Arrest me Officer

by leurauxe

Summary

Perhaps getting mugged at two in the morning isn’t such a bad idea’ Oikawa thinks as he eyes the world’s hottest policeman settled in the seat across from him.

In which Oikawa is a news reporter head over heels for a commanding police officer.

NOTE: This is fic is mainly Oikawa/Iwaizumi - There are also other side pairings (look in tags)

Notes

Hello darlings
I'm back for a second shot at this pairing alongside with another on the side. This is focusing more from Oikawa's POV and I've written them in their mid-twenties or so. Hope you enjoy and feedback/criticisms/comments are welcome.
Oikawa loves his job; really, he does. But there are some days where he just wants to march up to his boss’ office, scream a few things that would make his mother faint, flip him off and walk out with two victory peace signs raised in the air, to the cheers and applauding of his co-workers. Clearly today is not that day. As one of the head reporters of the Aobajousai newspapers, one of the leading news companies in the area, he sat obediently at his desk surrounded by mountains of event clippings which desperately needed assorting, mixed papers and files, accompanied by the constant bombardment of phone calls from clients, neighbouring businesses, or simply those who wished to submit an eye-catching piece of news (most likely to be rejected and thus an utter waste of time). Oikawa leaned back in his chair which did little help to comfort his aching back. He reached for his phone and tapping it awake. ‘Only 3:42pm’. Oikawa refrained from groaning in despair. Not that time even mattered. He wouldn’t be able to leave this god-forbidden place until he at least finished off the rescue from car-crash story and sent it off to be finalised and published.

“Oikawa senpai, would you like some coffee?”

Oikawa swore in surprise and fumbled with his phone before glowering at the individual waiting patiently behind him holding a tray of white paper cups. “Haven’t you ever been taught to knock before entering? Why are you even still here?”

The raven haired boy blinked at Oikawa. “I couldn’t knock, I was holding the tray. Akaashi senpai said it would be fine to come in,”

Oikawa sighed heavily, pinching the bridge of his nose. “There’s no point wasting my time lecturing you. You’ll just repeat it again tomorrow like some broken record. And since when did this place offer internships? I had to climb up the ladder without short cuts when I was your age to get to where I am now.”

“But you’re only three years ol-“

“Why the hell are you still here Kageyama?”

The boy held up the tray towards Oikawa, expression full of earnest. The brunette snatched a small cup and pointed it towards the door. “There, happy? Now get out, I’m extremely busy,” Oikawa didn’t miss the way Kageyama eyed his other hand which was still clutching on to the mobile and he stood, yelling defensively as the intern hurried out.

“I was checking for important messages, alright?! Because I have a job and you don’t!” Oikawa sat back down breathing heavily out of his nose. God, he hated that kid.

“It’s only three thirty and you’re yelling already? Clearly someone’s stressed.”

Oikawa waved dismissively at Akaashi who had peeked in to his office, coffee in one hand and expression completely placid. Akaashi was one of the very few co-workers Oikawa favoured. He was in charge of the photos which were selected in to the papers, and thus the two often worked closely together on the important headliner stories. He was also never late submitting his works which Oikawa was eternally grateful for.

“Allowing Kageyama to barge in to my office like that. I won’t forgive you so easily this time.”
Akaashi raised one eyebrow. He sat down in the seat nearest to the door. “I don’t think he’s that bad. If anything, I feel sorry for the kid having to deal with you breathing down his neck all the time.”

Oikawa snorted and shook his head in denial. “I’ve never done such a thing. Name just one incident where I’ve done wrong to him; and yes, that was a rhetorical question so don’t bother answering that. Besides, he was the one breathing down my neck just then. I bet he was trying to sneak a peek at one of my stories. Trying to steal my hard-earned works, the brat.”

Akaashi stared at Oikawa looking thoroughly unimpressed. “Sure. So what’s the progress on the rescue story down at Karasuno?”

Oikawa let out a woeful sound, thunking his head on the table. Akaashi clicked his tongue in disapproval and stood to leave. “I need an email of the draft by tomorrow morning the latest so I can figure out what pictures to use. I’ve got a few in mind but I can’t start until you’re done,” the other grunted in response. Akaashi turned before pausing and coming back.

“You’ll probably need this more than I do.” He placed his coffee next to Oikawa’s untouched one on the desk. The brunette let out pathetic whine and his friend huffed in amusement, giving a firm pat on the shoulder before leaving.

The major downfall of Oikawa’s work was fast pace of it all. News is constantly occurring, one major event after the other. Reporters are only given a few hours to gather up their story before being able to send it off to their editors for it to be finalised and published to the public. This meant there was no such thing as planning ahead or set schedules. This also meant relationships were basically a no-go. Oikawa had given up after several attempts and he could only handle so many slaps to the face and angry partners storming off before he decided to give it a quits too. The main focus on his mind was what was considered news-worthy and how fast can he finish it in order for it to be published to the public before other rival news businesses. Oikawa glared at the half-completed article on his desk before cracking his knuckles.

“Alright, let’s get this over and done with,” he muttered to himself. This story was just another obstacle to get out of the way and once it was done, he never had to look at it again.

… Only he was still staring at it after several hours. Others had left earlier and he was still stuck on this sad piece of writing which was nowhere near completing. Oikawa rubbed at his eyes and checked his phone for the thousandth time. ‘1:34am’. He wanted to yank his hair out. He had finished off the inspiring interview story with Quinn Mourre, emailed the publisher his final copy of yesterday’s work, emailed Akaashi in regards to the work they were asked to publish by tomorrow noon, as well as selecting a few story candidates to be published in tomorrow’s work. But he couldn’t finish this story. Everything he wrote came out either too awkwardly-phrased or insensitive. ‘I’m missing something here’. Once in a while Oikawa was faced with a difficult piece of work but he always managed to get through and get it done before the deadline. Oikawa hated going home knowing the unfinished story would be constantly at the back of his mind, nagging to be finished. But right now, he was just tired. “I don’t even care if I get fired tomorrow,” Oikawa said aloud to no one in particular. Of course he did care. There were plenty who would jump at the opportunity of taking his position (Kageyama included; I don’t care what Akaashi says, that kid is a menace) and he wasn’t going to give up that easily. But right now his eyes felt heavy, mind thick and muddled and his back on the verge of snapping. ‘Just a quick power nap then I’ll finish it’ Oikawa concluded as he pulled his chair out and shoved his laptop and papers in to his bag. He pocketed his mobile and wallet in to each pants pocket and stumbled his way out.

The air was surprisingly chilly and Oikawa clutched tightly on to his bag as he hurried down the city street. It never ceased to fascinate him how such a city packed with business men and women
bustling about during the day could be so empty and quiet during night. Oikawa focused on the small puff of warm foggy breath which escaped his mouth every few seconds to distract him from the eerie vibe of the night city life. He wasn’t an idiot. As a news reporter, he was fully aware of the frightening things which occurred at night, ranging from armed robberies to kidnappings and random attacks. Each chilling case rushed in to mind and he didn’t dare look at anything but the small slab of concrete ground ahead of his feet. His goosebumps were now prominent and he inwardly scolded himself for not bringing a warmer jacket.

“Got any spare change?”

Oikawa almost jumped out of his skin as he glanced up to find someone leaning against a building wall a metre ahead of him. They had pulled their hoodie up, covering their face which was never a good sign and Oikawa hesitated in his tracks. The deep baritone voice indicated a definite male with an air of confidence. That was very troubling.

“Oh, hm you know what? I’ve left my wallet at my work. I’d like to give you some spare cash but I-

“Shut up and give me some change.”

Oikawa refused to so much as flinch at the sudden sharp tone of the stranger. “Well not with that attitude. I’ve dealt with all different kinds of people in my life but you know what they say. Old people e-“ Oikawa froze at the quiet but distinct sound of a knife being steadily unsheathed; that audible sharpness alighting his nerves.

“Give me your god damn money and move on.”

This was definitely not a good sign. Oikawa glanced around to find the street completely empty. ‘I should just run. The chances of him chasing me is low’. He took a hesitant step back but immediately regretted his decision. The male lunged out, the slight glint of the knife appearing for a split second before Oikawa felt a sudden blunt pain in his stomach. He staggered back, but had little time to recover before he was shoved to the ground by the other. He tried to yell for help but the earlier blow had knocked the wind out of him and he lay there in helpless fear and pain. He felt his left arm yanked back painfully and he let out an involuntary hiss. The stranger had grabbed his bag and bolted down the streets, dark hoodie blending in to the background. Oikawa was now alone.

He lay there for what felt like a century, allowing his body to slowly readjust itself. His choked breaths were now shallow pants. His lungs still felt crushed as he forced more air in to his system. The pain in his stomach still lingered and with shaky hands he reached around, gingerly touching his stomach for any open wounds. He let out a grateful sigh when he found he was still intact. The thief must’ve hit him with the handle of the knife instead in order to immobilise him as opposed to actually harming. Oikawa’s thankful mood plummeted when he realised his bag was gone. ‘All my work’. Well technically he had saved most of his files on to the computer at work for a backup but the most recent files were a goner. As well as his expensive, recently-bought laptop. Oikawa wanted to scream. Today was definitely by far the worst day of his life. He reached for his back pockets and felt the familiar outline of his phone and wallet which he had tucked in before leaving. ‘Imagine his face when he realises I actually had no money in the bag’ Oikawa laughed aloud, too drained to even care how crazy he must look lying in the middle of the sidewalk at two in the morning, laughing like some deprived homeless person. ‘I need that laptop back though’ he contemplated woefully. He needed to get help first. Oikawa pulled out his phone and tapped in the nearest location of the police department. ‘Only four streets away. You can do this’. He sat up cautiously, whimpering inwardly. His stomach felt like it was on fire. Oikawa grabbed the nearby streetlight for support and began shuffling to the location.
It took well and truly over twenty minutes but he finally arrived. The ache within his stomach had ceased and Oikawa glanced up at the building. The two dimly lit lights casted an eerie artificial yellow over the dark exterior. He frowned at the unwelcoming atmosphere and pushed the door open.

The inner walls of the police department had proven to be just as dreary as the outside with pale, faded blue wallpaper everywhere, reminding Oikawa of the an old-school hospital. A few metres shy of the entrance was the reception desk which was occupied by a rather messy mop of dark hair. Oikawa hobbled to the front and stared at the individual perched on the chair behind. His hair was much more atrocious up close, his sharp, half-lidded eyes darting back and forth at the fast-paced game he was playing on the phone. His long legs propped on up the desk as he tapped away on his device. Oikawa gave a small cough to alert him of his presence.

“Shh. I’m so close to beating my friend, gimme a second.”

Oikawa blinked at the raven-haired male. “Are you serious? I’ve just been mu-“ the phone bleeped an unhappy tune and the receptionist sat back howling in disappointment.

“Damn it! I was so close too! Bokuto is never going to let this go now.”

Oikawa stared incredulously at the disgruntled bed-headed man. “Did you not just hear what I said? I got m-“ the door on the left slammed open as a white and grey haired man (with ridiculous amounts of hair gel) burst in with the most haughty grin on his face.

“You can’t beat the B-dogz, K-cat! Better luck never Mr. Second place,” he did a playful motion of pulling out finger guns and ‘pew-pew’ing at the receptionist. The other retaliated by grabbing a rubber band from the supplies draw and shooting it at his friend. ‘What the hell is this’ Oikawa was completely baffled at the scene of two men in police uniform yelling at one another, running around and jumping over the desks, making ridiculous fake gun sounds and in general, acting like absolute idiots.

“I just got mugged; is there someone competent in this god damn office who can help me?” Oikawa hissed. The two officers paused their childish game and stared blankly at him.

“You got mugged? Well, that sucks.”

The white-haired officer chortled and grinned at his snarky friend. They finally settled down and the receptionist reached over and grabbed a pen from another desk. He ambled over back to the front desk, throwing his body wholly in the wheely chair. It let it out a loud squeak, threatening to snap soon but he paid no mind. Those lazy, languid eyes focused on Oikawa as he pulled out a notebook and clicked the pen.

“Well first things, first. I would probably recommend you cancel all your credit cards, renew any other forms of I.D. such as your driver’s license and such. If you happen to have any other important belongings within your wallet, please indicate to us n-“ Oikawa shook his head as he pulled his wallet out from his pocket.

“No, I have my wallet I got my bag sto-“

The white haired police officer jumped in, hands latched on to the receptionists’ shoulders, ignoring his friend grunt as he pushed him down when he leaned over to peer at the wallet. “That’s your wallet right there.”

Oikawa rolled his eyes heavily and glared at the policeman. “Well, no kidding. I got my bag stolen,
not my wallet.”

The raven-haired officer reached back and jabbed his pen in to the other’s armpit. The other let out a loud yelp and fell back, nursing his pit with a dejected expression.

“What was in your bag then?”

Oikawa looked back at the raven-haired man staring expectantly at him. “Important documents. My laptop. And I had a lot of my work saved on to it so I need it back as soon as possible.”

The receptionists’ expression dropped, now looking rather bored. “What, that’s it? Some pieces of paper and a laptop? Man, I thought it would be something more interesting. Robberies like that happen all the time.”

Oikawa gaped disbelievingly at him. “What the hell, are you kidding me? I got mugged at two in the morning and you’re seriously telling me it should be more interesting? Are you even a police officer?”

The white haired officer jumped in again covering his friend’s ears. “Hey, hey, hey! That’s not a nice thing to say to someone who’s trying to help you out! Why didn’t you back up your work if it was so important?” Oikawa wanted to rip his own hair out. Or better yet, reach over and rip the officer’s hair out. The messy-haired friend placed a hand out, silencing the other officer.

“Hold up. The real question here is what were you doing lurking about at two in the morning with all these so-called important documents? What exactly were on those files?” That hand then closed in to a fist and the other automatically bumped it with his.

Oikawa pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed loudly. “They were documents of cases I had collected information on. I can’t tell you what exactly that information is because as part of job, I’m not authorised to share that with you,” The other two gazed at Oikawa before sharing glances amongst themselves. Oikawa felt a sense of unease as he scowled at the duo. In a very well synced motion, they both leaned in, squinting at him, expressions full of distrust.

“Sounds like an underground informant to me, ain’t that right Bokuto?” The white-haired officer, or Bokuto, nodded fervently. Oikawa trembled in fury as he gave them an icy glare.

“Is this the right place? I thought I came to a police station, not a god damn idiot parlour,”

“Are you sure you came to the right place? What kind of criminal informer comes to a police station? You must be new to this cause you’re not very good at it,” the bedheaded policeman drawled. His friend hooted with laughter, slapping his friend’s arm and causing a havoc. Oikawa’s tolerance had hit zero. He slammed his hand on the reception desk and snarled.

“Who the hell thought it was a good idea leaving you two by yourselves here? I demand to speak to the one in charge!” the officers grinned at him, unconcerned by his lash out. Oikawa leaned over the desk and yelled out. “Hello? Is there any other officer in here because I can’t deal with these idiots,” the duo burst out laughing which made his blood boil even further. He was just about ready to give up on his laptop and go home. ‘I’m going to publish a ten page report dedicated to how useless this god damn police department is so everyone will know’ he thought viciously. He turned to storm out when a deep, commanding voiced boomed from behind.

“What is all this commotion?”

Oikawa rolled his eyes and sighed loudly. “Finally. Are you guys short on staff here or something? What took you so lo-“ he choked back his words as he came face to face with the world’s most
handsome (but frowning) officer.

Chapter End Notes

Wonder who that handsome policeman is hmm gosh darn so hard to guess
I'm planning the next chapter already so it should be out in the next week or so!
Take me home baby

Chapter Notes

Hello yes I'm still here, I'm not dead (yet)
Sorry for the super late update I've just been really busy keeping up with school work
and my writing has been utter poop
I'm trying to figure out how to piece the storyplot together so please be patient with me
But enough of me yapping excuses and hopefully you enjoy this update so far

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This man was a model. No, a God. Short, cropped hair slightly mussed at the top, a strong jaw which
was even further accentuated from the way he held his head up, looking down to regard Oikawa. His
arms were the size of tree trunks and Oikawa inwardly prayed he would cross those arms of his so
the sleeves would finally burst. He was definitely toned from under that uniform which made up for
his slighter shorter stature. Not that his height was a turn-off. This man radiated perfection; not to
mention those eyes. Those sharp, piercing eyes which glinted from the artificial lighting of the office
as they focused on him. His posture and overall appearance screamed authority which was
frightening but kinda sexy at the same time. Most definitely Oikawa's type of guy.

“Oh my god,” Oikawa blurted. The officer’s eyebrows etched together in slight confusion and worry
and when he leaned in Oikawa held his breath. Okay, Oikawa had to admit he’d seen some good-
lookin’ faces in his lifetime but this was just ridiculous. This man looked like he was practically
sculpted from marble and to be placed in a museum. ‘Where have you been my entire life?’

“Sir, are you alright?”

Oikawa snapped out of his daze and opened his mouth to respond, only to get interrupted by the
blundering white-grey haired officer. “Iwaizumi, stay away from him! He’s an underground
criminal!”

The officer finally leaned back and sighed heavily. “How many times do I have to tell you to stop
harassing the civilians,”

Officer Bokuto’s expression faltered as he blinked widely at Mr. Handsome. The messy-
haired policeman reached in and slapped his friend’s back, eliciting a high-pitched shriek.

“Yeah, Bokuto quit harassing the civilians,” he chided teasingly. Officer Bokuto threw a rather
well-aimed punch in to his friend’s gut. He cackled when the other coughed and spluttered, backing
off immediately. Oikawa paid no mind to the ridiculous duo. He was enraptured by that deep,
velvety voice which seemed to rumble from his core. ‘I could listen to him all day’.

The handsome policeman ignored the two and considered Oikawa with knitted brows. “Are you
here to report a crime incident?"

Caught somewhat off-guard, Oikawa managed to stutter out a poorly-spoken response. “I-it was uh,
at two or so and my bag. With my laptop. And some papers. My work. Which were in the uh, bag.
Stolen,” Oikawa cringed at the stupidity of his own phrasing but the officer paid no mind.
He leaned back crossing his arms. “Where was this incident?”

Oikawa couldn’t focus on the question when those ridiculously huge biceps were right there. ‘I wonder how much he works out to look like that’. There was a sharp cough and he blinked up at the frowning officer.

“Are you alright? Did you need a seat? It is common to experience mild shock after an experience like yours,”

Oikawa nodded dumbly. He saw the two officers on the right elbowing one another and whispering amongst themselves in his peripheral vision. They snickered but immediately shut up the second the attractive officer glared in their general area.

“Kuroo. Bokuto. I don’t doubt your amazing ability to deliver your paperwork in time, but are you sure you have time to just stand there when that traffic report from last week needs to be completed by tonight. Unless you want to stay here overtime,” I've found my soul mate,’ Oikawa swooned as he cherished the sullen looks from the police duo.

“Oh come on Iwaizumi, give us a break. You’re lucky we even agreed to these morning shifts,”

“Yeah Iwaizumi! More like Iwai-zzup with your attitude,”

Officer Kuroo stared in amazement at his friend. “I don’t know whether to high-five you or cringe at what you’ve just said,” Officer Bokuto held his hand up with a hopeful look in his eyes.

“Do you have any recollection of the perpetrator?”

Oikawa snapped his head back to face the policeman. “He was wearing a hoodie which shadowed his face but he was about my height with a deep voice. It was rather dark so there really isn’t much else I can comment on. Sorry.”

The policeman gave a polite, clearly well-rehearsed smile and nodded.

“Any information no matter how small is significant and will help us further pinpoint the individual responsible. You are doing a great job,”

Oikawa felt his insides flutter momentarily as he ogled the officer shamelessly. “I could say the same for you.” The other stared at Oikawa for an uncomfortably long amount of time, as though processing what he had just said before continuing with the questions like nothing had happened. Oikawa felt his mood dampen slightly and he answered the next few questions sullenly. Before he knew it the officer stood abruptly, papers being stacked neatly in to a new file. “You are free to leave. If we have any further questions or answers we will contact you as soon as po-“

Oikawa reached out, grabbing a tight hold of the officer’s forearm. “Wait, the guy is still out there. Who knows what he’ll do if I bump in to him again. I'll feel much safer with a strong officer protecting me,” The officer’s face twitched as he stared expressionless at Oikawa. It vaguely reminded him of Akaashi’s face the time he had asked him to spend the night following the minister in order to hopefully grab a good shot of him pulling another scandalous stunt. Only Akaashi was no match against this gorgeous masterpiece of a human.

The officer eyed Oikawa up and down before finally sighing and going through his notes. “I suppose your safety is my concern.”

Oikawa could melt right on the spot. If this man asked him to get on his knees and worship him, he would. Oikawa immediately ran through possible scenarios of inviting the officer inside his after
escorting him home. He could imagine it already. He would offer the man some coffee and through which, he would graciously accept. Then after a few shared conversations and shy laughs, they’d gradually edge towards one another. They would stare in to each other’s eyes and fingers would interlock. The officer would reach in and push his hair back; Oikawa would tilt his head slightly to the right, open his mouth slightly and just k-

“Kuroo, Bokuto. Assist this man home,” ‘Wait, what?’ Oikawa blinked at the officer who didn’t so much as spare another glance. From his peripheral vision, he saw the two high-five each other, more than eager to leave the dull office.

“Well, let’s go fellow citizen. It’s our duty to ensure you return home safe and sound,” Officer Kuroo made it sound the absolute opposite of reassuring. Oikawa spun around to squint at the grinning duo before turning back and grabbing hold of the officer’s arm again. “Wait, please. I don’t feel safe with those two.”

Officer Handsome hesitated before holding Oikawa’s left hand and giving it a reassuring pat. ‘He has nice hands’ Oikawa inwardly sighed. He had a strong, firm grip which soothed the reporter immediately.

