

~Is this the end of the moment
Or just a beautiful unfolding, of a love that will never be or maybe be?
Everything that I never thought could happen
Or ever come to pass and I wonder
If maybe, maybe I could be all you ever dreamed
Cause you are...

Beautiful inside
So lovely and I, can’t see why I’d do anything without you, you are...
And when I’m not with you
I know that it’s true
That I'd rather be anywhere but here without you
(Anywhere but here)

Is this a natural feeling
Or is it just me bleeding?
All my thoughts and dreams
In hope that you will be with me or
Is this a moment to remember
Or just a cold day in December?
I wonder, if maybe, oh, maybe I could be
All you ever dreamed, cause you are...

You're beautiful inside
So lovely and I, can't see why I'd do anything without you, you are...
And when I'm not with you
I know that it's true
That I'd rather be anywhere but here without you
(Anywhere but here
Anywhere but here)

The words echoed inside his head as they took their place in front of the podium, it seemed to fit
them perfectly, like the words was everything Shizuo had wanted to say. He tried to stop his hand
from shaking, but he couldn’t even let go of Shizuo’s hand. The blond squeezed his gently,
reassuring him, telling him silently that it was ok. Izaya looked over at him, and suddenly, he wasn’t
so nervous anymore, because Shizuo was here, and he looked so calm.

“Izaya and Shizuo” the registrar’s voice brought him out of his daze, and everyone sat down again.
Mairu and Kururi, and Celty took their seats. “Today is a moment in history for both of you. In the
presences of your witnesses, friends and family, the words that you say today complete the
foundations for a long and happy future together for both of you”

It wasn’t as if they wanted to express any vows, but it seemed only right they chose a few words, it
was from the suggestions sheet they had gone through, so it didn’t feel as embarrassing.

They turned to face each other, and suddenly, it felt as though it was just the two of them in the
room. “I promise that I will be there for you Shizuo, each and every day, in good times and bad, I
will be by your side, I will be your guardian, your partner, and support you on our lifelong journey
together”

Shizuo smiled, who knew Izaya could be so nervous, but at the same time, so full of confidence in
the way he’d just spoken. “I promise that I will be there for you Izaya, each and every day, in good
times and bad, I will be by your side, I will be your guardian, your partner, and support you on our
lifelong journey together”
It was then that Kasuka and Shinra stood up from their seats, Kasuka on Shizuo’s side and Shinra on Izaya’s.

Saki smiled, trying to hold back her tears of happiness, she leaned her head on Anri’s shoulder, Anri giggled silently, trying to contain her own tears. “He looks so happy” Saki whispered. Anri nodded, and he really did.

Namiko clutched at her tissue “That’s our boy up there”

Kichirou smiled and wrapped his arm around her “All three of them” Namiko nodded.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Izaya and Shizuo have brought rings with them today. This giving of a band signifies the promise of a love that is everlasting and is a public affirmation that the contract between Izaya and Shizuo will be honoured” Reiji announced

Shizuo turned and retrieved the silver band ring from Kasuka and then turned back to Izaya. “This ring is a token of my love and a sign of the promise I make to you today” Izaya almost laughed as Shizuo tried to ignore the fact that his hand was shaking a little, not so calm after all. He watched as the silver band was slipped so gently on his left-hand finger.

Izaya then retrieved his own ring from Shinra, it was silver too, just to match his own, they’d chosen them together. “This ring is a token of my love and a sign of the promise I make to you today” Shizuo became mesmerized as the ring was slipped onto his finger. He looked back up at Izaya, who seemed to be smiling at him teasingly, obviously catching his expression.

“Every day you live, learn how to receive love with as much understanding as you give it. Be constant and consistent in your love. From this, will come security and strength. Would those of you, who have been asked to do a reading, please do so now under the biding law to which has been discussed with you”

Saki took a deep breath and stood up, holding the piece of paper tightly in her hands. Originally, Tom had been asked to do a reading, because Shizuo felt bad that he couldn’t have him as well as Kasuka to be a witness. But Tom shrugged it off, telling him that he wanted nothing more then for Shizuo to just enjoy his day, just happy that he got to be there with him. Izaya had mentioned Saki as a possible choice and Shizuo was happy to agree.