“Don’t fret. I wouldn’t dare put you in a dangerous situation, I assure you. Trust me,”

What a charmer. Absolute gentleman. Oikawa gave a tentative smile and slowly nodded. Officer Handsome bowed curtly before leaving the office room. The second the door shut he felt a sharp sting on the back of his neck and instinctively spun around. Officer Kuroo held several rubber bands in his hand whilst Officer Bokuto swung the car keys on his finger. They shared the same devious smirk and Oikawa wanted to punch that smug look off their faces.

“We don’t have all day, lover boy. Don’t keep us waiting.”

Bokuto threw the key at Kuroo and leapt over the reception desk. “Shot gun the front seat!”

Oikawa rolled his eyes and followed them wearily. “You’re not meant to have a civilian sit in the front passenger seat of a police car.”

Officer Bokuto paused, frowning at the ceiling in contemplation. “Huh. Never noticed that,”

Kuroo reached over and scruffled his friend’s hair ignoring the loud protests, as he sauntered out. “It’s alright buddy, I didn’t know either.” ‘Seriously, how did they make it this far as policemen?’ Oikawa thought to himself as he followed the two outside.

It was a quarter to three in the morning and Oikawa was on the verge of passing out. The rollercoaster of a day drained him completely. The drive home ought to have been at least twenty-five minutes and he briefly considered just sleeping on a nearby street bench. The moment he stepped in to that death trap of a car, he regretted it wholeheartedly. “Watch out for that speed bump!” Oikawa could’ve sworn the officer sped up instead. The car was airborne for a few seconds before crashing back down on to the road. Officer Bokuto hollered in excitement whilst punching Kuroo’s arm. “Fifty points for that kickass jump!” Kuroo grinned, swatting his friend’s fist away.

Oikawa’s fingers dug in to the chair as his other hand scrabbled uselessly at the window. “Can you drive slower?! I’d prefer to get home in one piece,” he hissed. Once again, the two paid no mind to his outcries. Bokuto leaned forward, reaching in to the glove compartment, and pulling out a bag of donuts which had been in there for god knows how long. ‘How typical’ Oikawa mulled as the officer shoved one in to his friend’s mouth and grabbing one for himself. He declined when being offered of a donut and Bokuto gave him a quizzical look. He glanced at Oikawa’s tightened
grip on the car seat and reached over to give a reassuring pat on the knee, dusting it with white sugar.

“I like putting the siren on when I’m super late to work. It’s fun watching the cars swerve out of the way for me.”

Oikawa breathed out heavily, giving the white-grey haired officer the most withering look he could muster. “Is that meant to be soothing? I’d rather you shut up,”

Officer Kuroo nodded toward Bokuto. “Or the way they try to get out of the way when they’re stuck in the traffic and you’re beeping the horn behind them. I love seeing the sheer panic on their faces,”

Bokuto hummed in agreement as he reached for another donut. Oikawa was absolutely taken back. It was like watching some surreal animal-observing documentary with these two.

“Honestly, I just don’t understand how the two of you managed to get this far as police officers; it seriously baffles me.”

Officer Kuroo swerved his way out of another pothole and grinned at Oikawa through the front car mirror. “You know, you’re not exactly in any position to be criticising us about career decisions, Mr. Underground informer,”

Oikawa glared back with his arms crossed. “I’m not an underground informer; I’m a reporter,” he spat back.

Bokuto shuddered, expression twisted as though he had a foul taste in his mouth. “I don’t know what’s worse,”

Kuroo snickered with laughter and Oikawa felt another urge to reach out and choke the driver from behind. “How do people tolerate you two? I feel sorry for that other policeman,” he provoked lightly, hoping they would shed some light on the mysterious model of an officer.

“Iwaizumi? Nah man, he hounds us all day and night. If anything, he relies on us to keep the department from collapsing,”

Officer Bokuto nodded eagerly, donut crumbs spreading over his shirt. Oikawa inwardly cringed and tore his eyes away from the man who ate like a four-year old. He spoke nonchalantly as to avoid suspicion. “Iwaizumi, huh? He seems alright,”

Kuroo snorted. “Yeah, if you’re a masochist and in to that kinda stuff,” He paused, regarding Oikawa through the mirror again. “Though, you’re not exactly his type. He’s in to the cute ones,”

Oikawa frowned. “I can be cute,”

The car jerked sharply to the right as the raven-haired officer burst out laughing. Bokuto’s eyebrows shot up as he joined in, slapping his knee as he hooted loudly. Oikawa glared at the duo. Officer Kuroo could barely keep his eyes on the road as he clutched on to his stomach and cackled, the other hand on the steering wheel struggling to hold on. Bokuto reached over and steadied the wheel as he turned to beam at Oikawa. “Nah dude, you are definitely not cute. Better luck next time,” Oikawa hmph-ed at the two.

“Oh! You know who was cute? That brown-haired chick from yesterday.”

Officer Kuroo’s eyebrows knit in confusion as he tried to recall. Officer Bokuto insistently smacked his arm excitedly, mouth filled with half-chewed donuts.
“Y’know the chick with them massive b-”

Kuroo snapped his fingers as his expression lit up. “Ohhh! Yeah, she was hot. She was all over Iwaizumi though, that little weasel.” Oikawa’s stomach coiled with discomfort and he gazed out the window, focusing on the flash of lights which flurried by.

“Yeah, well if I carried her out like that bridal-style from the burning car, I’m pretty sure she would’ve been all over me. Like, ‘Oh Officer Kuroo! You’re my hero! Now take me to bed and have your wicked ways w-”

Oikawa jolted up, grabbing their shoulders and leaning in. “Wait, the Karasuno car-rescue case? He was the lead of the case?”

“No, I’m serious. I was meant to finalise it by tomorrow; or well, today but all my work was in the bag which was stolen and can you stop with that expression and keep your damn eyes on the road?”

Officer Kuroo snorted but focused his attention on the road once more. Bokuto leaned in with a rather wild, eager look on his face. “If you’re telling the truth about the whole reporter thing then could you include how I dashed in there, battled against the fury of the flames, and saved a hot babe and her newborn child. Make sure to add a quote from me. How about something like ‘the fire was hot but I was hotter-” Oikawa smacked his hand over the white-grey haired officer’s mouth, a little harder than necessary but he had an epiphany.

“Even better, a quote from the great hero himself, Officer Iwaizumi. Everyone loves a good rescue story and that’s what the article was lacking! It needed an extra spark; and who more suited than the officer who physically dove in and saved a citizen from the hazardous car collision.” He grinned maliciously at the policeman who blinked at him with a mixture of confusion and pain.

“Well, thank you officer,” he gave two sharp mocking slaps to Officer Bokuto’s face who yelped and pulled his head back so quickly it collided harshly against the car window. This was the perfect excuse to bump in to him tomorrow. He could ask for a quote, or even better, a one-on-one interview. If he felt daring enough, he could ask for the hot officer’s number and possibly a coffee date to further discuss his other cases. He would score a hot date, as well as finish his report with a reliable source. It was a win-win situation. Oikawa allowed himself a mental pat on the back. ‘I am the best’ the car lurched to a sudden halt causing Oikawa to get yanked forward and thrown back again by his seatbelt.

“Even better, a quote from the great hero himself, Officer Iwaizumi. Everyone loves a good rescue story and that’s what the article was lacking! It needed an extra spark; and who more suited than the officer who physically dove in and saved a citizen from the hazardous car collision.” He grinned maliciously at the policeman who blinked at him with a mixture of confusion and pain.

“Well, here we are princess,” Officer Kuroo declared. He leaned down to peek out the window and let out a low whistle. “Damn, you must be loaded. Bokuto, let’s switch jobs. Imagine livin’ in a place like that,” Oikawa wrenched the car door open and threw himself out.

“Oh thank god, I thought I was going to die in a car with two weirdos,”


Officer Kuroo leaned out towards Oikawa with a predatory leer. “Yeah, the least you could do is say thank you. And who knows, we may even throw in a good word to Iwaizumi for you.” As much as Oikawa hated it, his heart thrummed in anticipation. Well, it was true; he could use the help of these two idiots to get an inside scoop on the charming policeman. If there was anything he learnt from his
profession, an inside man was crucial in gathering information. He forced himself to squash down his pride as he opened his mouth with great difficulty.

“Thhaank yyy… yyyoo~“ Officer Bokuto leaned out and there was a sudden flash of light. Oikawa stumbled back in surprise as the loud duo burst out laughing.

“I must say this is by-far the best surprise selfie we've had so far,” The white-grey haired officer reached out and blew raspberries as the car sped away, screeching still audible from streets away. Oikawa stood there for several minutes processing what had just happened. He was sure a vein had ruptured in his neck as he felt fury wash over him. Then it depleted and all he felt was utter exhaustion. 'Sleep now, plan revenge later' he promised himself as he dragged himself to the entrance door, typing in the password pin and allowing himself inside. The house remained in the exact same state as he had left it. 'Well, of course'. He didn’t know what he was expecting. The past few hours were an absolute chaotic nightmare. It was somewhat comforting to know his house still remained intact. Magazines were sprawled on the marble kitchen bench from where he had left them as he rushed out to work. His lounge room was immaculate as always considering he hardly spent time at home. The abandoned plush leather couches never looked so inviting. ‘No. bed.’ he scolded to himself. He half-heartedly yanked his tie off as he traipsed to his bedroom. He unbuttoned the first few buttons of his shirt before peeling it off and fumbled with his belt. After a few attempts he grumbled in frustration, giving up and flopped on the bed. Curling himself inwards, surrounded by his thick blankets he let out a peaceful sigh. The world can destruct tomorrow for all he cared. He felt himself rapidly drifting off to sleep, mind becoming hazy and blank. He dreamed of sharp, piercing eyes and a deep soothing voice that night.

Chapter End Notes

I think I may introduce the side shipping in the next chapter for those who are still even interested in this fanfic
As per usual feedback/criticisms/comments are welcome
Can't take my eyes off you

Chapter Notes

Okay, warning in advance this is the most dryyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyest chapter I've ever written and nothing much happens
I'm trying to map out how to continue this and I'm stuck so I just decided to get this chunk of writing out of the way
Sorry and I'll try to move things along in the next update!
NOTE: I'm also updating this whilst half-asleep so let me know if there are any mistakes
Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The heat was almost unbearable and the dense smoke enveloped him. Oikawa reached blindly for a door handle, window lever, anything but was only met with scorching blazes. He wanted to yell out but the thickness of the air was choking him alive. The roaring of the merciless flames created another level of panic in his chest as he coughed harshly. Strong arms reached out and wrapped around his torso. Oikawa felt himself being pulled out of the burning rubble and he held on tightly against the scruff material of the other's shirt. A wave of freshness rushed over him as he registered being carried away from the burning rubble of the car. He was coughing uncontrollably. His chest hurt like hell, his eyes were stinging like mad, and he was on the verge of passing out. Oikawa felt a light pressure against his lips and cool liquid trickling down his throat, soothing it instantly. He took huge gulps and soon the tightness of his throat loosened up. A surge of coolness flowed over his sore eyes and he blinked hesitantly, allowing them to adjust. The first thing he saw were those eyes. Rich, dark earthy brown eyes peered down at him and he clenched on to the rough-textured uniform when the officer readjusted his grip. He was literally now balancing Oikawa’s whole weight with one arm whilst his left hand rested gently against his neck for what he presumed was checking for any pulse irregularities.

“Thank you,” Oikawa’s voice was surprisingly even and the officer’s gaze rose to meet his. Those fierce, yet gentle eyes would be the death of him. Iwaizumi maintained eye contact for several moments before he reached out tentatively to place his palm on the side of Oikawa’s face. ‘Oh god yes please’. Oikawa’s breath hitched as the other leaned in with unwavering ease. His air of confidence was something he definitely appreciated. Honestly speaking, Oikawa was sick to death of being the one in charge in a relationship. He was more than happy to let the other lead. The fire nearby continued to blaze brightly, illuminating Iwaizumi’s sweat-shiny face, but specifically accentuating those beautiful, almond-shaped eyes. The corner of his lip curled upwards in a mischievous little smile. Oikawa couldn’t help but return the gesture. The pressure from the hand on his face nudged gently and he complied, tilting his head a fraction to the right. His heart fluttered madly within his ribcage as he leaned in quickly. Iwaizumi chuckled lightly as his eagerness. Then he began to reach in slowly. ‘Yes yes yes’ Oikawa inwardly begged. They were so close now; lips only a few centimetres apart. Then a sharp shrill sounded, causing the two to pause. Iwaizumi blinked at Oikawa as an awful rendition of canon in d rang throughout the air. ‘No no no’. Oikawa wanted to grasp at Iwaizumi who was now on the process of fading away.

And then he found himself lying in his bed alone. The cheek Iwaizumi had ‘rested his palm against’ was now squashed against the pillow, and with his face half mashed in to the pillow, and hair tangled, Oikawa looked like a wild mess. “Eurgh,” he croaked out. There were times he was glad he
was single so no one would witness the travesty he became in the morning. But today he glared lazily at the vacant spot on the left of his double queen-sized bed. The shrill rendition of the default canon in d from his phone played up again. Oikawa reached out blindly for his phone, squinting at the bright screen. ‘Karasuno car-rescue report’. He recalled setting the alarm yesterday in order to rush in to work early and hopefully finish it off before others began to make their way in. The small alarm clock jiggled about on his screen indicating it was 4:30am. Even with the report due, it was far too early to get up, but Oikawa always made sure he had enough time to groom himself in the morning. The ladies at work would no doubt be as willing to approach him if he came in to work with his usual bed hair and overall sloppy attire which he kept to himself at home. Oikawa tapped the alarm off with unnecessary force and curled upwards. There was a sudden explosion of pain which caught him off-guard and he clutched his side. He looked down to find an impressive bruise spread on his right. ‘Right. Yesterday.’ He processed, mind still in slight disarray. Events of last night (or this morning) rushed back and he momentarily mourned the loss of his laptop once more. Though now was not the time to cry over spilled milk. He promised Akaashi he’d email him the car rescue report by this morning and with it remaining unfinished, he was definitely in a tight situation. He allowed himself a brief moment to enjoy the stillness of the early morning before forcing himself up. Stumbling his way to the bathroom he rushed through his usual morning routine and with a quick instant coffee on the go he was on his way to the AobaJousai news building.

As he sauntered in, he greeted the early arrivers with a cheeky wink and charming smile. The ladies at reception sighed dreamily and one even fumbled with her photocopying when he nodded at her accompanied by a “morning sunshine” in that charismatic tone he practiced to perfection. With the dominant percentage of the company consisting of women, life was fairly convenient for Oikawa. He knew the logic of the ladies and it never hurt to ensure he was on their good side incase he needed to ask for future favours. Once he reached his office he dropped his overly-friendly façade and rushed over to his computer. He never bothered turning the thing off as booting it up every morning was a pain and waste of time. Oikawa clicked the file open and skim-read through, fingers drumming impatiently on the desk. He made a few minor adjustments but overall it wasn’t as bad as he expected. ‘I just have to add some final touches and I might be able to finish it in ti-

“Oikawa-senpai!”

He jolted violently and his side tweaked in pain at the sudden movement. “Jesus Christ, I swear to god Kageyama I’m going to strangle something soon if you don’t cut that out!”

The intern’s blinked at him, as he apologised in a tone which clearly indicated he had no idea what he was necessarily apologising for. “I was just surprised you were in this early that’s all,” he explained.

Oikawa let out a prolonged sigh and glared at him. “Why surprised? You saying I’m complacent?”

Kageyama shook his head madly in denial. He opened his mouth but was thankfully saved by Akaashi who had popped his head in. From his slightly raised eyebrows, Oikawa could tell he was surprised he was in this early too.

“Morning. Finishing off some stuff?”

Oikawa scoffed as he gingerly leaned back in his chair. “You wouldn’t believe the shit I had to deal with last night,”

Akaashi frowned slightly at him as he gently covered Kageyama’s ears. Oikawa rolled his eyes. “Oh, come on. The kid is like, fifteen Akaashi. He’s not that naïve,”

Kageyama leaned in, with an earnest expression and sincere tone. “I’m actually eighteen,”
Oikawa squinted at him in disdain before waving him off. Now it was Akaashi’s turn to roll his eyes as he dragged a chair across from Oikawa’s desk and sat down.

“Okay, humour me. What happened?”

Oikawa leaned in, resting his elbows on the desk as he spoke in a hushed tone. “So I was working on the car rescue report last night but it was going nowhere so I decided to leave it for now and work on it tomorrow- wait, hear me out this is a good one. On my way home, I get mugged and end up at a police station. But get this, I bump in to the police officer who was the lead of the car rescue itself. Y’know, the one that rushed in saving the helpless victims; the ‘one and only true hero’. Now I know I promised to email the report to you but what if we head over there and speak with him, influence him to give a quote to add to the report? Boom. We have ourselves an exclusive news special. Think about it, if we build good relations with this guy, imagine all the eye-catching news and cases we’ll have access to. We’re branching out to other valuable sources. This kind of opportunity comes once in a lifetime. Alright, so I haven’t finished the rescue report, sue me, but I really do think we’ve got something good here. Besides, I’ve done most of it which I can email you so you can work on your part o-“ he paused when Akaashi held his hand up. He had a tight look on his face.

“Rewind. I think I misheard. Did you say you were mugged?”

Oikawa nodded patiently. Kageyama’s eyes widened, eyebrows etched with slight concern. “You were mugged last night? Are you okay Oikawa senpai?”

Oikawa huffed loudly, mimicking his voice in a ridiculously high-pitched whine. “Are you okay Oikawa senpai?”

Kageyama looked down at his feet a few inches behind the line of the office door. “But I’m not in your office,”

“Akkashi let out a prolonged sigh, leaned back and dropped his laminated work folder on the desk. “Well good thing you emailed me the other story from yesterday. We’ll use that instead but we really need that rescue story by this afternoon, and even that’s pushing it,”

Oikawa hummed, staring blankly at the ceiling. It definitely was pushing the deadlines and no doubt he’d hear a mouthful from his boss. And what if Iwaizumi refused to give a quote? It tended to be more often than not interviewees denied giving responses to reporters. Oikawa was very aware of the stigmatisation toward people in his profession. Reporters weren’t exactly the most trustworthy of people; whatever story sells, they’ll go for it. Besides, it wasn’t as though the officer showed any interest in him either ‘which was a huge disappointment’ Oikawa thought glumly. The sharp, rich-brown eyes imprinted themselves in his mind and his heart fluttered like a hopeless school girl. However, ‘This kind of opportunity comes once in a lifetime’. He made up his decision.

“You’re right. Time is a-tickin’ and we need that report done, or I’m going to have my ass handed to me. Let’s go,” He bolted upright, grinning broadly at the photographer.

Akaashi frowned and flipped through his papers. “You’re joking, right? You want us to leave now?”

Oikawa grabbed his interview folder and shoved it hastily in his bag. “Nope. And yes. Right now, pronto. Like you said, we need that story by this afternoon and that’s pushing it. Trust me on this one,” he rushed out in a flurry with hesitant Akaashi at his heels.
The police building appeared even more miserable than before, the sun now shedding light on the rusted letters which left horrid brown streaks down the exterior. The front steps were cobbled and heavily chipped on the side, as though someone had beaten it with a sledgehammer. Akaashi took one look at the pitiful state of the structure before giving Oikawa a questionable look. The reporter shrugged and moved in to shove the entrance door.

He was greeted by a rubber ball whizzing past and rebounding off the wall a few centimetres away from him, the loud whack startling him. He jerked back, almost colliding with Akaashi. “Woops, sorry. Didn’t mean to sca- oh it’s just you,” Kuroo sat upright from his spot with slight difficulty and much less grace. The officer carried heavy bags under his eyes giving him an ominous glow. Oikawa couldn’t help but sneer at the deadbeat policeman. “Guess you didn’t finish that traffic report, huh?” The officer didn’t have the energy to do much except scowl at the cheerful reporter. He eyed Akaashi head to toe before flopping on to his chair and swivelling his back to the two. He reached over and placed a nearby policeman cap on his ruffled head.

“He’s not here, he’s on a break. Come back later,”

Oikawa strolled up the reception desk, flashing the worn-out crow a delighted smile. “I can wait,” Officer Kuroo waved dismissively and he cocked the hat down covering his face. He returned to Akaashi who waited patiently beside the door. Akaashi gave him a questionable look before pointedly checking his watch. Oikawa offered what he hoped was a confident grin and cautiously took a seat on a rickety brown chair. He had lied; they were definitely not in the position to be waiting around idly for god knows how long, but Oikawa needed to meet him. Akaashi frowned before joining him.

“I’ll give you 12 minutes tops but that’s it,”

The reporter nodded. Akaashi was definitely putting his neck on the line as well and Oikawa was much aware of that. The loud snoring on his right indicated the useless officer was already asleep. Akaashi sat patiently, fingers looping around his lanyard as he examined the office. Several minutes ticked by and there was still no sign of Officer Iwaizumi, let alone any other individual nearby. Oikawa was already twitching nervously and pretty soon the twelve minutes would be up and he’d be waiting alone. He considered getting up and waking the sleeping policeman but was saved the trouble by the movement on the left. The door creaked open and Oikawa eyed the individual scurrying out.

He recognised that travesty of a hairstyle from a mile away. Unlike the other, Officer Bokuto remained surprisingly alert. He skittered about, pausing only to examine his sleeping friend before hopping elsewhere. ‘Almost like a restless owl’ Oikawa considered. Akaashi hung his head, completely engrossed on his camera. He flicked through the images, fingers expertly tapping at the screen to crop, resize and readjust the photos.