“May the sun bring you new strength by day, May the moon softly restore you by night, May the rain wash away your fears, And the breeze invigorate your being, May you, all the days of your life
together. Walk gently through the world and know its beauty. Treat yourselves and each other with respect and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulties and fear assail your relationship, as they threaten all relationships at one time or another, remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms, when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives, remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight. Now you will feel no rain, For each of you will be shelter for the other, Now you will feel no cold, For each of you will be warmth to the other, Now there is no more loneliness, For each of you will be company for the other, Now you are two persons, But there is only one life before you. Go to your dwelling, enter into the days of your life together and may your days be good and long upon the earth.”

Shizuo curled a finger around Izaya’s, unable to resist the urge to hold him any longer, they were just standing there, listening, and he didn’t quite know what to do with himself. Getting the hidden message from him, Izaya curled his whole hand around his, linking them together and Shizuo squeezed gently.

Then, Namiko and Kichirou soon stood, a piece of paper of their own, Shizuo had asked them to do a reading, because he wouldn’t be who he was today without their support. They read a section at a time, taking it in turns, starting with Kichirou “I love you because you’re my future, my present and part of my past. My world has been turning so quickly and time just keeps moving so fast”

“I love you because you have something no ordinary person can give. A warmth that I’ll cling to forever - hold on to so long as I live. I love you because your devotion is tender and wonderfully rare. Could anyone ever imagine the magic moments we share?”

“I love you because you are truthful, your eyes hold the key to my heart. Tell me you share my commitment, and say we shall not be apart”

“I love you because you are wonderful, you give me all that I need. A hug when I seek reassurance, a smile if we have disagreed. I love you because….. I just love you, for too many reasons to say and I’ll always be right here beside you, a breath and a heartbeat away”

No one could say the words didn’t fit them perfectly.

“Please repeat these binding vows to one another. I promise to be open and truthful with you and no distance or obstacle will get in our way, with love from the deepest of my heart. I- Insert your name, take you – insert your partner’s name, to be my civil partner in law”
Izaya looked to Shizuo, telling him to go first, because his throat suddenly felt constricted.

“I promise to be open and truthful with you and no distance or obstacle will get in our way, with love from the deepest of my heart. I Shizuo Heiwajima take you Izaya Orihara to be my civil partner in law”

Izaya smiled, damn it, Shizuo made it look so easy. He nodded and finally found his voice. “I promise to be open and truthful with you and no distance or obstacle will get in our way, with love from the deepest of my heart. I Izaya Orihara take you Shizuo Heiwajima to be my civil partner in law”

“Ladies and gentlemen, the couple are about to sign the schedule that will make them legal civil partners. May the two witnesses, who will be entered onto the certificate, to please join them”

Izaya and Shizuo were followed by Kasuka and Shinra to the table behind the podium, Celty stood up and took her place back at the music pod.

“Izaya and Shizuo, please read back to me, the following words before you sign your schedule today. I declare that I know not of any legal reason why we may not register as each other’s partner. I understand that on signing this document, we will be forming a civil partnership with each other”

The two repeated the words clearly and without hesitation. As soon as the music began to play, the four began signing the document, the last piece that would bind them together.

~There's nothing I can say to you
Nothing I could ever do to make you see
What you mean to me
All the pain the tears I cried
Still you never said goodbye and now I know how far you'd go
I know I let you down but it's not like that now
This time I'll never let you go

I will be all that you want and get myself together
'Cause you keep me from falling apart
All my life I'll be with you forever
To get you through the day and make everything OK

I thought that I had everything, I didn't know what life could bring
But now I see honestly,
You're the one thing I got right,
The only one I let inside
Now I can breathe ’cause you’re here with me
And if I let you down I’ll turn it all around
Cause I would never let you go

I will be, all that you want and get myself together
’Cause you keep me from falling apart
All my life I’ll be with you forever
To get you through the day and make everything OK