The officer had yet to notice them and he continued along, humming a little tune whilst his eyes darted back and forth over the desks. He let out a little ‘Aha!’ as he bent down and reached for a box under a desk on the far right. “It’s like you’re not even trying Daichi,” he chuckled to himself, flipping open the little, white box and picking out a perfectly-glazed donut. He carefully placed the box back in its original spot and took a huge bite. There was a momentary pause before the white-grey haired officer let out a huge and really kinda inappropriate groan and tottered on the spot. “Oh
god, that’s so gooood”. Oikawa coughed soundedly and Officer Bokuto squawked in surprise, jumping impressively high. He spun around, opening his mouth but was prevented by a huge chunk of donut lodging itself in his throat. He spent the next three minutes coughing and hacking it back up and Oikawa scrunched his nose in repulse. Even Akaashi beside him twitched, the disgusting sound causing him to stop editing his photos.

There was a faint muffled thudding before the door leading to the back corridor of the department opened. A large, looming figure stepped and Oikawa thought ‘finally someone competent’. This officer held an air of seriousness with his neatly groomed silvery hair which border-lined platinum, hardly a strand out of place. He was abnormally tall, long limbs lumbering toward Officer Bokuto. This individual certainly looked threatening, his great stature and gaze alone enough to frighten any bypassing stranger on the street. He loomed over the gagging policeman, coffee in one hand and peered down at him with those large, calculating vivid-green eyes.

“What the hell, where did you get that donut from? I thought Iwaizumi banned them.” He frowned at Officer Bokuto who was now turning slightly pale. The other fumbled for the coffee mug and gulped some liquid down. He let out a huge wheeze, hand clutched on to his rumpled uniform shirt.

“Daichi’s stash.. down.. under his desk..”

The towering policeman lit up as he reached down and pulled out the box once more. He jumped when Oikawa leaned in and slammed his hand over the box lid. “Hi there,” the reported smiled tightly. “Do you know when Officer Iwaizumi is coming back? I need to speak with him urgently.”

The policeman opened his mouth but was interrupted by Bokuto. “Don’t tell him! He tried to kill me just then. He ambushed me and watched me die slowly without a single sign of remorse,” he rasped.

Oikawa rolled his eyes and let out an obnoxiously loud sigh.

“Look, that’s a really touching story and all but I’m running out of time and I need to meet him,” he moved his attention back to the other officer, flashing him an encouraging smile. The officer grinned back and opened his mouth again but Bokuto jumped in between the two. “Lev, don’t! Remember stranger danger!”

Oikawa was losing patience but Akaashi leaned in and retorted irritantly. “Quit wasting our time and let us meet with him already,”

Officer Bokuto’s shoes squeak to a sharp stop when he finally noticed the photographer now standing beside Oikawa. The moment he laid eyes on Akaashi he knew it was over. It was like witnessing a trainwreck of emotions.

∞

Angels do exist. Bokuto didn’t know who he was or why he was here but all he knew was that it was meant to be. He was beautiful. Such gentle eyes. That slightly ruffled choppy hair giving him a charming boyish look. He was the definition of pretty and Bokuto wanted to know everything about him. What are his interests? Likes? Dislikes? Does he live nearby? What’s his favourite colour? Does he like donuts? Bokuto likes donuts too. See, they have so much in common. It was clearly meant to be. And he could see it now. They’re running alongside the beach and everything is in slow motion like in those romance movies Kuroo likes to secretly watch alone on Friday nights. His new boyfriend isn’t smiling (but only because he hasn’t seen him smile yet) and that’s okay because Bokuto is smiling enough for both of them. The song ‘Can’t take my eyes off you’ by Frankie Valli
is playing in the background and he used to think it was a stupid song but now it’s not because it’s their song and it just feels right and everything is in the right place and-

“Why is he staring at me like that?” Akaashi murmured to Oikawa as he eyed the officer ogling him down with wide eyes.

Oikawa muttered back. “Keep a distance, there’s a lot of weird ones in here.” He faced the officer now occupying himself to jam and cream filled goodness. “So, could you get him for us?”

The giant nodded and turn to leave. Only to get shoved aside in to an office tree décor when Officer Bokuto rushed in with eagerness. “Sure thing! I’ll go grab him for you,” he beamed at Akaashi before flittering out in a mad rush.

“Definitely weird ones,” Akaashi agreed, inwardly glad he didn’t have to deal with someone like that at his work.

Chapter End Notes

Welcoming Lev in to the world’s worst policemen club so now it’s a trio
I’ve planned some stuff for him later so I thought I may as well just introduce him now
Next update involves Oikawa actually talking to Iwaizumi even though that’s the whole plot of it all

Also: I hadn’t intended to focus so much on the bad cop duo so much but the more I plan the plot, the more I seem to drag them in so sorry! I’ll definitely add more Oikawa & Iwaizumi soon!
Oikawa liked to think of himself as a realist. As a reporter it’s essential to work within that mind frame as you deal with strained situations, meet almost-impossible deadlines, as well as deal with the most demanding of people. Being a realist is an advantage because you learn to manage your stress and you don't take words to heart, brushing off the mean things people say to you.

“You’re kinda small, y’know?”

Oikawa glared at the lumbering officer who gazed downward at him, slowly munching on that jam and cream donut. “How dare you. That’s rude as hell and excuse you, I’m taller than the average.”

The giant blinked, head tilted to one side. “Oh, sorry. I didn’t mean to sound rude. Just an observation.”

“Excellent observation if I must say so myself, Lev.”

The donut-munching man beamed at Officer Kuroo who sat back, hand half-covering his huge yawn. Oikawa breathed out heavily through his nose whilst flipping through his files and pulling out the interview folder. “I’m just here to interview Iwaizumi and I’ll get going s-“

Officer Kuroo sat up and rested his elbows on the desk, an amused leer painted on his face. “What, you’re on name-basis now? Getting’ pretty bold there, Mr. Reporter.”

Oikawa visibly ruffled and he scowled back. “So what? What am I meant to call him? Mr. Policeman? Go back to sleep,” He almost jolted when a huge hand shot in front of his face, and for a split second he thought he was about to get slapped.

“My name is Haiba. But you can call me Lev.”

Oikawa stared at the outstretched hand before flipping through his folder. “I don’t know who you are nor do I care. I’m here for one interview then I’m done.”

Officer Lev frowned and looked over at Kuroo. “He’s so angry.. and small. Kinda like a Chihuahua,”

Oikawa felt his face grow red as Kuroo burst out laughing. “Well he certainly likes to flaunt around like one.”

There was a light huff of laughter and the reporter whipped his head around accusingly at Akaashi who appeared to be focusing on his camera instead. Oikawa scoffed and crossed his arms, nose in the air. “Well, Lev, you’re hardly one to talk; creeping over others li-“

“Oh! I got it! A peacock. He’s like a peacock.”
Officer Lev ahh-ed as he crouched slightly to peer at Oikawa’s face. “You’re right. He’s much more peacock than Chihuahua.”

Oikawa glared at Officer Kuroo who flashed him a cheshire grin. “I’m not a peacock.” He looked at Akaashi for support. The photographer tilted his head in a contemplative manner. “Well…”

Oikawa gaped back in incredulity. “Oh, come on, Akaashi.” He shot daggers at the three now scrutinising him. “Stop that.”

Lev nodded affirmatively. "The longer I look at him the more I see it now." Officer Kuroo hummed as he tilted his head to the left. His wild hair flopped about and he grinned. "I guess it's settled then." Akaashi didn't say anything but Oikawa could see it all in his expression. He felt his face burn and feeling cornered, he hissed this time. "I mean it. Stop staring at me,” They all shared discreet glances at one another. ‘Unbelievable.’ It hadn’t even been that long and even Akaashi was on their side. Oikawa felt unfairly targeted. He raged out at the trio. “I'm not a pea--“

The back door smashed open with an eager Officer Bokuto and irritated Iwaizumi and before Oikawa could stop himself: “cock!”

∞

Yes, Oikawa did see himself as a realist. Like he saw how it was only a one in million chance of screaming the word ‘cock’ so profanely in front of a crush. And how in this situation he was 99% certain he was going to physically combust due to the heart rising to his face, hopefully make such a mess the other officers would have to spend weeks cleaning the remains of his poor body.

There was a long, awkward moment of silence which lasted at least a century before Officer Kuroo let out a loud choking sound and burst out laughing. Lev joined in, finger shamelessly pointing at Oikawa who felt himself wither just a little further. Even Akaashi was struggling to hide his smile. Officer Bokuto gaped at the scene before him. His eyes met with Akaashi’s in a fleeting moment and he flashed a bright grin. The photographer frowned and looked back down at his camera. The only one who appeared to be unamused by all this was Iwaizumi who looked like he had swallowed a giant pill. Oikawa wanted to disappear.

“Lev, is that a donut? What did I say about donuts in this office.”

That wiped the grin off the other’s face as he hunched down meekly and wiped his mouth. “Bokuto gave it to me.”

Bokuto spun his head around at the startled giant. “You traitor.”

Officer Iwaizumi sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. Oikawa too sighed, taking in the sight of that clenched jaw and dipped eyelashes. Oh how he missed that face. Was it possible to miss someone after just one encounter? Surely it must be a crime to look that goo-

“Officer Iwaizumi, pleasure meeting you again.”

Oikawa fumbled with his folder before grabbing his hand in a prolonged handshake. “Very much a pleasure. My name is Oi-“

“Oikawa Tooru, yes we meet not long ago. Are you feeling any better?”
Oikawa nodded faintly, his insides fluttering as he thought ‘he remembers my name’. Officer Iwaizumi gave an affirmative nod before scowling at Bokuto. “No donuts.”

Officer Bokuto’s shoulder drooped like a child being scolded and he muttered “It was just one time though.”

Iwaizumi shook his head before turning to Oikawa. “So what brings you here today? Unfortunately we haven’t gotten much updates from your incident earlier but we’re working on it right now so rest assure.”

Oikawa put on his best winning smile. “Actually, I’m here to see you.”

The officer seemed slightly taken back as he frowned in confusion. “To see me?” He placed his hands on his belt in a languid manner. “Was there something you needed?”

Oikawa’s eyes zero-ed in on the rough, slightly calloused hands, mouth gone dry. “I’m aware you were the lead of the Karasuno car case last week.”

Officer Iwaizumi’s expression faltered and he regarded Oikawa with slight suspicion. “Yes, I was,” he said slowly. “Who told you that?”

Bokuto leapt in. “I remember that car-crash. Absolutely tragic. I was there. I helped out aswell,” he flashed a charming grin at Akaashi who frowned.

“You think a major car accident is funny? Why are you even smiling?” Oikawa had never seen a person visibly deflate the way this officer did. Kuroo gave his friend a tight squeeze on the shoulder and simpered at the photographer. “He just likes to smile about everything. It’s his defense mechanism so don’t take offense.”

Akaashi eyed the other before looking away. “Never said I took offense.”

Oikawa coughed soundly, turning the officer’s attention back to him. “So, about the car rescue. Could we speak about it privately?”

That definitely surprised the officer, eyebrows shot up. “Okay,” he said slowly. He opened the back door of the office and gestured inwards. “We can discuss this at my office if you’d like.”

Oikawa nodded eagerly, absolutely refusing to acknowledge the police duo starting a loud raucous of immature ‘ooh’s and ‘go get him cowboy’. Akaashi stood to join Oikawa before there was a loud wait! Bokuto shifted on the spot, one foot to the other in a restless manner. He had a hopeful look in his eyes as he grinned at the photographer. “They’re going to talk about boring, ‘private’ matter. You can stay here with m- Us. The rest of us policemen.”

Akaashi blinked slowly at the officer, subconsciously touching his camera the way he did when he was uncomfortable. “I’d rather not.”

Officer Bokuto could probably sink to the floor at this rate. Iwaizumi frowned at the sad owl. “You need to finish off the traffic report from last week. Don’t go pestering the civilians again.” He held the door open, stepping aside to allow the other two to enter. Akaashi shot Bokuto one final suspicious glance before hastily following Oikawa.

Officer Bokuto leaned heavily against Kuroo’s shoulder as though the strength to stand had left him. “Kuroo remember that time you said I couldn’t eat the whole pizza within 10 minutes and I proved you wrong?” He whispered, eyes not once leaving Akaashi as he walked away.
Officer Kuroo glanced over at his friend. “Yeah, you kept complaining how your stomach hurt and ended up puking it back up on my couch.”

“That’s how I feel right now. But in the heart.”

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Oikawa is good at his job. No, he’s pretty awesome. He writes great articles which is read by thousands of people and his stories are often front page news. Oikawa is also great with people which is an absolute must. He always prided himself in his ability to read people and influence them to speak comfortably around him. So when he flashed his snarky grin, placed a card on the desk and said in a confident voice “I’m a representative reporter of the AobaJousai news industry; a business I’m sure you’re aware of.” The sudden drop in Iwaizumi’s expression was definitely not a good sign. Akaashi had agreed to wait outside the office, something Oikawa was grateful for, but now he wasn’t quite assured. The reporter continued to smiled as bright as a daisy and the officer frowned.

“Yes, I’m aware of the AobaJousai news company. What was it you needed?”

‘Be a people-pleaser’ Oikawa rehearsed in his mind. ‘I’m very interested in the rescue incident you led last week and would love an opportunity to interview the one and only great hero wh-“

“No.”

Oikawa blinked at the officer who stared back with a bored look. “No?”

Iwaizumi sat back on his chair and crossed his arms. “No interviews. I understand it’s part of your profession but I’m afraid I’m going to have to decline.”

Oikawa simply sat there in stunned silence. Okay, it was part of the job to get rejected by interviewees but hardly anyone ever rejected Oikawa. Oikawa was good at his job. The reporter let out a care-free laugh as he shook his head. “I understand you may feel a little skeptic but I assure you it is a great opportunity for the community to become aware of the great police workmanship which exists today.” He looked at Iwaizumi who was still frowning back.

“No.”

Oikawa felt his grin tighten. Well, he hadn’t expected this. Akaashi was waiting for him outside and he couldn’t just leave now. Oikawa needed to use every trick up his sleeve. He leaned in, resting his elbows on the desk and offering Iwaizumi his most charming smile. “I get it, a handsome officer like you is constantly busy. Just one interview and y-“

“No.”

Oikawa felt his winning smile losing its touch. “But think about this, you get praise, acknowledgement for your great work, lots o-“

“No.”

Oikawa placed his folder on the desk, now feeling the irritation rise. “Alright, alright. Can you at least give me a reason why?”
“Officer Iwaizumi was examining a small scratch on his left arm as he spoke nonchalantly. “I don’t like reporters.”

“All particular reason why?” Oikawa asked, slightly offended. The officer shrugged. His gaze flickered up as he spoke in a deep, unwavering tone. “I don’t trust them.”

There was something eerie about the way he watched Oikawa, waiting for his reaction and the reporter grinned a little too brightly. “It must be because you seem so appealing. Well, not a worry because you can most certainly trust me.”

Officer Iwaizumi must have noticed something off because he dropped his gaze, sighed and shook his head. “I’m not interested. Maybe you should go find another officer to fill your news story up. Ask Bokuto or Kuroo, they were at the scene too.”

Oikawa felt his smile dropping quickly. “But maybe if I just explai—”

“No.”

Oikawa felt his insides coil with annoyance at the indignation of the situation. He dropped his friendly façade and leaned in, berating the officer. “Alright, you know what? That’s not a good enough excuse for me. I’ve worked too damn hard to get to where I am today and for you to say you ‘don’t trust reporters?’ Nope, not good enough.”

Iwaizumi looked completely stunned but Oikawa had far too little patience to cut off his tantrum. “Alright, yes, you shouldn’t trust all reporters. Some just use you for a good story and move on. Some even change the story to use it against you if that’s what it takes for an even better story. I’ve met some of the dodgiest people out there in my profession so yes you shouldn’t trust all of them. But they’re not all like that. I’ve also met some talented folk in this business who should be acknowledged for their efforts and work but continue unnoticed. That’s why I do this. People deserve to be recognised for their amazing contribution in the community and they deserve to be noticed by the community. You’ve saved lives. You deserve to be in at least ten newspapers. I take my profession seriously and it’s part of my personal morals and work ethics to share the individual’s, and only the individual’s perspective to others. So there is no reason for you to dislike me because I’m a reporter and you shouldn’t just label us all as untrustworthy. Sorry for hounding you but that’s how I see it and I can assure you what I just said is the truth.”

Oikawa leaned back, breathing deeper as the other officer remained silent. Oikawa felt somewhat mortified at his own words but he couldn’t hold it in. He took pride in his work and it was solely this reason why he never lasted long in relationships. No one understood how much work meant to him. Well, how could they? They didn’t join him on all those endless nights finishing off reports, being rejected by so many news industries before finally landing a position at Aobajousai, slaving away and always working ten times harder than others to get to where he is now. He couldn’t blame them though; he was always making excuses, work taking priority. It’s not that he didn’t like his partners enough; he just never met anyone who understood how much work meant to him. In the end, it was always came to work or relationship, never both.

Iwaizumi frowned at the ground before finally looked up at Oikawa. “I said I didn’t like reporters. I never said I didn’t like you.”

Oikawa’s anger dropped immediately. He was at a loss of words. “Oh,” he said faintly. “Well, I see,” He cleared his throat and fiddled with his folder, face colouring in embarrassment. ‘Well, so much for branching out to other sources.’

Officer Iwaizumi gazed at Oikawa for a long minute in silence before he spoke. “You’re passionate
about your job,” he said thoughtfully, mostly to himself but Oikawa nodded anyway. The reporter expected him to kick him out of the office, but instead he sighed. He got to his feet and stood, stretching languidly, running his hands up and down his arms, ruffling his shirt, giving Oikawa glimpses of his flat abdomen. ‘He must definitely work up’ Oikawa’s eyes were blatantly fixed on the toned stomach before it disappeared behind the shirt once more.

“Okay.”

Oikawa looked up to find Officer Iwaizumi staring at him intently. “Okay?” Oikawa asked, knowing his face was turning pink.

He examined Oikawa’s face for several moments, as though he was searching for something. “One interview,” he said eventually. Oikawa’s heart skipped a beat and he let out a small huff of disbelief. He leapt up from his chair, bursting in to a genuine smile.

“Okay! Just one interview! Great, perfect. Here’s my card with my number and I’m free any time so call whenever you want,” He grabbed on to Iwaizumi’s firm hands and shook. “Thanks for doing this. I can’t wait to hear from you.”

Officer Iwaizumi had an amused, thoughtful expression on his face. “Just one interview” he reminded Oikawa. The reporter nodded away as he stacked his papers together and tucked them neatly in to his bag.

“Just one is enough. I really do appreciate it,” he chattered, flashing Iwaizumi a bright beam. The officer seemed slightly stunned but shook his head soon after with a thoughtful smile on his face.

Oikawa gave another lengthy handshake and they both left the office in bright spirits. Akaashi was waiting as patiently as ever outside in the hallway. He was accompanied by Officer Bokuto who hopped about around him, chatting his loud mouth off. “So you’re a photographer, huh? I like taking pictures too. This one time I took a picture of Kuroo when he was in the middle of yawning. It’s one of the best pictures I’ve ever taken. I saved it as my phone wallpaper if you want to see it,” The officer rocked back and forth on his feet as he leaned in to peer at Akaashi’s camera screen.

Officer Iwaizumi’s amused expression wiped off as he spoke out of a warning tone. “I assume you finished that traffic report then?”

The restless officer fumbled about, almost knocking in to Akaashi as he bolted frantically down the hallway. Akaashi shook his head and stood, wiping the non-existing dust off his pants. “Everything all good?”

Oikawa flashed his signature peace-sign at the photographer as he placed at arm on Iwaizumi’s shoulder. “Fantastic. We got ourselves a guaranteed front page interview story with our dashing hero.”

Iwaizumi appeared embarrassed at the brass comment and sighed. “Remind me again why I agreed to this?

Oikawa tilted his head and hummed in mock contemplation. “You get your name in, get this, Oikawa Tooru’s news report which is read by thousands out there who will know your name and the good deeds you have done. I’ll even get Akaashi to include a photo of you in the article. He’s a good photographer, he’ll take it from a good angle.”

Officer Iwaizumi appeared just as unamused as ever. Oikawa tried again. “A sense of self-worth and pride? I don’t know, aren’t police officers meant to help civilians out of the good of their own
hearts?”

Iwaizumi snorted and crossed his arms. “Aren’t civilians meant to avoid harassing police officers?”

Oikawa drank in the beautiful sight of those bulging arms and inwardly thanked the two parents that brought this creation in to the world. “A sense of humour too. I like that.”

Officer Iwaizumi frowned and opened his mouth but Oikawa quickly interjected. “Please. Just one picture. That’s all I need,” ‘And a date too’ Oikawa gestured at Akaashi. “Akaashi’s the lead photographer for the Aobajousai news company. It’ll be a good photo, I promise.”

Akaashi nodded and reached for the camera hanging around his neck. Iwaizumi still had a doubtful expression but relented anyway.

“Oikawa, could you get my extra camera lenses? I left them in the front seat of your car,” Akaashi asked as he aimed the camera, pausing occasionally to make several adjustments on it. The reporter flashed Iwaizumi one final supportive smile and left them to their own devices. He hurried out the hallway and office in order to avoid bumping in to any unwanted presences. Though, when he spotted his white Benz in the carpark, he walked over to find it was joined by an unlikely individual.

“Fancy seeing you here, my dear friend.”

Oikawa looked around in skepticism. “What, at my car? I could have you reported for stalkerism you know.”

Officer Bokuto waved his hand dismissively as he leaned against Oikawa’s car. “Whatever bro. Not like you’re the first to do that anyway.”

Oikawa’s eyebrows shot up. “Wait wha-“

“So, if you wanted to impress a certain photographer but he was really kinda mysterious, but in a good way, what would you do?” Officer Bokuto’s gaze slid over to Oikawa, one eyebrow poised upward in a sly manner. “Hypothetically speaking.”

Oikawa stared bluntly back. “Well have you ever considered the fact that the photographer might just not be your type at all?” He leered at the way the officer deflated. “Hypothetically speaking.”

Officer Bokuto puffed out his chest in determined defiance, a wild look in his eyes. “Well you don’t know until you try, right? And what if you just knew that the certain mysterious man was definitely your type and you really, really, really wanted to know how to win him over? Hypothetically speaking.”

Oikawa hummed in mock contemplation. “Well I know for a fact that the mysterious photographer has one turn-off and that’s whacky dudes with tacky hairdos and a ‘dad’ sense of humour. Not to mention the fact that he would never consider dating a policeman,” The look on poor Officer Bokuto’s face was golden and Oikawa couldn’t help but snort in his face. “Oh, hypothetically speaking of course.”

The officer frowned at Oikawa, jumping in to his personal space and speaking far too loudly. “Come on! Give me a break! What’s his name, huh? Tell me! I bet it’s something real exotic like Emmanuel, or Gustavus. He looks like he’d suit a foreign name. Is he single? Or is he taken? I bet it’s nothing serious. Is it serious? Wait, don’t tell me he’s married or something. What if he has a kid?! I don’t know if I could handle breaking a family apart.” He clutched insistently on to Oikawa’s arm and shook madly.
The reporter swore and yanked his almost-broken arm away. “Don’t touch me! My god, have some
dignity why don’t you.”

The officer blinked owlishly at him; his big, round eyes giving Oikawa the creeps. “You weren’t
exactly Mr. Coolhead in there either, you know. I’m pretty sure Iwaizumi just pitied you.”

Oikawa sniffed at the officer. “Hasn’t your mother taught you not to eavesdrop? Besides,” Oikawa
sighed dreamily. “Can you blame me? Everything about this guy is perfect. I mean, have you seen
those arms? I want to cuddle up against one whilst I sleep.”

Officer Bokuro scrunched his nose. “Bro that’s disgusting on so many levels.”

Oikawa glared at him and Officer Bokuto held his hands up in alarm. “I’m kidding! He’s.. a nice
fella. I guess.”

Oikawa examined his fingernails with unconcern. “Doesn’t matter, I’m not going to help you get
with Akaashi. He doesn’t deserve to be punished like that.”

Officer Bokuto lit up like a Christmas tree. “Akaashi?! What a nice name. I knew he’d have a nice
name. What’s his full name?”

Oikawa hummed nonchalantly. “Not telling you. Honestly, don’t even bother. You’re not his type.
It’s never going to work.”

Bokuto excitement melted in to a puddle of dejected gloom. Even his hair appeared to droop and he
nodded slowly, mouth shaped in to a little pout. "Okay then..." He slinked off, dragging his feet in a
pathetic manner.

Oikawa inwardly scorned himself for feeling sympathy. Of all people in the world he definitely
didn’t want to feel sorry for this wild-haired, hyperactive fool. He watched as the policeman melted
further in to the ground until he was practically crawling on all fours, his hunched shoulders shaking
as though he was crying. The reporter sighed and thought ‘I’m going to regret this’.

“He likes competency. Someone who knows what they’re doing.”

Oikawa had never seen someone run so fast and yelped when Officer Bokuto backtracked and was
right up in his face within a millisecond. His golden eyes shone as he prompted him excitedly.
“Yeah?! Competency? I can be pretty competent! What else?”

Oikawa shoved his face away and hmph-ed at the man teetering on the spot. “Don’t do that. He likes
his personal space so you need to stop this whole sharing-the-other’s-air nonsense. Be respectful of
his profession. Don’t take his words literally all the time; he has a dry sense of humour and 90% of
the stuff he says is sarcasm. And don’t piss him off.”

Bokuto frowned in confusion. “Why? What happens if you piss him o-“. Oikawa shook his head,
regarding him with grave expression.

“Just don’t.”

Officer Bokuto nodded fervently. “Okay, don’t piss him off. Gotcha,” he paused, regarding Oikawa
with a tilted head. “You know, under that feisty exterior you’re not half bad.”

Oikawa sniffed at the odd compliment. “Of course, I’m one of the nicest people you’ll ever meet.
You may not know this but at my work, everyone loves me.”
Bokuto hummed as he examined Oikawa, tilting his head to the right. “If you wanna get with Wazzy you gotta get rid of all that fake niceness though. He’s quick to catch that.”

Officer Bokuto strolled off, leaving Oikawa surprised as ever. ‘Guess he’s not as clueless as I thought’ he speculated as he stood alone in the carpark.

Chapter End Notes

Tune in next update for more Oikawa and Iwaizumi interactions (or more of Oikawa’s secret yearning)

Feedback/questions/comments are welcome - thank you for reading!
Iwaizumi felt restless. It was late evening and he remained at his desk, flipping through a file of yet another mugging case. These incidents were becoming increasingly frequent which was definitely worrisome. And stressful. He let out a prolonged sigh and rubbed his temples. He hadn’t gone home in over eighteen hours but there was far too much to do. He opened his draw and pulled out several other files. There were altogether seven similar cases, all within the past two months. Iwaizumi had gone through each file, read and re-read every detail, analysed the facts, examined the backgrounds of the victims, searching for any links between the individuals. But nothing seemed to be match up. The timing and locations were inconsistent, the items stolen varied in value, and the victims were of contrasting age groups, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic status. There didn’t appear to be a particular framework of an ideal victim. Iwaizumi’s gaze wandered from one report to the next. ‘An elderly woman, a drunk young man, a high school student.’ He mulled over the various victims and wondered ‘perhaps it is a random act’. His mind drifted towards the most recent: the news reporter. ‘Oikawa Tooru.’ Iwaizumi thought to himself as he flipped through the case file. Iwaizumi was confused. Curious, even. One moment he’s helping the citizen, the next he’s agreed to meet them for a news interview, something he absolutely despises. Okay, don’t get him wrong. It’s not that he hates it, moreso that he dreads them. There was something about the way reporters chewed up your words and spat them out in a manner which was completely the opposite of what you had intended. But this one seemed different. The way his eyes shone in a daring manner when he talked about his profession still irked Iwaizumi deeply. He was an interesting individual.

Iwaizumi’s thoughts were interrupted by a tentative knock on the door. He glanced up from his papers and called “the door’s open.”

The door creaked open and a familiar face peeked in. “How come you’re still here? Your shift finished over three hours ago.”

Iwaizumi offered a tired smile at the concerned individual. “Daichi. I’m just finishing off some stuff then I’ll go.”

The other frowned at his response and shook his head disapprovingly. “You said that last shift.” ‘Ah, caught out.’ Iwaizumi grinned and leaned back.

“Okay, you got me.”

Officer Daichi opened his mouth but suddenly bowed sharply. Another individual’s head popped in and he blinked at Iwaizumi.

“Wazzy is still here? You should go home already.”

Iwaizumi sighed and reached for his jacket. “Alright, alright. I’m leaving. And Lev, you better get off Daichi because he looks like he’s pretty close to beating you black and blue.”
The officer beamed before jumping back to avoid a fist swinging at him. Daichi scowled, nursing his shoulders. The job aged Iwaizumi twice as fast as any other job but he enjoyed the company he had. He threw his keys to Daichi, bid farewell, and begrudgingly made his way home.

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Iwaizumi fumbled with the keys before finally unlocking the front door. His apartment house was in serious need of a maintenance. The living room was currently covered with scattered files and half-finished reports. Clothes were left in a rumpled pile by the couch from the days he had to rush due to random calls from work and he hadn’t had time to get around to picking them up. Iwaizumi dreaded the state of the kitchen. He sighed and kicked off his shoes. The officer trudged to the fridge, loosening his tie half-heartedly as he rummaged through and eventually deciding on a canned beer. ‘I deserve this one’ he self-assured and made his way to his bedroom. Flopping down on his bed, Iwaizumi stared at the ceiling nursing the cold beer on his stomach. Times like this he dreaded. Being alone in his apartment with nothing to occupy him but his mind. Iwaizumi had long lost contact with his friends from the academy and his busy working lifestyle kept him from maintaining new relationships. He blinked up at blank creamy ceiling, fingers fidgeting around the can. Iwaizumi simply felt restless. The officer took a long swig of the cold drink before reaching for his mobile. He flipped it open and to his dismay found no missed calls from work. ‘Daichi is too good at his job’ he thought glumly. If it had been Kuroo or Bokuto in charge, he’d have received at least ten missed calls by now. He scrolled through his contacts, contemplating whether or not to call for any updates. The name Oikawa Tooru had popped up catching his eye. Iwaizumi paused, thumb hovering over the screen before continuing to scroll down. He took several gulps from the can before sighing out loud. His mind flittered back to the mugging cases. Iwaizumi memorised everything on those files, front to back. ‘I’m missing something’ he frowned. He knew he was going to have little sleep tonight. Hesitating once more, he scrolled back up, resting this finger over the contact. Without thinking too much he clicked the dial button. The ringing echoed throughout his bedroom and he lay there patiently. The reporter’s face imprinted itself in his mind. He had large, caramel-brown eyes, the kind that girls no undoubtedly swooned over. Everything about him was sharp, from his suit to his business grin. It only seems appropriate now to see him as a reporter. Then there was his soft side. The way he smiled at Iwaizumi like they shared a personal secret. Iwaizumi remembered the way those eyes would almost twinkle when he leaned over to offer a handshake. ‘Oikawa Tooru seems like a decent person’ Iwaizumi contemplated.

“Kageyama! Get the hell away from that compu-Who is this? I’m extremely busy so this better be good.”

Iwaizumi blinked at the unexpectedly snappy tone on the other line. “Uh, sorry I think I might have the wrong number” he said. There was a brief pause before the phone crackled lightly.

“Iwaizumi! Yes, hi. You have the right number. Sorry, I was just caught up with work. How are you?” Iwaizumi almost wanted to scoff at the overly-bubbly tone of the reporter.

“Who knew you’d be so grumpy over work?” he teased. He paused to take another swig from the can. “I can call you back another time if you’d li-“

“No!” the phone called out. “No. I’m free to talk. Why’d you call?”

Why did he call indeed. Iwaizumi frowned at the ceiling as he contemplated. His mind was now
entering the slightly hazy stage and he carefully placed the beer on the bedside table. ‘I want a
distraction’. “Are you free to do the interview anytime soon?” he asked.

The response was instantaneous. “Yes! I am free anytime soon. I mean, any time. Tomorrow any
good for you?”

“Yes. I’m free -“ he paused to contemplate. “tomorrow morning?”

“Perfect. I know a nice café we can meet at, not far from your work. I’ll text you the address if you’d
like.”

Iwaizumi agreed.

“Great, I’ll send it straight after,” There was a brief pause before he heard a light murmur. “Look
forward to seeing you tomorrow. Talk soon.”

The call ended and after a few seconds his phone flashed with details of the address. Iwaizumi
placed his phone beside him and reached for his beer. He continued to lie there, fingers drumming on
the can as he decided he’d stop by work in the morning before going to the café. The inner unease
had subsided a little and the officer finished the rest of the beer in one swig, mind now foggy and
null.

∞

When Iwaizumi entered the small café he spotted the reporter sitting alone in a far corner. He was
learning against the chair, eyes focused down at the papers sprawled on the desk. He was dressed
sharply in a well-fitted suit and Iwaizumi suddenly felt conscious in his very casual attire. As he
approached he noticed Oikawa’s mouth moving slightly, as though in a slight murmur. He appeared
to be reading to himself. His voice trailed off when he heard Iwaizumi passing a nearby table to get
to him. He was staring at the officer as if he’d seen a ghost.

“Uh, hi,” Iwaizumi said awkwardly. Oikawa’s gaze moved up and down from his hair to jacket, then
to his dark sneakers and he felt his insides tweak in discomfort. They rose, finally meeting his eyes.

Oikawa smiled out the side of his mouth. “Hello,” he said. Iwaizumi sat opposite of Oikawa and
glanced around. The café was fairly cosy with only a few customers. The faint hum of jazz flowed
through the store, though did little to soothe the restlessness coiling within him. The reporter seemed
to notice as he pushed forward the drinks menu. “Pick a drink, I’ve already ordered.”

Iwaizumi allowed himself to be distracted as he focused on the list of beverages, most of whom he’d
never heard it. “Strong black,” he called out to a nearby waitress. Oikawa blinked in surprise.

“A strong coffee. How suiting,” he chuckled. Iwaizumi felt himself warm in embarrassment and
awkwardness. Was that meant to be a compliment?

“Thanks, I guess,” he muttered. “Nice suit. Looks good,” Iwaizumi only realised the implications of
his words after as he fumbled to correct himself. But his words were caught in his throat when he
looked up to find the reporter staring back wide-eyed. His large doe-ful eyes shone as he smiled in an
almost shy manner.

“Thank you,” he reached behind him, pulling out a small black device and placed it on the desk. “A
recorder just for work regulations,” he assured. Iwaizumi eyed it, nodding slowly. The reporter leaned back grinning. It felt like the moment of judgment and Iwaizumi was on the receiving end of the interrogation table. For a minute neither spoke, observing one another in silence.

“One black coffee,” Iwaizumi jolted at the sudden voice and sheepishly allowed the waitress to place it on the table. Oikawa huffed in amusement as he accepted his iced beverage flashing the waitress a charming smile which left her blushing like a dame. Now resting his cheek on his palm, the reporter eyed the officer once more before letting out a small chuckle.

Iwaizumi felt his insides churn at the possibility of the reporter laughing at him and he briskly asked “what is it?” The reporter shook his head lifting his cup to his mouth which did little to mask his smile.

“Just thinking about how odd it is meeting you like this. I never thought I’d be happy that I got mugged.”

The officer frowned in confusion. “You shouldn’t be happy you got mugged,” Oikawa nodded slowly, remnants of a smile still lingering.

“Yes,” he murmured. “I shouldn’t.” There was another long pause of complete silence if not for the gentle purr of jazz. The reporter coughed and rubbed his palms together. “Alright, I’m going to now record but just imagine it as another casual conversation amongst two friends,” he locked eyes with the officer and he nodded in affirmation.

Click.

Oikawa leaned back once more and spoke in a clear, confident voice. It contrasted to the calm, soothing tone he used before. “This is Oikawa Tooru speaking as a reporter on behalf on the AobaJousai news industry interviewing Officer Iwaizumi in regards to the Karasuno car rescue on the 25th of March. How are you doing?”

“I’m doing fine, thanks.”

Oikawa smiled. “That’s great. So tell me, how did this whole situation come about?”

Iwaizumi leaned back and frowned in concentration. “Well, I suppose it started last week with…”

The two carried their casual back and forth exchange of conversation, mostly consisting of Oikawa carrying the flow of the chatter as Iwaizumi felt himself often fumbling with his words. Oikawa gradually melted to a soothing, soft tone which comforted Iwaizumi and it was rather frightening how easily he could coax the words and thoughts out of his mind. Before he knew it, two hours had passed and finally Oikawa sat back.

“So, is there anything interesting you’re currently working on?”

Iwaizumi blinked. “Anything interesting? What do you mean?” Oikawa waved dismissively as he waved the waitress over for a refill. “Any new cases you’re working on?”

Iwaizumi went silent as he stared down at his cold half-drunk coffee. “I’m working on the mugging cases you’re involved in,” he finally murmured. That caused the reporter to falter. Oikawa tilted his head to the right as he regarded Iwaizumi.

“And how’s that going so far?”

The officer tightened his grip on the mug and he couldn’t bring himself to look at Oikawa. The
reporter watched Iwaizumi carefully.

“You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to.”

Iwaizumi shook his head. “I promised I’d give you any updates on the offender. Problem is we don’t have any,” he sighed. “You’re not the first this has happened to,” He felt his cheeks redden slightly in shameful humiliation. This was the part he hated. It was almost as though his entire profession was at judgment.

The reporter seemed to understand as he reached over and clicked the recording device off. “We all have days where we feel like we’re in a rut. It’s nothing to be ashamed of,” Oikawa gave Iwaizumi a sympathetic, knowing smile.

Something flittered in his chest and the officer brushed it aside. “I just,” he paused to swallow down the heavy lump in his throat. “I feel like I’ve looked at it from every possible scenario but just when I think I’ve got it, he strikes again in a way which completely contradicts everything I’ve been working on.”

Oikawa considered Iwaizumi. “If you don’t mind me asking, have you been getting enough sleep?”

The question caught Iwaizumi off-guard. “Excuse me?” he blinked. “Getting enough sleep?”

The reporter chuckled. “Yeah, Iwaizumi, enough sleep. Have you? I often find when I’m stuck on a report or in the midst of trying to balance everything, sometimes all I need is a good sleep. Even if it’s not the most convenient of times. It honestly helps.”

Iwaizumi frowned, staring down at his coffee. His face was reflected back in a distorted manner. “I can’t sleep knowing the case is on the back of my mind,” There was a long pause and the officer glanced up to find Oikawa staring with a half-lid gaze.

“You know, despite our differences, we’re actually quite similar in various aspects. We demand outcome. Perhaps it’s in our nature to try and take leadership. However,” The reporter looked down, focused on stirring his iced-drink. “You don’t have to take responsibility for everything, you know. There are plenty of other officers in the office who I’m sure would offer a shoulder for you to lean on,” Oikawa’s expression scrunched in slight distaste as he added “well, some of them anyway.”

Iwaizumi scoffed. “Bokuto and Kuroo can be a handful, but they’re also great assets to the team. They definitely have their strengths and weaknesses. And when you least expect it they can do wonders.”

The reporter hummed nonchalantly, not quite completely masking his skepticism. “More like you whipping them in to shape,” he grinned at the officer. A strip of sunlight rested on the left of his face, illuminating one eye. It was fixed on Iwaizumi’s face, a light, melted caramely-hue and up this close the officer noted it had light specks of brown circling within the iris which he hadn’t noticed before.

“Iwaizumi?” the reporter had lost his grin, now looking at him with concern. “There something wro-“

“Thank you,” Iwaizumi blurted. “For listening.”

Oikawa blinked before flashing a cheeky grin. “Listening is my part of my job, no problem. Who knew there was some mush hiding under that tough exterior” Iwaizumi snorted and gave the reporter a light shove.

“Shut up. No need to get all cocky,” he retorted, feeling a sense of comfort for the first time in
weeks. He found himself grinning back and reached to take a sip of his cooled coffee. The reporter stared before leaning in.

“We should hang out again.”

Iwaizumi frowned at the reporter. Oikawa was offering a sugar-sweet smile, cheek resting against one palm. The officer started. “You said one interv-“

“As friends.”

Iwaizumi blinked. ‘Friends.’ It had been a long time since someone offered to be ‘friends’ and for a split moment he felt like a child again. Before he knew it, his mouth was running on its own. “Sure. I guess we can hang out,” Oikawa’s smile grew and he leaned back looking very pleased.

“Perfect! You seem like a cool guy so I’m sure we’ll get along. Oh, and I hope you like movies because there’s this awesome alien film which has come out just this we-“ he paused, frowning as he reached in to his pocket. Oikawa’s expression twisted in to irritation as he answered his phone. “What is it?” he asked, tone suddenly gone cold. His brows furrowed in confusion as he listened. “What? Peacock? What the hell are you on ab- wait. No,” he bolted upright. “No, no, no! Do not let them in. Under no circumstances are they allowed to ente- What do you mean Karen let them in?! Kageyama, I swear to god sometimes I ju-“ Oikawa paused to let out a huge sigh and flashing Iwaizumi an apologetic look. “Looks like we’re going to have to cut this short, sorry.”

Iwaizumi shrugged dismissively as he waved the waitress over to pay. “That’s alright, I need to get back to the office anyway.”

Oikawa shook his head, giving Iwaizumi a disgruntled look. “Actually, I’d appreciate if you stopped by my work first. You need to pick up a few things.”

Iwaizumi had briefly entered the office to let them know he was going to attend an interview and would be in later than usual. “You’re in charge and make sure these two don’t get too distracted,” he called as he tossed the office keys to Daichi and made his way out.

Daichi gave a brief nod and sat back down. “Since when did Iwaizumi take interviews?” The officer frowned as he faced the other two. “I’m presuming it must be pretty important.”

Officer Kuroo spun his chair lazily as he stared at the ceiling. “He’s got an interview with the peacock.”

Bokuto sat up, expression full of hope. “K-cat, you reckon Akaashi is going to be there too? At the interview? I should’ve offered to go with Wazzy.”

Daichi sighed, swiveling his chair to his desk. “Peacock? You know what, I’m not even going to bother asking,” he was suddenly jerked back and the chair creaked loudly from the effort. He frowned at the two large cat-like eyes peering down.

“His name is Oikawa Tooru but we like to call him peacock.” Lev grinned. Daichi swatted him away as he leaned forward to focus on his report.
Officer Bokuto faced Kuroo. “Akaashi wouldn’t be at the interview, right? Because technically he’s not a reporter. He does all the pictures and stuff,” He groaned loudly, ruffling his own hair in slight frustration. “I wish I learned photography! I would be so much more confident, walking up to him like ‘yo baby, check out all this salient in this picture’ and he’d be so impressed I bet he would leap in to my arms.

Kuroo nodded. “Makin’ the first move. Impressive.”

Daichi sighed, leaning back and rolling his sore shoulders. “Bokuto, I sympathise with you but if you mention that ‘Akaashi’ one more time I might just snap.”