’Cause without you I can’t sleep
I’m not gonna ever ever let you leave
You’re all I got
You’re all I want
Yeah
And without you I don’t know what I’ll do
I could never ever live a day without you
Here with me, do you see, you’re all I need

Once they had finished signing the document, the registrar spoke once more. “Izaya and Shizuo, you have both demonstrated your lifelong commitment to one another today. In the presence of your friends, family and witnesses, it gives me great pleasure in declaring that you are now both civil partners to one another. Congratulations”

Shizuo grinned, couldn’t hold back anymore and he pulled Izaya into his arms and kissed him with all the emotions he felt for him. Izaya hadn’t expected it, but he wrapped his arms around Shizuo’s neck and deepened their kiss. Those who sat before them stood up, tears forming in their eyes as they clapped.

And I will be, all that you want and get myself together
’Cause you keep me from falling apart
All my life (my life) I will be with you forever
To get you through the day and make everything OK

“We did it Izaya, we actually did it”

Izaya smiled and kissed him again lightly, and then he whispered “I love you, Shizu-chan”

Shizuo smiled back, his forehead against Izaya’s. “I love you too, flea…”

Izaya chuckled.
“Izaya?” Shizuo called as he walked into the bedroom, they’d only come here to get changed. They were suppose to meet everyone at the Russia Sushi soon. Apparently, those who hadn’t been there at the ceremony had planned an after gathering, and Simon and Dennis had kindly offered to cater for them, for once, free of charge. Never had Simon offered them free Sushi, so he was damn well going to accept it. Except the only problem was, that Izaya didn’t seem to be here. “Where the hell did he get to, we’re suppose to be there in an hour. I just bet he snuck out while I was in the shower” it was then Shizuo spotted blue pants and a white shirt on the bed for him, with a note next to it. He picked it up and it read ‘Meet me at Raira academy when you’re done, and wear this. Xx’ Shizuo raised an eyebrow “What’s he up to?”

Shizuo walked across their old school yard, it was strange, coming back here. the sun was setting and there was a tinge of orange across the sky. It was eerily quiet, everyone had obviously gone home, he didn’t remember it ever like this, and had it always been so big? He looked down as his foot brushed against something, it looked like a broken piece of post of some kind. On instinct he picked it up, a familiar setting soon filled his mind.

“This is where we first met” he heard his voice then, turning around to see his partner, Izaya was sat, one leg propped up on a bench just across from him. Looking exactly like he did back in high school, same jacket, same top, except he was taller now.

“Yeah. Except there was a pile of unconscious body’s around us” Izaya grinned “You know, we’re suppose to be at Russia sushi”

“I thought this would be fun first. Why not celebrate our civil partnership with a little flashback”

Shizuo raised an eyebrow “That your way of a honeymoon?”

Izaya chuckled lightly “If you want” Shizuo grinned a little, and suddenly, it was like he was there, back in time, looking at Izaya as he clenched a hand around the post, the informant really had thought of everything. “Since Shinra isn’t here, I’ll have to introduce myself instead. I’m Izaya Orihara” Izaya grinned darkly at him, and it was suddenly so easy to remember everything from that day.
Shizuo frowned “You piss me off!”

Izaya opened one eye, challenging him with his stare. “Oh yeah?” he then sighed silently, “That’s too bad, I was hoping you and I could have some real fun together, now why you gotta be like that….Shizuo” Izaya smirked at him, Shizuo glared, trying so hard not to smile. He then lunged forward, dropping the post and threw his fist at Izaya as he jumped at him. Izaya dodged, jumping off the bench, causing Shizuo to once again break it in half. Shizuo span around only to feel the blade of Izaya’s knife slash him across the chest.

 Damn, he’s really serious Shizuo looked up to see him grin, eyes narrowed.

“See? Now aren’t we having fun?”

Shizuo snorted quietly “You’re not going to get me hit by a truck, are you?”