Bokuto swiveled his chair, staring widely up at Daichi. “What do you think? Do you reckon I should take photography classes? But that’s so expensive and I still haven’t paid Kuroo back for last week’s pizza,” he dragged his chair toward Officer Daichi. “Between you and Suga, who swept who off their feet? Who made the first move?”

Daichi’s cheeks were dusted a faint hue of pink. “Suga did,” he coughed sheepishly.

Kuroo blinked. “Suga swept you off your feet?”

“No! No one swept anyone off their feet,” Daichi snapped, face now turning a delightful shade of red. Bokuto placed both hands on either side of his shoulders, regarding him with an air of unusual seriousness. “Daichi. Out of the four of us in this office, you are the only one with a successful relationship.”

Lev frowned. “What about me?”

Officer Bokuto didn’t take his eyes from Daichi’s face as he called out “Lev, Yaku beats your ass more often than you two cuddle. Yours doesn’t count,” He tightened his grip as Daichi stared back in an apathetic manner. “Daichi, my good man. I demand direct honesty and respect your judgement. So, tell me,” he leaned in to whisper. “Do you think it’ll work between me and Akaashi? Should I go for it?”

Daichi frowned. “Well, I mean from what you guys have said, he doesn’t exactly sound very receptive of your advances. So, honestly? I don’t think you should keep trying.”

Bokuto regarded him seriously before nodding and dropping his arms. “Thank you Daichi, you’re right. I should at least get to know him further so we can build our relationship.”

Daichi stared. “Your selective hearing never ceases to amaze me,” he shook his head. “If you’re so insistent then why don’t you make the first move? Does he even know your name? Maybe you should offer to hang out someplace and see where it goes from there.”

Bokuto lit up as he spun around to his bed-headed friend. “You hear that Kuroo? Daichi reckons we should go meet Akaashi. We could surprise visit him at his work!”

“Okay, that wasn’t even close. I definitely did not sa-“

Kuroo leapt up. “A surprise visit sounds perfect. In fact, we should go now when Iwaizumi’s not here. I think I’m in need of some fresh air too.”

Daichi looked a mixture of alarm and annoyance. “No, definitely not. Don’t do tha-“

Bokuto frowned rubbing his chin thoughtfully. “I don’t know, man. Don’t you reckon that’s abit too forward?” The raven-haired officer stared blankly. “Nope.”
“Alright then, let’s get this show on the road!” Officer Bokuto had a wild look in his eyes as he cracked his knuckles. “We’re on a love mission.”

Daichi sighed heavily muttering to himself why he even bothered. Lev perked up. “Can I join?”

Kuroo swung the car keys on his finger grinning. “Sorry Lev, but this is a matter for the big boys. You stay here with Papa Policeman over here,” Lev drooped, placing his chin on the desk in a sullen manner. Daichi eyed the two. “Iwaizumi put me in charge. You can’t just walk out now.”

Kuroo turned to him, blinking widely with the disturbing demeanor of a school girl. “Oh no? But we can just say we’re using our lunch break now. Or who knows, Iwaizumi might find out about the donut stash hiding under your desk.”

Daichi’s expression darkened significantly. “Are you the one that’s been eating all my donuts?”

That wiped the grin off Kuroo’s face as he shook his head madly. “No, it was Lev.” He leapt over the reception desk in a fluid motion and bolted. “Let’s go B-dawgs,” Bokuto offered a mock salute and tripped over the desk, knocking a few pens and a pile of papers. “I owe you one D-drizzle!”

Daichi sighed, gingerly rubbing his temples. His mood turned murderously foul when he stood over Lev. “So. You ate my donuts?” Lev gulped.

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The building was huge. The police car screeched to a halt nearby and Kuroo leaned to peer at it. “Well, this it is. Man, that thing must have at least fifty stories,” He received no reply and turned to find Bokuto squirming in his seat, thumbs fiddling as he peered out aswell.

“Maybe this isn’t such a good idea,” he blurted, eyeing the building. “What if he’s not there? Or worse, what if he is? I don’t know what I’d say.”

Officer Kuroo stared at his flustered friend. “What the hell are you on about? This is definitely a good idea, you said so yourself.” He squeezed his friend’s shoulder and offered an enthusiastic grin. “Besides, Peacock won’t be there to interfere since he’s with Iwaizumi right now. You got all the time in the world. I’m going to be right there with you, buddy.” The officer turned to unclick his seatbelt. “Let’s do this, B-dawgs.”

Officer Bokuto let out a prolonged breath, shaking the nerves out of his hands. “Yeah.. yeah, yeah! Alright, I got this! You and me, K-cat, we got this.”

Both officers exited the vehicle and stood side by side in front of the building. It loomed over, sunlight refracting the tinted windows like a glossy statue. Officer Bokuto scrutinised the modern architecture. “Hmm. Yeah, nah. Maybe tomorrow. I’ll come back tomorrow.” he let out a strangled choke as the other officer yanked him in to a painful chokehold and entered the building.

The office was significantly cooler, the faint hum of the air conditioner running. Their shoes clicked against the marble-tiled floor as they walked in and the two stared around at the large space. Everything was so modern. “Can I help you?” They jumped at the sudden voice and spun around. A head peeked over the reception desk and both officers glanced at one another.

“We’re here for Oika.”
"34th floor," She pointed to the elevators on her right. "He left earlier but I don’t think he’s returned yet. If you’d like I can message him to notify-"

"No!"

The receptionist jumped at the sudden scream. Officer Kuroo slowly turned his head toward Bokuto who appeared to be sweating a flood despite the blasting power of the air conditioner. He turned to flash the now-suspicious receptionist a reassuring grin. "We’re good. Thank you."

They waved farewell before scurrying in to the elevator. Kuroo frowned at the hyperventilating officer. “Dude, seriously relax. You almost gave the poor lady a heart attack.”

Bokuto’s golden eyes darted about, his breath slightly ragged. “I don’t think I can do this anymore. Let’s just go back. I think I might puke. What if I puke on him? Imagine telling our kids that’s how I met woo-ed their father. I puked on him.”

Kuroo scrunched his nose. “Okay, first, stop saying puke. Second, if you’re that keen you’re already talking about kids then you and I both know you’re not going to let this go. So you go in there and give it a shot. And if it doesn’t work out? Then I’ll go buy you a donut for your bravery. I’ll even get you the ones with the pink sprinkles because I know how much you like them and don’t even try to deny it.” There was a light ping! and they both glanced up at the digits which flashed 34. “This is it,” Kuroo murmured. “The moment of truth,” He raised his hand in front of his friend and clenched it in to a fist. The other let out a long, shaky breath before bumping it back.

The moment the doors opened, it was utter chaos. They were met with the endless ringing of phones, people bustling about, along with the fact that everyone was yelling over each other. Officer Bokuto leaned in toward Kuroo as he whispered. "Oh my god... I think.. Are they actually all working?" The two stared at the sight in amazement.

"Are you visitors?" They blinked and stared at a lanky boy with dark raven hair holding a tray of instant coffees. Unlike the others, he wasn’t dressed in a suit, but a sweater and jeans. He had a laminated badge which was labelled ‘INTERN’. The boy stared back expectantly. Officer Kuroo leaned in with an attempt of a sincere smile. “We’re friends of the peacock- I mean, Oikawa.”

The intern looked surprised but nodded and offered them a drink. He walked past to offer a drink to the two women sitting at reception who coo-ed at how ‘kind and cute’ he was. The intern offered a terribly forced smile before hurrying his way back in to the chaotic crowd.

Officer Kuroo smoothed his ruffled mess of a hairdo and leaned his arm against the reception desk. He flashed the two a snarky grin, winking slowly. “Well, hello ladies,” Little did he realise with his atrociously wild fringe covering one eye, he simply appeared to be blinking incredibly slowly. The two receptionists glanced at one another before making poor excuses of “I’m going to refill my coffee” and “I need to photocopy this file again” and hurrying away. Officer Kuroo chuckled to himself and leaned back, stretching languidly. “Yup, I still got it.” He received three light punches before Bokuto yanked him in by his shirt.

“There he is!” Bokuto whispered fervently. Kuroo had no idea how he pinpointed him out from the bustling office but there he was. Akaashi was dressed smartly, in a white buttoned shirt and sharp grey suit trousers. His sleeves were half rolled up and not a single scratch on his polished shoes. He was leaning against a vacant desk and appeared to be preoccupied, eyebrows etched as he was carefully examining several laminated photos.

Bokuto was ogling him with wide eyes and Kuroo gave an exasperate sigh. “This is it, buddy. Now’s your chance. Go!” he gave a rough shove and Officer Bokuto stumbled forward. He tottered
about, edging closer to the photographer. Akaashi had yet to notice him. The officer turned to Kuroo who flashed him a two thumbs up. Bokuto grinned hesitantly before approaching Akaashi. ‘He’s going to lose his cool’ Kuroo thought as he turned to the check if the ladies at reception has returned. Only to jolt back as he almost collided in to someone. “Woah, woah, watch where you’re going. That coffee looks pretty hot.”

The shorter individual murmured an apologies as he nursed the mug with his left hand. His right was clutched on to his phone, fingers tapping expertly on the screen. Kuroo’s gaze flickered down. His hair certainly stood out and the officer stared the dark roots which contrasted to the shocking blonde dyed hair. He continued on, wandering throughout the office. The other members of the office must’ve been used to this behavior as they automatically moved about to part out of his way. However, one bustled through, colliding with the individual. “Watch out, Kenma!” He, or Kenma, took a hesitant step back, clutching his phone to his chest. ‘Cute’ Kuroo thought as he eyed the individual who blinked out of his trance-like state. His eyes met Kuroo’s for a brief moment. The officer felt his heart thrum. Kenma’s eyes were beautiful. Large, syrup-gold eyes regarded him before focusing on his mobile once more.

Kenma was so close to finishing off the 342nd level of Candy Crush. He only needed three striped candies and he could pass. He swiped the green jellies and frowned when it burst and a red fell in to its place. ‘Ah. So close.’

“What are you doing?”

Kenma jumped. A police officer with a wild, messy hair was standing next to him, holding his drink and staring down at him.

“What are you playing?”

“Nothing,” Kenma murmured. He eyed the officer but noted he didn't have a 'GUEST' badge on. 'Perhaps he's here for someone'.

“It’s a nice office you guys got here. Way different to the stuff I’m used to,” the tall officer hummed. Kenma nodded slowly, unsure of what to say. They stood there for several awkward moments, neither saying a word whilst the office was in complete motion. The officer appeared nonplussed by his antisocial behavior. If anything, he seemed rather content to stand beside him and stare blatantly. Kenma exited the game and tapped his mobile, checking for any messages, emails, notifications, anything to excuse himself from the daunting situation he was held in. A shadow loomed over his phone screen and he jolted at the slight huff of breath against his ear. “Oh, neat. Never seen a phone like that before. It’s so high tech.”

The shorter male took several brisk steps to the right, the hairs on the back of his neck already risen. “I guess,” This guy was giving him the creeps, towering over with a frightening leer painted on his face. Those half-lid eyes examining his every move with such intensity it was extremely unnerving and far too confronting for his comfort. Kenma took another hesitant step back, eyes flickering anywhere but at the officer. “I’m going to go n-”

“Are you a reporter aswell?”

Kenma blinked at the officer. Kuroo tilted his head to the left causing the tangle mop of hair to fluff about. “Though, I can’t see someone like you working with the peacock.” The officer placed his left index finger over his lips in a contemplative manner. “Perhaps a technical guy? Judging by your phone you must be tech-savvy.”
Kenma couldn’t but think ‘his voice is nice’ and he tightened his grip on his phone. “Technical media producer. Mainly for the news website.”

The officer burst in to a haughty grin. “I knew it! I saw you and knew straight away you'd good with all that stuff,” he reached in to his back pocket and pulled out his mobile. “Check out my bad boy. Out of all my other phones, this has lasted the longest. I think I’ve dropped it about sixteen times now.”

Kenma couldn’t quite hide his look of disdain as he eyed the old brick of a phone. “It looks… ancient.”

The officer burst out laughing, shaking his head as he tucked his phone away. “Very ancient indeed,” he was watching Kenma again with a lazy grin on his face.

Kenma’s gaze flittered about before resting over the officer’s shoulder. “Your friend looks like he’s about to cry.”

Kuroo glanced behind to find Bokuto and the photographer near the reception desk. It was not a pretty sight. The other officer did indeed look very flustered as he flailed his arms about, face bright red. ‘Come on, B-dawgs’ Kuroo inwardly frowned. He made move to come rescue his bumbling friend. Then the unexpected happened. The photographer smiled. Officer Bokuto appeared just as surprised before he puffed his chest out in a sudden burst of confidence. The other shook his head but it was unmistakable. He was definitely smiling. Kuroo turned back with a satisfied grin to find the other already gone. He must’ve skulked off when he was distracted. ‘Sneaky’ he thought with intrigued amusement. Officer Kuroo was far too occupied by the large, golden eyes imprinted in his mind to notice the shadow looming over him from behind.

Chapter End Notes

Adding another side shipping in to this pot of mess - a little bit of kuroo x kenma (but only if you squint very hard)
Hope you enjoyed and stay tuned!
Feedback/criticisms/comments welcome
This was it. The moment of truth. Life and death. There was no turning back down. Bokuto’s heart hammered as he took a step closer toward Akaashi. Every step felt like a chore. He was about a meter away now and from here he could make out each individual eyelash, quivering shyly as the photographer shifted his gaze from one still to another. Bokuto felt his stomach lurch. ‘Almighty God, if you really do exist and you’re out there watching over me, please give me the strength not to throw up on your greatest creation’ he prayed as he took another step. His heart hadn’t pounded this hard since the theft incident at the lingerie store. He had had to chase the underwear thief out the department, screaming “sir, drop those panties or you’re in serious trouble!” ‘Focus Bokuto, focus’ he inwardly scolded. He was now standing in front of Akaashi and ‘Oh my god. He’s even prettier up close’. Officer Bokuto was breathing hard, hardly able to refrain himself from reaching out and touching that smooth face. Akaashi had yet to notice him, which Bokuto decided wasn’t due to rude manners but the deafening noise of the office which enveloped them. He could barely hear his own thoughts over the loud raucous intensities now bordering intolerable. But nothing could stop him now; not when he’s made it this far. ‘This is it’. This was his one chance. Bokuto took a cautious breath. Now or never.

“It's nice to meet you!” he screamed.

The photographer jolted in surprise, dropping a few pictures. “What the hell,” he murmured, wide-eyed. He stared at Bokuto as if he’d grown a third head. The officer felt heat bloom across his entire face as he leapt down to pick up the pictures.

“Sorry, sorry, sorry! It’s just so loud in here so I thought I had to speak up for you to hear me,” he hung his head meekly and offered the pictures back. Akaashi continued to stare deadpanned at the officer and Bokuto felt his heart pound, stress levels now skyrocketing. “So, uh…” he coughed soundly, hands tucked obediently behind his back.

Akaashi slowly reached over and accepted the photos, gripping them with his mere fingertips as though they had been tainted by Bokuto’s contact. He eyed the sweating officer as he carefully placed the photos on the desk. “Can I help you with anything.. or..?”

Bokuto’s stomach flipped and he gulped. “Uh, well…” He looked around, licking his dry lips. ‘Oh god, oh god’ Bokuto inwardly heaved. He hadn't thought this far. Laying his eyes upon the pretty specimen of a human being, his brain had depleted and his mouth withered in on itself. Akaashi leaned against the table and stared expectantly. The palms of his hands now rested against the table ledge whilst he continued to watch as though he had all the time in the world to witness Bokuto enter panic mode and have a humiliating meltdown. This was a nightmare becoming reality. Bokuto’s eyes darted about frantically. There was no sight of Kuroo either to save his poor, sorry ass.

“Are you looking for Oikawa?”

Bokuto snapped his head up. “Oikawa.. The reporter? Wait, why Oikawa? Do you know who I
am?"

The photographer nodded slowly. “Well, yes. I recognise you.”

The officer’s heart swelled as he leaned in close and asked in a near whisper. “You do?”

The photographer tilted his head, face etched in to a cute expression of concentration. “Yes. You’re the man at the police department. The one that choked on his donut.” Before Bokuto could respond, he was reaching for his mobile. “I can call him to confirm where he is if you s-“

“I’m not looking for Peacock!” The officer exclaimed, voice shrill and Akaashi frowned in confusion. This was definitely not a good idea and he felt the waves of anxiety pouring over him. Bokuto was now officially entering meltdown mode. He never was good at holding long conversations and his knees were now wobbling slightly. His gaze dropped at the pictures.

Akaashi crossed his arms. “Okay… Then why did y-“

“I love photos,” Officer Bokuto blurted. Akaashi blinked at him. Bokuto offered a helpless grin. “Yeah! I love how…” he looked around the photos, gesturing weakly at them. “I mean, the… salient… so nice.” There was a long pause and he couldn’t bear to look at Akaashi.

“So, you’re a fan of photos..” Akaashi repeated slowly. He looked over the officer’s shoulder. ‘Probably going to call for security’ Bokuto thought in alarm.

The photographer’s gaze was focused elsewhere as he murmured distractedly. “Uh, anything.. that grabs your attention about photos or-“

“Okay!” Bokuto screamed out, waving his arms. “I’m sorry! I lied! I don’t love photos. I mean, they’re nice but I don’t love them! I don’t even know what salient means,” he blurted. Akaashi blinked at him. The office wheezed and puffed as he flittered about in distraught. ‘Where’s Kuroo when you need him the most?!’ The taller man appeared to have slinked off elsewhere, leaving Bokuto to receive the full brunt of the rejection. He stared at that pretty mouth, before noticing the frown had gone. The corners of his mouth tilted upwards in a lazy manner and his mind whirred slowly, processing this new information. Then it clicked. Akaashi was smiling.

It was almost coy the way he smiled so gently and Bokuto couldn’t help but stare and babble “wow, you have a cute smile!” It took almost his entire will not to throw up with his heart suddenly deciding it would be wise to get caught up in his throat. His smile was even better than he could have ever imagined.

This seemed to amuse Akaashi even further as he continued to smile at Bokuto. “You’re too honest. Strange, I’ll admit, but honest. That’s good.”

‘Good.’ Bokuto repeated in his mind. His heart was now on the verge of exploding. He could hardly contain his excitement. “Yeah! I’m an honest guy. I’ll always be honest! To you,” He inspected Akaashi’s sharp eyes, taking in to note the way the corners crinkled lightly in faint amusement. Bokuto also noticed he had leaned in far too close, face only a few centimeters shy of the other’s and took a swift step back. ‘Personal space.’ He reminded himself. The other was shaking his head, the charming smile now hidden. Wow. What a pretty face. Bokuto didn’t even care about his mess-up earlier because it was okay. Akaashi said it was ‘good’ and he supposed that was, well, good. Officer Bokuto felt a surge of confidence as he puffed out his chest. “I have come here to let you know my name is Bokuto. Koutarou Bokuto! And I need to know your full name.”

The photographer glanced up. “Akaashi Keiji. Was there anything else you ‘needed to know’?”
Officer Bokuto hummed in consideration, oblivious to the sarcastic, teasing tone of the other. “Yes, wanna hang out some time?” However, the other didn’t reply.

The photographer’s gaze was focused over his shoulder once more and Bokuto couldn’t help but wonder if there was something wrong. Akaashi’s gaze slid back with a raised eyebrow. He spoke out. “Oikawa’s client is here. Your colleague. He doesn’t look too pleased though. Just a head’s up,”

Bokuto frowned in confusion. “My colleag-“ he gasped loudly. “Wazzy? Is Wazzy here?!“ He did a discreet peek over his shoulder and yep, there he was. And Akaashi’s comment was an understatement. Officer Iwaizumi wasn’t just unpleased, he looked murderous. The reporter was situated by his side, though looking more pleased if anything, often stealing secret glances at the grave-looking man. Bokuto spun around, facing the photographer. “Oh shit, oh shit. Has he noticed me yet? You reckon he’ll leave if I just hide here?”

Akaashi tilted his head. “Well, you’re not exactly blending in with your uniform but no, he hasn’t noticed you yet. He’s found your friend though,” Akaashi reached over, taking a short sip from his coffee mug. “Ah, nevermind. He’s spotted you. He’s coming over.”

Bokuto felt the hair on the back of his neck rise. “Ok, ok, ok.. Uh, oh god. Is he still really mad? On a scale of 1-10 how mad does he look?”

Akaashi squinted slightly. “Looks pretty mad to me. Probably a solid 8 or so. Did you do something wrong, Bokuto san?”

The officer felt his insides flutter. ‘He called me Bokuto san!!’ He leaned in and murmured secretively. “Let me know when he gets close.”

The photographer took another sip, glancing over his shoulder dismissively. “He’s pretty close now. What’s your plan?”

Officer Bokuto leaned back, stretching in an exaggerated manner. He called out loudly. “Well, it appears there’s no signs of suspicious activity here! We received an anonymous call and came right over. But it is just an office of civilians going about in their civilian matters. I’m g-“ He let out a choked noise as Iwaizumi yanked the back of his uniform collar. “Why, officer Iwaizumi!” he wheezed out. “What a surprise! What are you doing hrrrr-“ Officer Bokuto clutched around his neck and fumbled about as Iwaizumi paid no mind to the officer’s chatter and began to drag him bodily with him back to the front of the office.

“Wait, Wazz- geurgh. Wazzy! Stop, I nee- hrgnh!” Bokuto flailed about, struggling to escape from his unrelenting grip.

“Stop squirming, you just kicked me.”

Bokuto glanced over to find Officer Kuroo too being dragged along on his right. “Oh, sorry.”

Kuroo flashed a teasing grin. “No worries, Mr. Hotshot.”

Bokuto beamed back and wheezed. “Bro! Did you see? I was on a roll. He said he remembered me. I think I’m in,” He rose his fist toward Kuroo. The other officer leaned over to bump it but his hand was harshly slapped away by Iwaizumi. Kuroo nursed his stinging hand. “Ouch, talk about jealous third wheel.”

Bokuto craned his neck back with slight difficult due to the tight grip Iwaizumi still had on his shirt collar. “Wazzy we can fist bump too if you’d like.”
Iwaizumi finally looked down at Bokuto with a dark expression. “Shut it or you’re getting a ‘fist bump’ to the face. Wait till we get back to the office. You two are going to get it.”

Officer Bokuto turned slightly pale, wide eyes looking at Kuroo for support. “What are we going to get?” he whispered in fear. Kuroo shook his head warningly. The two stumbled slightly when Iwaizumi suddenly halted. They were at the reception desk and Oikawa’s face suddenly popped in to view.

“Well, hello officers,” he crooned with far too much enjoyment in his tone. He glanced over at Officer Bokuto and flashed a rather malicious grin. “Fancy seeing you here, my dear friend,” Bokuto mouthed silently ‘help me’. The reporter reached over and pinched his cheek before rising to face Iwaizumi.

His expression softened and his left hand reached up and readjusted his bag strap, almost in a conscious manner. “Thank you for the interview. As well as picking these two up,” he pinched his mouth tight in a sour expression as he eyed the two. “Literally.”

Iwaizumi shifted slightly, tightening his grip on the two officers who stared back at the reporter over their shoulders with equal distaste. Oikawa’s gaze shifted toward Iwaizumi’s shirt which hugged his chest more snugly as his arms were pulled back slightly from the strained clutch on their collars. He swallowed hard. “I enjoyed your company. I’ll contact you in regards to the interview publishing progress.”

Officer Iwaizumi nodded curtly, watching Oikawa with careful precision. He opened his mouth before hesitating. “Okay.” There was a prolonged, awkward silence between the two as though they were waiting for the other to make the first move. Oikawa offered a shy smile, eyes shining as they watched Iwaizumi. The officer, in return, nodded slowly, examining the bustling office around him.

Kuroo leaned over towards Bokuto whilst eyeing the Iwaizumi and Oikawa. “What the hell are they doing? They’re just watching each other,” he murmured. Bokuto strained his neck to peek over as well.

“Well,” Iwaizumi coughed. The reporter’s eyes fluttered lightly as he bowed his head, gazing upward through his eyelashes. He breathed out lightly. “Yes?” Oikawa asked, golden brown eyes shining encouragingly.

Iwaizumi gave a curt nod and sharp bow. “Good bye.”

Oikawa’s expression fell flat as he let out a dissatisfied “oh.” He faltered before he grinned a little too forcibly. “Okay then, see you.”

The officer marched over to the elevator, reaching over to click the button and readjust his grip on Officer Kuroo’s collar. The doors slid open and he threw the other two in before stepping in himself. Oikawa stood by the reception desk, examining the floor when Iwaizumi finally called out. “Hang sometime next week?”

The reporter snapped his head up, wide eyed. Even the two officers blinked up at Iwaizumi, speechless. Oikawa burst in to a relieved smile. “Yeah! Sounds good. I’ll call you. Or you call me. Wait, preferably text,” he stammered out loudly as the elevator doors began to close. “Or whichever! I’ll answer ei- okay, see you soon!”

The doors closed and it was suddenly awfully quiet as the elevator carried them away from the loud, frantic office. The three officers stood there in awkward silence, unsure of what to say. Bokuto glanced at Kuroo who then glanced at Iwaizumi. The senior officer remained as passive as can be, studying the elevator light which now flashed ‘14’. However, this cheeks were now lightly framed
with a faint splash of pink; the sight so absurd the other two didn’t know how to approach this. “Um,” Officer Kuroo started.

“Shut up,” Iwaizumi muttered and Kuroo nodded. Not another word was spoken until they were back at the police department.

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‘Ah. It seems I’ve found myself a fan.’ Akaashi nursed the coffee mug with both hands. He leaned against the desk and observed as the white-grey haired officer with a shocking slicked-up do was manhandled out by his presumably senior officer. The officer seemed utterly hyperactive as he whined and retorted in a ridiculously childish manner, though unable to escape from the other’s grip. He looked up and for a brief moment they met eyes. Rather than being embarrassed by his behavior, the officer split in to what had to be the world’s biggest grin and waved wildly. To Akaashi’s greater surprise, he found himself smiling just a little back. His forced his attention back to his instant-coffee, sipping a little, but just enough to sweeten his palate. ‘Officer Bokuto’ he thought. ‘How peculiar’.

The photographer noticed Oikawa’s client had paused by the reception to have a word with the reporter. Oikawa was acting strangely. His eyes were opened slightly wider, his charm was upped completely, and did he seriously just tuck his hair behind his ear? Whether this was a conscious act Akaashi was unsure, but he did know what this meant. Officer Bokuto flashed a final grin before being thrown unceremoniously in to the elevator.

When Oikawa strolled over with the most pleased grin, Akaashi asked “since when did you ‘hang out’ with your clients?”

The reporter threw his bag aside and waved his interview folder in the air. “Since now,” he sang. Akaashi snorted in surprise. It was rare to find Oikawa in such a good mood and he watched as the reporter hummed and flicked through his papers in a giddy manner. “I can finally finish this ridiculous car rescue story and it’s going to be a hit,” Oikawa declared, turning towards Akaashi with bright eyes. “I can feel it.”

Akaashi retorted. “Well, I wouldn’t expect anything less considering how late you’re submitting it.”

Oikawa chortled, waving Akaashi to follow and he made a beeline towards his office. He jolted back, cheerful expression suddenly coiling in revulsion. “Eurgh. There always has to be someone raining on my parade,” he groused, rolling his eyes dramatically. Kageyama frowned before holding out a folio toward the reporter.

"Hanamaki wanted me to remind you the weather report is overdue. As well as the Karasuno c-“

“I’m working on it!” Oikawa snapped irritatingly. “Oh my god, Kageyama you just never stop complaining do you?”

Kageyama looked worried as he quickly defended himself. “I’m sorry. I didn’t meant to sound rude. I was just asked to pass the message on to you.”

“See!” Oikawa exclaimed. He pointed a finger accusingly at Kageyama. “Blaming others once again! Get out of my sight,” He yanked the paper from the intern’s grasp and stormed in to his office. Kageyama turned a light shade of red as he bowed at Akaashi and scurried the opposite direction.

“You’d think that as his elder you’d be more mature,” Akaashi frowned as he followed the reporter
to his office. “What a bully.”

Oikawa swung himself in to his chair and grinned at the disapproving man. “I prefer the term, ‘building character’. You’ll understand yourself once you get an intern following you around like some useless pup.”

Akaashi sat down, clasping his hands behind his neck. “Well, you’re enjoying ‘building his character’ far too much,” He leaned back and peered up at the ceiling. The LED office lights emitted a harsh brightness and he closed his eyes for a brief moment. “I don’t think I would mind. Having an intern that is. It would be refreshing to have an eager youngin looking up to you,”

Oikawa looked up from his file. “Youngin? You sound like you’re eighty,” He scrutinized Akaashi. “Though, speaking of eager, that police officer. The one with the embarrassing hairdo. What did he want?”

Akaashi met eyes with Oikawa and replied nonchalantly. “He asked for my name. And that he likes photos.”

Oikawa snorted, shaking his head. Of course he would say something like that. The officer was a hopeless case. “He’s quite the weirdo.”

“I think he’s okay.”

Oikawa blinked at Akaashi. “Excuse me? Wait, sorry. I don’t think I heard right. Did you just say okay? Because he is not the definition of okay.”

“He’s weird but okay,” Akaashi murmured. He could feel Oikawa’s infamous devious grin and forced himself to remain as indifferent as possible. Oikawa had a knack for reading people with alarming accuracy and the last thing he wanted was the reporter nagging him about this. “Stop that. Now you’re being weird,” He stood. “I’m leaving. You better hurry up with that report before Kageyama comes back again,” He ignored the reporter when he called out teasingly “oh come on, don’t be like that.”

Oikawa grinned to himself and sat back in his uncomfortable chair. “Who knew owl boy had game,” he mused aloud. He glanced around his desk surrounded by piles of papers and half-completed files and sighed. “Okay, back to work,” he declared, clicking his computer from sleep mode.

∞

Iwaizumi signed the last page of the file and stacked the papers neatly, stapling the top left corner and placing it aside. It was late noon and he hadn't left his office since this morning after he yanked the two whining officers back in to the department by their ears. Iwaizumi sighed and leaned back in his chair. Daichi had left several hours ago and he allowed two other officers to leave early, leaving Bokuto, Kuroo and Lev remaining. As punishment, Iwaizumi had extended their shifts, giving them plenty of time to finish off all their overdue reports as well as being given two late night patrols throughout the city.

Iwaizumi shook his sore hands and rubbed them against his arms. ‘Just one more report to go’ he sighed. With this out of the way, he could focus on other things. Like gaining progress on the prosecution cases of recent minor offenses, finishing off his proactive program designs in response to further crime preventions in the street, not to mention delving in to the surveillance footage of the
eastern region of the city where the rates of crime were particularly high. The work was endless. Under normal circumstances, Iwaizumi would plough through until he could endure no more. However, he found himself growing weary of this rather mundane routine. Iwaizumi eyed his phone which was placed at the far right of his desk. He glanced around before slowly reaching for it. He just needed to check for any incoming messages. A message. A distraction.

Though, the phone default screen flashed indicating no new updates. Iwaizumi refused to acknowledge the glum feeling which mellowed within and clicked contacts. He could always ask when the other was free instead. He flicked through and found Oikawa Tooru’s contact details. The officer hesitated over the dial button. ‘He asked to text, not call.’ He frowned. Iwaizumi clicked the Options button and scrolled down. Another menu popped up with several features but no message function. He clicked through a few sub-options before throwing his phone on the desk in irritation. Technology wasn’t exactly his strongest aspect and if he could live without its use, he would. Oikawa’s voice rang in his mind ‘I’m sure the other officers would offer a shoulder for you to lean on’. Iwaizumi clicked through before sighing and getting up.

Officer Iwaizumi peeked out at the office to find it quiet per as usual. There was hardly any activity during the day and officers tended to ease down around this time. He spotted Officer Kuroo sprawled out on his favourite, rickety chair, evidently napping again. Officer Bokuto was plopped on the computer to his right, mouse clicking occasionally as he poured his entire focus on the minesweep game. Iwaizumi glanced down at his wristwatch. Daichi’s shift would start again in two hours. “Where’s Lev?” he called out. Officer Bokuto fumbled with his mouse and quickly closed the game, whereas the raven-haired man jolted upright, almost falling off his chair.

“He’s out grabbing coffees.”

Iwaizumi frowned. “You two need to stop bullying him in to buying you coffees all the time.”

Kuroo wiped the side of his mouth before flashing a lazy grin. “The youngest buys coffee. That’s always been the tradition.” Bokuto nodded fervently and Iwaizumi sighed.

“Allright, one of you help me instead then,” he held up his phone towards Bokuto. “I want to send a text message, show me how.”

The duo stared at Iwaizumi. “Have you never sent a text message before?” Bokuto asked slowly.

Officer Kuroo appeared just as shocked and he let out a sharp bark of laughter. “How is it you’re able to work all those complex police devices but you can’t even manage one text?” Iwaizumi felt his cheeks burn and he glared back.

“I got taught to use those devices,” His response caused both the officers to burst out laughing.

“Oh my god, no one gets taught to send a text message. You just know,” Kuroo shook his head and Bokuto grinned, reaching for Iwaizumi’s phone. He flipped it open and let out a somewhat restrained chortle.

“I got taught to use those devices,” His response caused both the officers to burst out laughing.

“Look, he made it to the Options menu then gave up. How cute. A+ for effort though,” he lifted to phone towards Kuroo who snickered loudly.

Iwaizumi glared at the two. “I knew it. This is why I don’t ask for help. Give me my phone back.” Kuroo swiped his hand away and fluttered his eyelashes. “Okay, okay. No more jokes. Wazzy needs our assistance so let’s help the old man out.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “I’m not old. And don’t do that with your eyes, it’s disturbing.”
Kuroo grinned before Bokuto shoved his face aside and held the phone up to Iwaizumi’s face. “Okay, this here, you see? This is the message button. You click that then type your message in here like a normal keyboard. Make sense?” he asked. Iwaizumi nodded slowly and Bokuto beamed. “What a fast learner! Now what do you want me to type?”

Iwaizumi frowned and dictated carefully. “Uh, hello. This is officer Iwaizumi Hajime. If you have an available time slot, would you like to do something next week? Preferably on the Friday evening. Please reply. Thank you.” He paused to stare back at the deadpanned duo. “What?”

“What,” Officer Kuroo began before pinching the bridge of nose and biting his lip to keep from grinning. “What the hell was that?!” he choked out, one arm clutched around his stomach as he trembled with laughter. “What the actual hell Wazzy? What are you doing? You might as well write a letter and have it hand delivered by a messenger. Oh god,” he threw his head back and continued to cackle.

Bokuto glance darted nervously between the laughing officer and Iwaizumi who appeared to be on the verge of grabbing a biro and stabbing it in Kuroo’s neck. “Hey, hey! It’s his first time! Here, I’ll make fix it up for ya Wazzy,”he clicked the phone swiftly and showed the disgruntled officer. “When you text you make it short and simple, see?” he beamed at Iwaizumi, eyes hopeful. “So, does this mean I get a patrol night taken off?” Iwaizumi waved him off. Before Bokuto could send the text, Kuroo reached over and tapped several keys. “What are you doing?” Iwaizumi asked suspiciously. Kuroo flashed the screen towards him.

“Relax, ya Luddite. I added a smiley face, see? Those are the eyes and that’s the nose and mouth,” Kuroo blinked innocently. “Adds more character to the text,” Bokuto nodded encouragingly and Iwaizumi eyed the two in suspicion. Before he could protest, Kuroo clicked send and grinned. “There, done. Congratulations, you’ve just lost your text virginity. Tell me, how does it feel?”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes but before he could open his mouth, a large individual bustled in, stooping slightly to fit in to the doorway. Lev carried a small cardboard tray with three drinks wedged in and paused when he noticed Iwaizumi. “Sorry, I only got drinks for the three of us.”

The officer waved dismissively and examined the text message whilst the other two officers reached automatically for their drinks. Lev ambled over and leaned to peer at Iwaizumi’s phone. “What are you doing?”

Iwaizumi glanced up muttering sheepishly. “Kuroo and Bokuto just helping me send a text, that’s all.”

Lev blinked at the phone screen for several moments. “Is that a penis emoticon?”

Iwaizumi snapped his head up. “What the hell do you mean a penis emoticon?” He tilted the phone screen and scrutinised the message. “It’s a smiley fa- Oh, christ. No. God no,” Iwaizumi flashed the screen at Lev. “It could also be a smiley face, right?”

Lev grinned apologetically. “The penis emoticon is pretty universal, sorry.” Officer Kuroo and Bokuto were shaking in the efforts of holding in their laugh as Iwaizumi frantically pressed the Back button on his phone. “You two are dead meat,” he barked and Lev choked out in laughter.
Stay tuned for awkward first dates and intense second-hand embarrassment next update!
8=D
Also, a very big thank you for those who have commented and left such lovely messages you make me feel all giddy and excited to post more so a big fingers crossed you’ve enjoyed this chapter
Oikawa was on cloud nine. No, cloud one thousand. He floated through his daily work routine with little regards for his demanding editors, endless phone calls and his piled-up work files. In fact, he handled his work load, endured the complaints which were usually ignored, sitting through each one with a sympathetic ear and short words of apologies, as well as replying to all his emails with advice and swift updates. Even when Kageyama came around with that tacky, plastic blue tray of coffees, Oikawa grabbed one and waved him off, sparing him of his usual dose of insults. The intern blinked at him with wide eyes, taking a hesitant step back. He glanced around with suspicions that perhaps this was a trap.

Oikawa hummed a short tune as he took a tentative sip of the sweet liquid, careful not to scald his lips. He pulled out his phone and checked it dismissively, only to do a double take of the screen. Three email notifications from the publishing department, an email from the editorial committee, one missed call from an anonymous number, an update remin- he swiped them away impatiently to peer at the only important notification. Two text messages from “Iwaizumi Hajime♡”. He took a slow sip, wide eyes not once moving away from the phone screen.

A light scuffling notified him Kageyama was still standing there, shifting from one foot to another. He spoke out cautiously, as though careful not to somehow offend the reporter. “Oika-” he paused when Oikawa lifted his finger at him warningly. The reporter held an air of intensity, his sharp gaze fixed on the phone screen as he slowly moved to sit at his desk.

Kageyama scuffled uncomfortably on the spot, fingers flittering around his tray. He glanced behind him towards the door before peering back at the other. “Uh,” he started. Oikawa finally broke contact to glower at him and even with just a coffee in one hand and phone in the other, he looked frighteningly menacing. Kageyama’s heart pounded as he swallowed hard. “I just, uh, wanted to let you know.. that.. I’m, um, not.. I’m not..” Oikawa rolled his eyes before diverting his attention back to his phone.

Kageyama felt his insides coil. He tampered down his ever-growing irritation toward his elder. “I, uh, I need to tell you something senpa-“ he was interrupted by an obnoxiously loud slurp. Oikawa blinked innocently at him over the paper cup. His eyes shone certain smug satisfaction as he watched the intern. Kageyama waited patiently before continuing. “I’m here to tell you that I’m n-”

Sssssssssllllllllrrrrrrppppp.

Kageyama grit his teeth before starting again. “I just wanted t-“

His shoes grounded the floor as Oikawa took another prolonged sip. The wet sound filled the room
as Kageyama eyed the reporter, his left eye twitching involuntarily at the sound. Oikawa grinned slowly whilst continuing to sip the coffee. Honestly speaking, it was piping hot and Oikawa inwardly praised himself for not jolting back from its scalding touch. His eyes drifted back to his phone, clicking at Iwaizumi’s message. This seemed to bristle Kageyama further as he spoke with greater assertion this time. “I am here because I wanted to inform you I am no longer…”

Oikawa was hardly even listening to the boy as he began to read Iwaizumi’s message. ‘Ah, I’m not free next Friday’ he thought glumly as his eyes skidded through before landing on the emoticon. ‘Wh-’ His eyes boggled and he inhaled sharply in surprise. Hot, lava-like liquid surged down his throat and he spat out, spraying his desk and half his papers with boiling coffee. Oikawa was certain his tongue had melted off or at the very least been thoroughly scalded. Tears welded as he choked and smacked his chest uselessly.

“Oh my g- Oikawa senpai!” Kageyama cried out in alarm. Dropping the tray on a nearby chair, he rushed over to slap the reporter’s back. “Are you alright?! I didn’t mean to upset you! I’m sorry.”

Oikawa pushed him back as he croaked “Trying to kill me now, are you? Who even makes coffee this hot?! Get out!” Kageyama leapt back and scurried to grab his tray. He glanced back hesitantly at the reporter who continued to hack his lungs up. “Don’t look at me!” Oikawa screeched. The boy jumped before hastily making his way out. He almost bumped in to another and bowed sharply before rushing away red-faced. The reporter peered up through watery eyes. “Kenma! Help me,” he whined.

The other stared at him with little concern but traipsed over. His nose crinkled at the messy spray of brown liquid, somewhat resembling a horrific murder scene. Oikawa wheezed and clutched his throat as he made grabby hands at Kenma’s red mug. Kenma pouted but handed it over, eyes flashing with immediate regret as he watched Oikawa down it all in one go. The reporter’s face scrunched in disgust as he wiped his mouth. “Eurgh, that’s so sweet. Did you put something in that?”

Kenma took his mug back, mournfully peering at the bottom of the empty cup. “Yeah. Two satchets of sugar.”

Oikawa stuck his tongue out, wiping it with a nearby tissue. “Apple juice is sweet enough. Why add the extra sugar? God, I hate people like you and your fast metabolism.”

“It tastes better,” Kenma mumbled. He flipped out his mobile, tapping the keys with swift precision. “And it gives me extra energy.”

Oikawa took note of the dark bags under his eyes. “Kenma, don’t tell me you stayed up playing those games again. We don’t even get enough sleep as it is. I honestly don’t get why you do this to yourself.”

Kenma blearily rubbed his eyes. “I was on boss level.”

Oikawa sighed, wiping his papers with another tissue. “You’re always on boss level,” Kenma rose to leave before Oikawa called out. “What’s a good excuse to skip work?” Kenma’s eyebrows rose as he stared at Oikawa.

“I’m sick,” he replied in a bored tone.

Oikawa shook his head in disapproval. “No, that’s too common,” he mumbled. “Something that doesn’t require a doctor’s certificate or some form of proof.”

“I didn’t want to work.”
Now, Oikawa frowned at the other. “That’s too close to the truth. Another one.”

“I slept in.”

“Okay, now you’re just trying to get me fired,” Oikawa grumbled, shaking his head. He looked down at his phone. The first text was followed almost directly after another comprising of a curt apology to disregard the ‘colourful emoticon’. Oikawa squinted. ‘Owl boy and Bed head’ he thought with a sour expression. The two were like a rash which never left. However, Oikawa couldn’t help but feel just the slightest twinge of disappointment. “God, I’m too old for sexting,” he half-heartedly sighed.

Kenma retreated slightly, nose twitching in disdain. He coughed before asking. “Why are you even asking me this?”

Oikawa stared. “Because I want to get out of work next Friday,” he replied blatantly. He leaned in, eyes twinkling and a charming smile slid in to place. “Say, didn’t you get a day off three weeks ago, around the same time when that new Quest game was released?” He grinned at the other whose face pinked lightly. ‘Caught out.’