Izaya continued to smirk and then he ran, Shizuo stared after him for a moment and then a rush of adrenaline pumped through his veins and he began to chase after him. Izaya ran down the street, away from the school, leading Shizuo through the familiar alley way. He looked back at him with a grin, Shizuo was grinning now too, as Izaya turned the corner Shizuo stopped. Izaya leaned against the wall for a second, catching his breath, of course, he wasn’t going to get Shizuo hit by a truck. Izaya began to search for him, Shizuo was suppose to come out of the alleyway, so where the hell was he? A noise behind and he span around with his flick blade, only for Shizuo to catch his wrist.

“What now, flea?”

Izaya glared at him and then jumped on him, Shizuo toppled backwards and they fell to the ground. Izaya grinned at him, knife still firmly in his hand. “You tell me” Shizuo shifted his body, growling as he raised his legs up and shoved Izaya off with his feet. Izaya fell backwards, landing non gracefully on his ass, Shizuo laughed as he dusted himself off. Izaya frowned up at him, ignoring the hand offered down to help him up. Izaya looked to his left, he grabbed the lid from the trash can beside him and lobbed it. Shizuo growled and by the time he smacked the thing away, Izaya was gone.

“Little bastard…” He then turned back into the alley way, he couldn’t have gotten far, and Shizuo would have heard him if he’d ran past him. “Izaya!” Shizuo searched around, fists clenching by his sides.
Izaya smirked as he watched him from the small space in between the wall of the alley. “Idiot”

“Flea!”

Shizuo approached Izaya’s hiding place, and the moment he walked past, Izaya grabbed his arm and pulled him in. Shizuo grunted at the sudden attack, he startled and threw his fist forward on instinct. Izaya groaned as he landed against a pile of black bags. Shizuo blinked at him, and he suddenly realised. Whoops. Izaya spat and glared at him. “That fucking hurt”

Shizuo walked toward him “Well who the hell grabs someone from behind like that!? Of course I’m going to react that way” Shizuo held his hand out again, and this time, Izaya grabbed it and Shizuo pulled him to his feet. “I’m sorry, you could have said something-” Izaya shoved him forward and pushed Shizuo against the wall, his bleeding lip curling upwards into a grin. Shizuo felt the blade against his cheek and just barely the sting of a clean cut. “Izaya! You-”

“Now we’re even”

“Dick. I’d have kicked your ass back then for that, you wouldn’t be standing right now”

Izaya’s grin widened “And now?”

Shizuo grabbed his wrist and then a fist full of his jacket as he shoved him backwards, up against the opposite wall. Izaya grunted at the roughness but his grin remained. “What I should have done, was this….” Shizuo pressed his lips against Izaya’s, tasting the metallic on his tongue, smearing the red slightly across his cheek. Izaya moaned as Shizuo grinded against him, dropping the knife as he wrapped his arms around his neck. They pulled away and Shizuo touched two of his fingers to Izaya’s lip. “Sorry”

Izaya chuckled “We were role playing after all ne?”

Shizuo snorted, trust Izaya not to care about something like that. “We should probably head to Russia sushi. After all, they went to all the trouble, and it’s free” Izaya pocketed his knife and Shizuo noticed the grazes on his knuckles, matching his own. “Damn it, what the hell are they gonna think happened?”
Izaya laughed “We could always let Erika decide”

Shizuo frowned “Yeah right”

Izaya and Shizuo walked into the restaurant, their friends and family toasting to them with drinks as they entered. Kadota and the gang were their too, Namie and Satoshi, along with Masaomi and Mikado. Well, it didn’t matter anymore whether he knew or not, though Izaya would have loved to have seen Mikado’s face once he’d been told. Shinra then ran in front of them, arms spread out wide as he took in the two’s appearance. “What the hell happened?”

Shizuo laughed and placed a hand behind his head “Well, we thought it’d be kind of fun, to re-enact the day we first met. Minus the truck of course”

Shinra’s glasses slid down his nose as he slumped in surprise “Seriously?”

“It was Izaya’s idea”

Izaya grinned “It was fun”

Their friends stared at them in surprise, only the two of them could find something like that fun. Shinra sighed, his friends were fricking crazy. He then looked at Izaya and pointed to his lip “I don’t remember you getting that last time, and Shizuo, your cheek…”

Izaya pouted “He punched me in the face”

“You grabbed me from behind, what was I suppose to think!?”

No one said a word as Shinra continued to scold them for their stupid little game. Suddenly, they heard a squeal, everyone turned their attention to the voice. “That’s so hot!” It was Erika. “Role playing your first encounter, fists flying, hearts pounding as they struggle to get the upper hand for dominance….so- hot!”
Kadota sighed in annoyance “God damn it”

Izaya laughed as he and Shizuo were led to a table by Shinra to get patched up. “That’s pretty accurate to be honest” Izaya said

Erika’s eyes sparkled brightly as she bounded over to them “Who won!” Izaya and Shizuo looked at each other and then grinned. “Aww come on! Tell me!”

Izaya then looked over at her “I’ll leave that up to you”

Erika just squealed again as she danced around the restaurant, her mind taking her to who knew where.

Shinra then raised his glass and everyone followed his lead. “Here’s to you both. It took you a hell of a long time to get here, and god knows I would know that better than anyone. Izaya, Shizuo, I couldn’t be prouder than I am right now, to call you my friend’s”

“Cheers!” everyone clinked their glasses

“Now kiss!” Erika shouted, the two look at her and she pleaded “Pleaseeeeee?”

Shizuo and Izaya smirk as they look at one another. “I think we can do better than that” The raven said, he got up from the table and held his hand out. “Celty?” she nodded and then a song began to play. Izaya turned his attention back to Shizuo “Dance with me?”

Shizuo’s eyes widened, he glanced at their friends and then back at Izaya’s waiting hand. He gulped and then took it and Izaya pulled him to the middle. “Are we really going to dance in front of everyone?” Shizuo whispered

“Just pretend they’re not there”

Erika looked like she was going to pass out, her eyes watering with such excitement as the two
began to sway.

~Every night in my dreams
I see you; I feel you
That is how I know you go on

Far across the distance
And spaces between us
You have come to show you go on

Near, far, wherever you are
I believe that the heart does go on
Once more you open the door
And you're here in my heart
And my heart will go on and on

Love can touch us one time
And last for a lifetime
And never let go till we're gone

Love was when I loved you
One true time I hold to
In my life we'll always go on

Near, far, wherever you are
I believe that the heart does go on
Once more you open the door
And you're here in my heart
And my heart will go on and on~

Saki smiled and placed her hand in Masaomi’s, and he looked over at her, he smiled back and pulled her with him to the floor. They began to dance too. Soon, couples followed their lead, Shinra reached for Celty’s hand and guided her to the floor, her body fluttered. Mikado nervously grabbed Anri’s hand, she looked at him and finally, finally she smiled knowingly, Mikado smiled and lead her to dance. Walker giggled and bowed to Erika, “Care to dance my lady?” They both knew it was just a joke, but she accepted anyway, not willing to miss out on the fun.

~You're here, there's nothing I fear
And I know that my heart will go on
We'll stay forever this way
You are safe in my heart and
My heart will go on and on~

Izaya’s hand threaded softly through the back of Shizuo’s hair as they stopped swaying when the music finished. Shizuo closed his eyes and captured his lips, trying to block out the cheers of their friends and the high-pitched squeal of Erika. “I love you” Shizuo said quietly
Izaya huffed a laugh “I hope so, you’re stuck with me for good now”

“For ever and always”

Chapter End Notes

So we've come to the end of the sequel already, I can't believe I've finished it! Thank you for all your support and I really hoped you enjoyed the ending.

But you know, I feel like there's another chapter in their lives that I have yet to write. I've been working on the third sequel in my mind, so be sure to look out for it soon.

Also, be sure to check out my brand new story too, It's another-eventually Shizaya fic, and it's called Ghost hunt. The initial idea came from the anime, if anyone has seen it, they'll know. it'll be a high school setting, I wanted to play around with the paranormal too, that's when I came up with it.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!