Kenma eyed Oikawa. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said slowly. He blinked at the reporter clasped his hands and fluttered his eyelashes.

“You know I never ask for favours, Kenma-chan,” he whimpered. “How about you do this for me and I won’t tell anyone about you hacking the system.”

Kenma frowned. He opened his mouth but Oikawa hastily added “and I’ll buy you three apple pies. Three.”

The reporter clenched his mouth to refrain from snorting aloud at the way the other perked up at his offer. Kenma stared at him briefly before dropping his gaze. “I would’ve said yes to one but okay. Three.”

Oikawa sighed, sitting back and resting his palms at the back of his head. “Granny Smith apple pies. Your favourite, right?”

Kenma fiddled with his hair in feign disinterest. “Mmm,” He tapped on his phone whilst murmuring “this must be important.”

Oikawa hummed nonchalantly, briefly closing his eyes. It was true he had never gone through such efforts and means of getting with someone. Iwaizumi’s face came in to mind. His smile back at the café had caught him completely off-guard. There was genuine gratitude splayed on his face and Oikawa could felt giddy just thinking about it. ‘He has a pretty smile.’

“Yes,” Oikawa admitted in a faint mumble, though more to himself. “This is important.”

Kenma watched Oikawa before nodding. He stood and began to shuffle out. “Oi, Kenma,” Oikawa called. The other paused, head tilted slightly to the right. Oikawa paused before snorting. “Five apple pies. I’m feeling generous.”

Kenma turned to face the reporter. He smiled, golden feline eyes meeting Oikawa’s for a brief moment before leaving.

Oikawa sighed, swinging his chair around idly as he pulled out his phone. He swiveled his back toward his desk and dabbed his sensitive lips absentmindedly with a napkin whilst re-reading the message. “I am free on Thursday night,” he dictated aloud as he typed. Oikawa paused,
contemplating what to include. “Despite our… unconventional start,” he typed slowly. “I’m… I’m looking forward to… getting to know you.” The reporter stopped and frowned. ‘Is that too forward?’

“O-Oikawa senpai…”

The reporter jolted in surprise and swiveled to find Kageyama by his door. He appeared just as startled and Oikawa glared at him. Before he could open his mouth, the intern bowed deeply. “Thank you!” he uttered with sudden passion. Oikawa blinked dumbfounded at the red-face boy who stared at him with great pride before marching off with that ridiculous tray.

“What,” Oikawa muttered as he blinked to himself. “The hell was that?”

∞

The white blades rotated, its movement followed by tired, green eyes. Lev sat back, head tilted as he eyed the half-broken contraption on the office ceiling. The fan was spinning in a lazy manner as though even it had given up on its role as a fan. Lev sat and stared as it continued to go round and round in circles. He was bored, tired and hungry. His stomach let out a feeble groan and he reached down, consoling it with light rubs. The other two officers were in surprisingly lighter spirits, despite getting their asses handed to them by their senior officer just moments before.

Officer Kuroo held both hands up. “Not that I’m blaming anyone or anything,” he drawled. “But Daichi was in charge and he should know better than to let other officers off loose. Just sayin’ ”

Officer Bokuto shook his head, a wide, placid grin smeared on his bright face. “I don’t even care anymore. Two nights of city patrol was completely worth it,” Bokuto’s eyes glazed over for a brief moment as he fawned over the memory.


Kuroo chuckled as he leaned back in his rickety chair. “Also worth it,” he tilted his face upwards, wild hair masking his left eye as he peered down at Bokuto. “When are you going to meet that Akaashi guy again? Let me know when you are so I can come too.”

His friend hummed nonchalantly as he spun around on his chair. "Why? You going to come support me again? K-cat, you're the best."

Officer Kuroo beamed as he ran a hand through his unruly hair. "Bro, I know. But I wanted to go cause I mean, did you see that blonde guy at the office? He was pretty cute."

Bokuto’s chair squeaked to a stop as he stared wide-eyed at his friend taking a while to process the implications. He let a prolonged high-pitched ‘ooh’ and leaned in to punch Kuroo’s arm repeatedly. “What’s this? What’s this?! K-cat’s got a little crush?!”

Kuroo half-heartedly swatting at the punches. “Woah, chill B-dawgs,” He regarded his friend with an offended look. “No one said anything about a crush.”

Lev shared confused glances with Bokuto, the sudden serious demeanor catching them off-guard. Kuroo stood abruptly, surprising the two as he threw both arms up in the air and yelled. “But I got a crush!” Officer Bokuto screeched in excitement and jumped about waving his hand frantically to fist bump the other.
Lev’s eyes glistened as he leaned in from his chair. “Who? Who is he? What does he look like? What’s his name?”

Kuroo waved him off. “That’s not important. What’s important is that he committed a criminal offence. And a serious one at that,” he stared at the awe-struck officers, gaze not once wavering as he reached up and clutched the right side of his chest. “He stole.. my heart.”

Lev pointed at Kuroo. “Actually the heart is more on the left side so,” he pointed to his own chest. “Like, about here or something.”

Kuroo frowned at Lev. “C’mon man, don’t harsh my vibe.”

Lev’s large green eyes peered up at the bed-headed man. “Oh, sorry,” he placed his fists on each knee and leaned in like an eager child ready for storytelling. “So, what else? Is he a reporter too?”

“He’s a producer of something. I don’t know what it was but sounded important.” Officer Kuroo leaned back with a lazy grin on his face. “I reckon I can score a date with him. He seems like a decent person.”

Lev frowned in confusion. “Wait, you don’t know anything about him but you wanna date him? I don’t know man, what if he’s one of them crazy or weird ones?”

“Well, I wouldn’t know till I try, right?” Kuroo said defensively. “He’s like Yaku though. He’s cute and small, minus the beatings.”

Bokuto leaned in, eyes dancing with delight. “That’s like me and Akaashi!” he piped. “He makes my heart thrum like a mandolin in the Venice streets,” Bokuto swooned over his chair.

“What’s he like though?” Lev asked. “Do you know anything about him?”

This seemed to irk Bokuto and the officer opened and closed his mouth. “He.. likes photos.. and being sarcastic..” he suggested in a less confident tone.

Lev tilted his head. “What else? It kinda sounds like you know nothing about him.”

Officer Bokuto blinked slowly as he sat back in his chair. “My god,” he whispered. “I don’t know anything about him.”

Kuroo eyed his friend who began to droop at an alarming rate. “Hey, hey,” he called, shaking Bokuto’s shoulder. “Why do you think we went to his work? It’s called building the relationship. And who knows, maybe you’ll outrank Daichi and Suga as the best couple in the office,” he encouraged. Bokuto nodded, his mouth tilted downwards as he continued to sulk.

Kuroo leaned over and pinched Lev on the neck. The tall officer yelped as he rubbed the sore spot with a dejected look. “Look what you’ve done now, Lev,” Kuroo scolded. “Go get him a milkshake to cheer him up. And a hot chocolate for me,” he included with a toothy grin. ‘Who pinches people on the neck’ Lev grumbled and got up from his chair.

His shoes padding on the carpet, he peeked in to Iwaizumi’s office to find the senior officer at his desk. His focus was centered on his phone clutched between both hands in his lap. Lev tilted his head as he watched for a brief moment. “Wazzy, why are you smiling at your crotch?” he asked, grinning at the way Iwaizumi’s frown immediately slid in to place.

“No, I’m not,” he replied in a defensive manner.
Lev shook his head as he swung about whilst leaning on the office door. “I’m getting a round of drinks, you want anything?” he asked.

Officer Iwaizumi shook his head as he glanced down at his phone once more.

“Is that the Oikawa reporter?”

Iwaizumi snapped his head up as he stared accusingly at Lev. “Wh-no. Why? How can you tell?” He demanded.


“An iced black,” he grumbled as he placed his phone on the far end of his table. Lev flashed a two thumbs up and chuckled at how his senior fiddled with his fingers and eyed his phone like it was out to get him.

He rushed out, grabbing his wallet and passing Officer Kuroo who was patting Bokuto's back. The other was still in the moping stage and Lev quickened his pace as he left the department and headed towards the nearby café. His stomach gurgled in complaint, though the officer paid little mind to the light pangs of hunger.

‘Ah.’ Lev thought. ‘I wonder what Yaku is up to.’

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The week was torturously long but sure enough, Thursday rolled up and Oikawa felt a light thrill of anticipation. Through several texts, he and Iwaizumi had agreed upon meeting at the cinemas for a movie Oikawa had been dying to see, even months before its premiere. Checking his phone, he let out a quiet ‘oh thank god’ when the time flashed 4:00 pm. He tucked his papers in to a folder and grabbed his bag. Humming a light tune, he stood from his desk and ambled out, only to bump in to Yamaguchi. “Ah!” the younger male yelped as he stumbled around, struggling to keep the stack of papers from falling. Oikawa reached out and steadied him.

“Thanks,” Yamaguchi breathed out a short relieved breath. Oikawa gave a short nod and began to walk past when he yipped “wait, Oikawa!” He reached in and carefully pulled out a booklet from his pile and handed it over. “This is from the editors department. They told me to get you to hand it to them by six.”

Oikawa frowned. “I’m done for the day. Tell them I’ll get it done by tomorrow.”

Yamaguchi’s large eyes blinked at Oikawa as he tilted his head. “Oh. Don’t you usually stay till nine? I’m just the messenger but it seemed pretty urgent,” he lowered his head and glanced up in an apologetic manner.

Oikawa sighed but flashed a patient smile. “Alright, just this time,” He waved off Yamaguchi and turned to find another individual.

“Oh hey, I emailed you earlier but I need this done by tonight.”
Oikawa received another two reports in his hands and “Does no one check the timetables?” he grumbled as he dropped his bag and returned to his office.

It was well and truly past five by the time he had finished and he rushed out the office. He rummaged through his pockets, groaning when he remembered he had caught the bus in the morning. ‘I won’t have time to go home and get changed’.

“Oikawa.”

The reporter spun around, lifting both arms in a cross motion. “Nope, no more service. I’m done for the day.”

Akaashi frowned at him as he readjusted his bag. “I know you’re done for the day. Weren’t you meant to finish two hours ago?”

Oikawa let out a sigh of relief. “Oh, good. Someone who checks the timetables,” He pointed toward the elevator with a hopeful look. “You going now?”

Akaash knitted his eyebrows in confusion. “No,” he said slowly. “Did you not read the email from last week?”

‘Nope’. Oikawa flashed him a big smile. “Of course I did,” he chided, eyes darting to his watch. “Well, I’m going now so.”

The photographer watched him edge away. “So you’re not staying tonight?” he called.

“No way!” Oikawa called. He flashed a single peace sign in the air as he quickened his pace to a light trot. “I got a movie date tonight!”

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Oikawa had arrived with only a few minutes to spare. He let out a relieved sigh and combed through his hair with his left hand. It felt rather strange wearing a suit to the cinemas. He was sure the other wouldn’t mind, but found himself shrugging off his jacket and rolling up his sleeves for a more casual look. 'Just for good measures’ he assured himself. Oikawa strolled around, giving enough time catch his breath. The sun had begun to lower, painting the city with dashes of orange and reds. The reporter allowed himself a brief moment to admire the view before pulling out his phone. 

6:03pm. ‘He should be here by now’. And sure enough, he spotted Iwaizumi strolling down with his hands tucked in to the pockets of his jeans. Generally Oikawa cringed at the sight of tattered denim, but Iwaizumi seemed to pull it off rather well. The reporter tugged at his own tie and ran a hand through his hair as he watched from afar.

The officer’s eyes darted about in a restless and almost agitated manner. His shoulders were hunched and he held an air of intimacy.

‘Perfect’ Oikawa sighed as he tottered over to meet him halfway.

The officer’s scrunched expression cleared the moment he spotted Oikawa and Iwaizumi gave a short greeting nod. “Nice to meet you again,” he stated and Oikawa couldn’t help but chortle.

“What’s with the stiffness? I’m off-duty you know,” he teased.
Iwaizumi frowned at him. “Are you lecturing me for my manners?” But his shoulders lost their tenseness and he folded his arms as curious eyes wandered over Oikawa.

“I just caught a bus straight over from work,” Oikawa explained, gesturing at his work attire. “I don’t normally go around in suits.”

Iwaizumi nodded and examined the movie posters as they walked side by side towards the entrance of the cinemas.

He blinked at the light squeeze on his arm and glanced over to find the reporter fawning over each poster. “Wow, look at all the options. There’s so many movies I want to see now!” Oikawa exclaimed.

“Do you go to the movies often?” Iwaizumi asked.

Oikawa smiled and shook his head. “Nah, I haven’t gone in awhile. Work tends to get in the way whenever there’s a decent movie showing,” he pointed excitedly at a nearby movie poster. “That’s the movie we’re going to be watching! I’ve wanted to see this for so long!” he yipped.

Iwaizumi turned to come face to face with a large green face with grotesque features. It frowned back at him whilst holding an elaborate-looking gun and standing on a milky pink coloured-planet. “Wow,” he stared blankly at Oikawa. “This looks kinda ridiculous.”

Oikawa puffed up in indignation. “No way! It received positive reviews and the storyline is interesting,” he protested. He grabbed Iwaizumi’s arm and pointed to the green figure. “It looks like he’s a villain but note the look of wisdom in his eyes. You can tell he’s had a tortured past.”

Iwaizumi squinted at the hideous face. “Which eye are we looking at? There’s about seven.” The officer huffed in amusement at Oikawa’s offended look and crossed his arms. “Can we just go inside? It feels weird seeing this guy glaring at me from the corner of my eye.”

Oikawa brightened at the suggestion and he adjusted his bag as he pulled Iwaizumi inwards. “Yes! We should be heading in about now anyway.”

Iwaizumi was welcomed by the familiar scent of popcorn and the comfortable chatters of other film viewers. His shoes padded against the plush, velvety carpet as they headed towards the cashier. The lady flashed them a funny look when the two ordered their tickets but smiled and directed them of the cinema room. Iwaizumi couldn’t help but notice the way the reporter fidgeted around, constantly moving and bumping shoulders as he stared around in awe. ‘Like a child’ he thought with amusement but the thought was pushed aside when he noticed the crowd waiting at cinema 2. “Oikawa, is this a kid’s movie? There’s only children here.” He asked as he eyed the loud, chittering group.

Oikawa shook his head madly. “No, lots of adults watch this too!” he reached over, lightly holding Iwaizumi’s shoulder and pointed to his left. “See, that guy over there is watching it and he looks older than us.”

Iwaizumi frowned. “He’s a dad though. He’s holding his kid’s hand. And even he doesn’t look like he wants to be here.”

Oikawa lightly shook Iwaizumi’s shoulder as he “No, I’m telling you! This is a good movie. Just give it a chance,” he insisted.

Iwaizumi opened his mouth to protest when he felt his left pants pocket vibrate. He reached back to check his phone, expecting a sudden emergency call, but to his surprise found a text message.
“Wazzy could u ask P-cock if Keiji has sed anything about me???:~D
P.S. that is a smiley NOT a dick”

He snorted and Oikawa peered over in interest. “Message from work?” he asked and Iwaizumi shook his head. He flashed the screen over at the reporter, examining how Oikawa’s face twitched as he skim-read through. “Honestly, that peacock joke has gone on for too long. They should get over it already. I’m nothing like a peacock,” he groused. His cheeks puffed out lightly and Iwaizumi noted, had gone a faint pink.

Oikawa blinked at the light huffing sound glanced over at Iwaizumi. “Are you laughing? How mean! It’s not even that funny,” he whined.

Iwaizumi grinned, gaze focused on the ground. “Sorry, but you have to admit it is a little funny,” Oikawa hmph-ed, tilting his head upward in an indignant manner. The action, Iwaizumi begrudgingly admitted, even for a grown man was rather cute.

“You’re right though,” he said seriously. Oikawa peered over questioningly.

“You’re nothing like a peacock,” Iwaizumi continued. He peered over, sharp eyes focused purely on Oikawa. The officer tilted his head as he scrutinised him. “You’re more like a teddy bear to me. Tries to act tough by saying you’re a bear but in real life you’re just a soft toy- ack!” Iwaizumi burst out in to a surprised laugh as Oikawa smacked him on the arm. His cheeks had turned a bright red as he cried “that’s even worse! It’s not even a real animal!”

Iwaizumi chuckled as he rubbed his arm. “Okay, okay. Just teasing, sorry,” he grinned at Oikawa who watched him with a faint tinge of disgruntled amusement and wonder. Oikawa let out a short huff and lunged out. Grabbing hold of Iwaizumi’s wrist, he led them towards their allocated seats, plopping down and swinging his legs.

“Well, I suppose at least one of us is going to enjoy this movie,” Iwaizumi sighed as he settled in his seat. Oikawa hummed, turning his head to face Iwaizumi.

“Give it a try,” he insisted. “I’m sure you’re going to enjoy it.”

Iwaizumi considered the way Oikawa’s eyes shone against the cinema light. His lightly ruffled hair flicked up in a stylish manner and his pinky lips shaped in to a small pout.

“O-okay,” Iwaizumi stuttered. “Open mind,” he mumbled as he faced the front, missing the way Oikawa watched and smile before facing the front himself.

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“That movie made absolutely no sense.”

“No! He defeated the dark lord but the bomb wasn’t defused and was still ticking so he got in the spacecraft and flew in to it in order to minimise the damage!” Oikawa clutched on to Iwaizumi’s side as he cried out in anguish. “It was a good movie!”

Iwaizumi frowned at his friend. “No, that makes no sense. If the bomb was already going to explode, why would he fly straight in to it? Why not use that time to fly the opposite direction and save himself and get with the girl he’s been pining the entire time?” His frown deepened as he blinked in
confusion. “Actually, no that doesn’t make any sense either. Why would he let the girl go even though she was helping the evil guy earlier? Does that mean she was evil this whole time too? If he lets her go, isn’t she just going to go around creating more time bombs and planting them on other planets?”

Oikawa let out a bark of laughter. “No!” he exclaimed. “No! No! No! You’re looking at this all wrong! Perfonias was helping the dark lord because she was under his command, remember? She couldn’t help it. And the two were going to go back to her mother planet in order to get married and live a normal life. The only bad thing about the movie was why did the protagonist have to die? Self sacrifice makes me sad,” he lamented, resting his head on Iwaizumi’s shoulder. The other snorted but said no more as the two made their way out of the cinema. It was now dark and had grown significantly cooler as the air whirled around them. Iwaizumi glanced beside him to find Oikawa lightly humming as they strolled along the streets.

“I haven’t been to the movies in a long time.”

Oikawa paused mid-tune and lifted his head to look over at Iwaizumi. “Work?” he asked. The officer hummed. He tucked his hands in his pockets and let out a short puff of breath.

“Well, because of work too. I’ve always been the kind of person who gets too engrossed with what I’m doing so I tend to forget about others and eventually, we grow apart,” he grinned at Oikawa. “So even if I had free time, and I wonder ‘who could I go to the movies with?’ no one really comes to mind,” he continued to smile as he turned to face the ground. “I don’t think I could go to the movies by myself either,”

Iwaizumi had realized Oikawa was silent and let out an awkward chuckle. “You seem like the type to have plenty of friends though,” Iwaizumi said thoughtfully. He glanced over at Oikawa. “Plenty of friends but I bet none of them know about your alien fixation,” he teased with a light grin.

Oikawa scoffed as he rubbed his arms. “Hardly. Your deduction skills are terrible,” He focused on the pavements as they continued to stroll through the dark streets of the chilly city. “I’m good with people but I don’t think I’ve ever many friends, even as a kid. My parents were hard-working people. They tended to have busy working lifestyles so I spent most of my childhood at home by myself,” Oikawa’s clouded breath tumbled from his mouth as he spoke. “I would come home from school, finish my homework, have my pre-made dinner then try to stay up for as long as possible. I always wanted to be able to greet them when they came home but they worked long hours. I usually watched tv to pass the time,” He tilted his head toward the sky, smiling at the memory. “Our tv had a very limited number of channels but every night from 7 to 8pm on channel three, they aired these documentaries of the outer universe. My favourite were the extra-terrestrial special series. I think I grew an interest from then.”

Iwaizumi watched him carefully before looking down at the pavement. There was a moment where neither spoke, the sounds of their breaths and shoes filling the night.

“I guess the movie wasn’t too bad,” he said finally.

Oikawa blinked in surprise at Iwaizumi. “Ah,” he smiled. “Yeah it wasn’t.”

The two continued to walk in companionable silence until they reached Iwaizumi’s car.

“I had fun,” Oikawa commented feeling oddly pleased. He turned to find Iwaizumi already making his way to his car and was suddenly hit with a sudden impulse to keep him from leaving. “Wait!” Oikawa blurted. “It’s still kinda early and a Friday night. Do you want to go grab a drink?” he asked, adjusting his cuff links and offering a charming smile at the officer.
Iwaizumi stared. “Nah, I have work tomorrow so,” he made his way to the driver’s side of the car, reaching in to his pockets.

Oikawa felt his grin tighten and nodded to himself. “Oh, ok. Bye, I guess,” he mumbled. Iwaizumi didn’t reply as he fumbled with his keys. The reporter waved farewell and strolled past. His bus stop was further down the street and it was timed to arrive in two minutes. If he missed this bus, he would have to wait another half an hour. There was a roaring sound of Iwaizumi’s car engine which dampened the reporter’s mood further. ‘He could’ve at least said bye’ he inwardly grumbled as he readjusted his work bag. Oikawa fastened his pace down the empty street. The memories of the mugging incident was still fresh in his mind and he tightened his grip on his bag. He jumped back when a car lurched beside him and the side window rolled down. “Oi!” the deep voice called from inside.

He could’ve at least said bye he inwardly grumbled as he readjusted his work bag. Oikawa fastened his pace down the empty street. The memories of the mugging incident was still fresh in his mind and he tightened his grip on his bag. He jumped back when a car lurched beside him and the side window rolled down. “Oi!” the deep voice called from inside.

Oikawa tilted his head to find Iwaizumi glaring him with one hand resting lightly on the steering wheel. “What are you doing? You said you caught a bus here,” Iwaizumi scorned. Oikawa blinked at him in confusion. The officer reached out and opened the passenger seat, staring expectantly. “Hurry up,” Iwaizumi called. “It’s freezing out here.”

Oikawa smiled. “Okay.”

The two carried light conversations with Oikawa pointing out directions every now and then until they reached his driveway. “I’ll walk you to the door,” Iwaizumi offered and Oikawa flashed him a funny look. The reporter nodded and unclicked his seatbelt with a pleased look on his face. The two slowed to a casual stroll, bumping shoulders occasionally as they made their way up to his house. Iwaizumi eyed the lush hedges which accentuated the driveway, towering over the two on either side. No doubt this place was worth a fortune, much more than the small apartment he owned. The two paused in front of a large house with a posh exterior.

“I had fun today,” Oikawa said. He beamed at Iwaizumi.

The officer gave an affirmative nod and eyed Oikawa’s grand home. He opened his mouth but paused when he noticed Oikawa still watching him. His pupils were slightly dilated and his mouth was curled up in a lazy smile as he continued to stand there and watch like he was expecting something from Iwaizumi. Hell, Iwaizumi was in suspense too. Oikawa’s eyes were a striking light hue despite being in the dark. They reminded him of poured warm whiskey which settled so well in his stomach after a tiring day of work. Iwaizumi’s stomach curled in at the thought and he stared back unable to find words. The officer licked his suddenly very dry lips and coughed. Oikawa’s eyes darted down for a split moment before peering up at him again. “Um,” Iwaizumi croaked. “I’m going to, uh, go now so,” He gestured towards his car before tucking his hands in his pockets. They stood there for another long moment till Iwaizumi could feel his hands twitch with unfamiliar nervousness.

Oikawa’s eyes fluttered over his shoulder before quickly meeting his gaze again. “Or you could come inside for coffee,” he spoke softly in that soothing tone which he used during their interview at the café. His eyes were half-lidded and it was almost sultry the way he stared at Iwaizumi. The officer had a sudden sense of dread that Oikawa was aware of what he was thinking and almost felt guilty for his own thoughts.

“Okay,” he uttered. Oikawa’s eyes danced at his response and he didn’t break eye contact as he slowly reached for the door lock.

“Good,” he murmured, mouth cocked up on one side. He leaned against the door password pin. Only to let out a surprise yip as he stumbled forward when the door swung open. Officer Iwaizumi
jolted forward and steadied him. The two stared at as the dark interior of Oikawa’s house with blank expressions.

Oikawa frowned in confusion. “But I locked the front door this morning,” he said slowly.

Iwaizumi glanced over at Oikawa. "Are you sure?" he murmured.

The reporter nodded as he peered at the blackness of house interior. He looked at Iwaizumi to find the officer’s eyes had sharpened significantly. Iwaizumi held an arm over Oikawa’s chest and gently pushed him back.

“Stay here. I’m going to check the house,” he murmured.


“Stay here. There’s less complications. If anything happens, I’d rather have them come at me than you.”

Oikawa made a face as he retorted "What are you even on ab-" He froze at the implications. If he had locked the door then it meant someone had snuck in. And if someone had indeed tampered their way in to Oikawa’s house, it was possible they were still in there.

Officer Iwaizumi took a hesitant step in, nerves now alight as he swiftly examined the surroundings of the front entrance. He stopped when he felt a light tug on his arm and turned to frown at Oikawa clutched on to his sleeve. “Go back,” he hissed but the reporter shook his head insistently.

“No,” he whispered fervently. “I know my house better than you do. I’m coming too!”

Iwaizumi glared harder but Oikawa seemed unaffected as he blinked around, allowing his eyes to adjust to the dark house. He let out a silent sigh and took another step forward. The house was awfully quiet but it didn’t appear to rise any suspicions. Oikawa finally let go of Iwaizumi’s arm and pointed to the left of the house. Iwaizumi nodded and took a step to the left, only to get held back by the reporter. He frowned but Oikawa lightly touched his side and leaned in. He bristled when he felt a light brush of lips on his ear and forced himself to remain still.

“I’ll check the left, you check the right,” Oikawa whispered. Iwaizumi leaned back and shook his head wildly. Oikawa grinned and offered two thumbs up before inching to the other side of the house. Iwaizumi bit his lip to suppress the frustrated hiss building up and began to make his way to the right side. It was true that the invader would unlikely still be remaining in the house. If they did, generally they tended to lock the front door, being able to leave the house at the sound of the front door later being reopened. Though, these thoughts did little to calm Iwaizumi’s nerves as he reached over and grabbed a nearby vase on his way down the hall. Shadows and dark shapes lurked about and he entered the first room on his left. There was a large queen-size bed in the far end of the wall with a small bedside table and large desk. ‘Bedroom.’ He concluded and had a thorough look around. There was no one here.

Iwaizumi’s heart was pounding, adrenaline pumping. Secretly, he loved this. The thrill of the chase. It was one of the great perks of being an officer. He clutched tightly on to the glass vase and tip-toed to the next room. The atmosphere suddenly shifted when a shrill scream sliced through the silence. Iwaizumi felt his heart drop as he whipped around and bolted toward the other side of the house. ‘Oikawa!’ he panicked and inwardly beat himself on the head. Idiot! He shouldn’t have let him in. The light at the far end shone as he edged closer swiftly. There was a sound of light scuffling and Oikawa suddenly cried out “Hajime! Hurry, he’s getting away!”
Iwaizumi burst in, vase in hand and ready for action. To find the bathroom empty exempting the reporter. He looked thoroughly distressed as he shakily pointed to the other end of the bathroom cut off by a corner. “He escaped over there.”

Iwaizumi held out an arm protectively over Oikawa’s chest and pushed him back. He edged closer toward the end, heart pounding through his ears. ‘One, two, three’

He jumped out, eyes darting sharply. But frowned in confusion. “There’s no one here,” he accused. Oikawa peeked through but jumped and latched tightly on to the officer’s arm.

“There! He’s right there!” Oikawa screamed.

Iwaizumi dropped his gaze to find a large roach in the corner. It scurried about frantically, trapped between the wall and the shower. Iwaizumi stared at Oikawa in disbelief. “Are you.. talking about this?” he asked slowly, pointing at it.

Oikawa tightened his vice grip covering his eyes. “Yes, yes! Oh my god don’t point at it, it’s going crazy! Disgusting!” he squealed as he pressed his face deeper in to the groove between Iwaizumi’s shoulder blades.

Iwaizumi’s mind was blank as he watched the bug scramble about. “I think you’re scaring it more than it’s scaring you,” He took a step closer and leaned in cupping his hands.

Oikawa let go, smacking his back wildly. “No! No! Don’t do that, eurgh! Just kill it!”

Iwaizumi had never heard Oikawa’s voice so shrill, or seen him so panicked. He couldn’t help but grin as he ignored Oikawa’s distressed cries and gently lifted the bug. Creating a small dome with his hands, he carried the frightened critter out of the bathroom and gently placed it outside.

Oikawa stood from a distance, face distorted in absolute revulsion. “How can you touch that thing?” he shuddered. “I’d just spray it and let it out of its ugly misery.”

Iwaizumi chuckled as he watched the roach hesitantly scurried in a small circle as though it was examining its surroundings. “I used to collect bugs as a kid so to me they’re more fascinating than anything. Look, it has antennas like that alien from the movie.”

Oikawa clutched his hand over his mouth. “Don’t you dare compare it to Ultrafonio. You’re making me sick.”

Iwaizumi stood to face Oikawa who let out a relieved sigh. “Thank god it’s gone though. You’re my hero.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “You had me worried. I thought you were in real danger,” he scorned.

Oikawa frowned. “That was real danger right there. Danger for my eyes. Roaches are hideous-what? What’ so funny?” He pouted at Iwaizumi who shook his head and laughed in utter disbelief.

“I don’t think I’ve ever met a man like you,” he chortled as he rubbed his sore stomach.

“I’d hope not,” Oikawa snorted. “I’m one of a kind.”

Iwaizumi looked at the taller man with the fancy suit and ruffled hair and ‘wow’. For the first time in a long time he felt comfort. His mind was at ease. “Oikawa,” he murmured.

The other grinned at him, expression stuttering when he met eyes with Iwaizumi.
Bzzzzzzzzttt.

Iwaizumi jolted at the sound and coughed soundly. “I think that’s yours,” he pointed out.

Oikawa watched Iwaizumi not bothering to check it even after it had stopped ringing. There was a brief moment of silence before he finally letting out a helpless chuckle. “Sorry,” he muttered. Iwaizumi took a respectable step back and murmured “that’s alright. I should get going though.” He eyed the reporter. “You sure you’re going to be okay?”

Oikawa flashed a reassuring smile. “I’ll be okay. I must’ve just left the door open. Thanks for checking the house though.”

Officer Iwaizumi nodded and took a slow step back.

“Wait,” Oikawa blurted. He was watching Iwaizumi again with that careful precision. His mouth suddenly split in to a big grin as he shook his head. “Never mind. Hang out again?”

The officer blinked at Oikawa. “Oh” he smiled. “Yeah. I’ll call you,” and with that he bid farewell and made his way to his car.

Oikawa watched Iwaizumi’s back get smaller and smaller until the officer was out of sight before he groaned loudly and drooped completely. His pocket began to vibrate again and he growled in frustration. Yanking the phone out of his pocket, he glared at the unfamiliar number and accepted the call. “Who the hell is this and you better have a damn good reason to call at this time,” he snarled.

There was a moment of pause before his ear was almost blown off by a loud “yo, yo, yo! P to the E to the A to the cock!”

Chapter End Notes

In which Oikawa is challenged to a spontaneous gangster rap battle on the phone and he freestyles it like a legend
NOTE: Yamaguchi is only there for a brief mention - he won’t be showing up very much so sorry if I got your hopes up :
Hope you enjoyed and stay tuned for the next update!
Hey guys! I'm back and ready with another update! Sorry it took so long but honestly a huge thank you to those all you readers and those who left kudos/commented - You guys are the bomb Hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iwaizumi had placed himself in his car, hands resting on the wheel as he stared at Oikawa’s driveway. ‘What the hell was that?’ He glanced up at his front mirror to find an equally confused and alarmed Iwaizumi staring right back. His heart was still hammering from the incident before and he rubbed at his chest absentmindedly. Oikawa’s face was imprinted in the back of his mind, lazy, half-lid eyes gazing at him, no, into him like he were peeling each individual layer, one by one. ‘Why is it so damn hot in here?’ Iwaizumi reached down automatically at the AC button, pausing to find the car heater wasn’t turned on. He glanced back up, only to do a double take and gape at his face. His cheeks were now dashed with pink and he pressed the back of his palm against it, feeling warmth. Iwaizumi dropped his hand, gripping on to the steering wheel again as he blinked up at Oikawa’s house in the distant. “What the hell,” he murmured to himself.

He reached over for the gear stick and glanced over to find a lightly crumpled jacket. Oikawa had left his jacket in his car. Iwaizumi stared, as though expecting it to suddenly lunge out and grab him. ‘You’re being stupid’ he scolded himself, running a hand through his coarse, dark hair. It would be more convenient to simply go back and hand the jacket over. Iwaizumi reached over, hand above the coat when he felt a light vibration. The officer snatched his phone, expecting an ‘Oikawa Tooru’ to flash on the screen, but to his slight dismay and confusion he came face to face with ‘Sawamura Daichi’.

Iwaizumi flipped his phone, starting the call with a firm “Iwaizumi Hajime” when he was interrupted by Daichi’s brisk tone.

“There’s been another victim.”

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Oikawa wasn’t a bad person. Or, at least he didn’t think he was. But karma seemed to find a way to pummel him in to the ground each time.

“You’re meant to holla back.”

Oikawa grinded his teeth as he stormed back in to his house, ready to punch whatever he could find his hands on. “I’ll have you reported for harassment.”

“Oh, okay. I’ll go report myself. It saves us the trouble of you ranting.”
Oikawa slammed the door closed, locking it behind him. “How did you find this number?” He demanded.

“Craigslist.”

“I’m hanging up. Good bye.”

There was a slight scuffling before he heard a much louder, frantic voice.

“No! K-cat, stop! We took it from Wazzy’s phone. I just need your help! Please,” the voice begged.

“You need my help?” Oikawa scoffed, shifting the phone to his right hand as he hissed in to it. “Trust me, the only person who can help you now is a psychiatrist,” He yanked at his tie, storming in to his bedroom. “What would make you even consider that I’d help you? You two are by far the most infuriating, irresponsible, incompetent human beings I’ve ever met and-” He paused, patting at his shirt before letting out a loud frustrated noise. He had left his jacket in Iwaizumi’s car.

“What does Akaashi look for in a relationship?

Oikawa let out a sharp bark of laughter. “Not you.”

Oikawa heard Officer Kuroo’s slightly muffled voice ring in the back of the call. “Ask him about the website guy with the dyed blonde hair.”

“Stay the hell away from my co-workers!” Oikawa snapped. “You two are like vermin!”

“How about we play twenty questions? Here, I’ll start. What year was Akaashi born in?”

“Surely!” Oikawa laughed in disbelief to no one in particular. “Surely I haven’t done anything to deserve this! I mean, no one in the world deserves this. And you!” he snarled, yanking off his trousers and reaching to grab his favourite overly-worn pajama pants. “I help you and this is how you repay me? Wingman and get cockblocked in return?”

“Please!” The voice begged. “We need your he- did you just say cockblock?”

Oikawa rolled his eyes, unbuttoning his shirt and replacing it with his soft ‘ET-Homeboy’ sweater. “I was at the movies with Iwaizumi,” he grumbled. It was bizarre saying it aloud considering he hadn’t done anything remotely fun in the past few months. Oikawa sat himself on the side of his bed. Thinking about Iwaizumi’s focused expression, reflected by the bright colours from the movie screen Oikawa couldn’t help but think the experience altogether was bizarre. It felt almost domestic he thought with a rush of giddiness and threw himself backwards in to the plush goodness of his bed.

“Wazzy hates the movies.”

“Liar,” Oikawa accused, eyes squinting at his phone as though the other would somehow receive it.

“No, really! He always refuses our invitation whenever we ask! He says the screen is so large he doesn’t know where to look and he can never get comfortable in the chairs.”

“Well, no one gets comfortable in those chairs,” Oikawa retorted defensively. He paused, rolling on to his stomach. “He seemed pretty casual about it to me,” he added with less reassurance.

There are a long pause before the phone crackled again. “What movie did you watch?”

“That’s irrelevant,” Oikawa snapped, face turning slightly red.
There was a momentary ruffling, and this time Officer Kuroo’s voice ringing in his ear. “Mm-m, nope. It is most definitely relevant. See, now this is what’s going to happen. Wazzy is going to go home thinking ‘wow, that was the worst date I’ve ever gone on’, delete you as a contact, and never speak of you again. Ever. All because you didn’t accept our help. We can help you out! We’ve known Wazzy for years! We know everything about him. So how about we help each other? I’ll scratch your back, you scratch mine?” The voice sounded almost coy and Oikawa shuddered at the imagery.

“Not sure if I want to touch your back,” he retorted.

“. It was a metaphor.” There was a light snuffle as Oikawa heard the two officers mumbling to one another. “Bro, he’s pretty clueless, don’t you reckon?”

“Do you two realise that there’s no chance for you two if this doesn’t work out? There’s no way you’ll ever see Akaashi and Kenma again.”

“What did he say? Kanmur? Did he say Kanmur?”

Oikawa rolled his eyes. "I don't need your help. I'm doing fine as it is."

"We'll just keep bothering you until you give us a chance."

Oikawa let out a prolonged laughter. "Do you know what I do as a profession? Avoiding nagging calls is my specialty. Good bye," He hung up, throwing his phone on his bed.

Bzzzzzzzzzzt.

He rolled his eyes as his snatched his phone. "I will block you if you keep calling though."

"You say that like it's a bad thing."

Oikawa let out a huge sigh of relief as he dropped his head on his pillow. “Oh, thank god. Tsukki, please tell me some good news.”

He allowed himself a smile as the brisk voice on the phone crackled. “Don’t call me that.”

“Oh, come on. Yamaguchi calls you that.”

“I was going to tell you some good news but now I think I'll just hang up.”


“Your Karasuno car rescue article got front page. Was told to pass on the news.”

Oikawa tucked his mobile between his ear and shoulder as he stretched his arms out on the bed. “That is good news,” He grinned at the ceiling. “Thanks for the message, Tsukki-“

Oikawa let out an amused laugh as the phone call ended immediately. Reaching up, he clicked for messages, sending Iwaizumi a short, but succinct message.

your article got front page well done. Want to celebrate? I'll shout. 
P.S. I may have left my jacket in your car
Oikawa dropped his phone on his stomach and lay there, waiting patiently for a reply. He hummed a light tune as he thrummed his fingers on his stomach. Several minutes passed and he tapped his phone to find no reply. 'Probably hasn't seen it yet' he decided as he tucked himself in to bed.

Minutes turned in to hours, then a day. Oikawa carried his phone with him at all times, checking his phone every few minutes but to his dismay was met with a blank screen. Saturday rolled by and Sunday made him anxious. 'Maybe the movies was a bad idea’ he wondered with slight uncertainty. By Monday morning, he was feeling glum and disappointed. He trudged his way out of bed, getting ready and locking the door before he left.

The first thing Oikawa noticed when he had walked in to work were the approving looks received from everyone. He wormed his way through, getting sidetracked several times by his female colleagues who batted their eyelids and crooned sweet compliments, and male associates who praised him with high-fives and pats on the shoulder. He finally made it to his office, excusing himself with a charming smile and hurried inside. Oikawa let out a relieved sigh when he jumped at the light ruffling. He spun around to find Akaashi leaning against his desk. Undoubtedly, the photographer had taken refuge in his office until the waves of praise died down.

“Well, you did it again,” Akaashi hummed.

“Don’t I always,” Oikawa grinned, clasping Akaashi’s hand in to a firm shake. "Good job on the photo too. Good choice."

The photographer gave a short, polite nod. “I guess it’s double the good news today,” He mused with a pleased smile.

Oikawa tilted his head with a confused smile. “Double?”

Akaashi flashed him a secretive look. “I was going to leave it as a surprise but I’ve got a special guest coming in today. I’ll introduce you to him later,” He stood, fingers flicking at his camera the way they always did when he was excited. “He’s coming over soon so I’m going to go to my station. Congratulations again though.”

“Same to you,” Oikawa replied. The photographer lifted his hand in a brief wave as he peeked his head out Oikawa's office door and scurrying out when there was the sight was clear.

Oikawa leaned back at his desk, checking his phone one final time and placing it in his drawer. He was done moping anyway. Rolling his head to the left, then right, he let out a sigh and switched his computer on. "Alright, let's do this," he mumbled aloud.

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Several hours had passed and Oikawa was beginning to feel to sluggish, his mind growing bleary and thick. He glanced at his mobile and frowned at the time. 'Kageyama should’ve come round with coffees by now’. Perhaps he was getting complacent with his job. Not that Oikawa cared. It was about time the intern left. He rose, leaning back and hearing a satisfying pop! Oikawa tiptoed his way to the door and peeked out, eyeing the passersbyers. There was no bustling raven-headed boy in sight. 'I shouldn't have to make my own coffee'. The reporter tightened his lips and made his out and toward the staff kitchen. Everyone was bustling about and phones rang incessantly as he toed his way through. He paused when a vivid light flashed in the corner of his eye. Oikawa glanced over
and did a double take at the small child standing in the middle of the office. He clutched on to his shoulder-strapped bag, staring around in awe. His eyes were the colour of toffee, a sweet and light brown.

Others seemed to be unbothered by the boy simply watching them with heightened fascination. Oikawa glanced around, frowning in confusion. ‘What kind of mother leaves her kid to run off in a place like this?’ Coffee forgotten, he strolled over and tapped the boy lightly on the shoulder. He leaned down at him with his award winning smile. “Hi there,” he cooed. “Are you lost?”

The child turned around and stared at him in surprise. “Yeah, a little. I was looking for the bathroom,” he admitted with a helpless grin. “Today’s my first day as an intern here,” he grinned, sticking his hand out. “Hinata Shoyou.”

“What?” Oikawa blinked down at the boy with the hair of a wild lion’s mane. “Intern? Another one? Where’s Kageyama?”

The new intern scrunched his brows in confusion. “Kage-who? Kageyami? Akaashi didn’t tell me there was more than one intern.”

Oikawa stared in bewilderment at the red-headed boy. “Akaashi? Is this some kind of joke? What does he have to with it?”

Hinata frowned, looking around. “I don’t understand, sorry. I’m not enti- Oh! Akaashi!” he called, waving madly.

Oikawa gaped in disbelief as Akaashi approached with a distressed look. “Hinata, you can’t just wander off like that,” he scolded. He nodded at Oikawa briefly before tucking a file in under his arm. “First, let’s just have a quick tour a-“

What,” Oikawa interrupted. He pointed at Hinata. “What is this?”

Akaashi’s eyebrow twitched but he smiled regardless. “This is my special guest. Hinata Shoyou. He’s working as an intern under me. I got authority since, you know, Kageyama isn’t one anymore.”

“Wait, what are you saying? Kageyama isn’t an intern anymore?” Oikawa stared at Akaashi. “No one told me about this,” His mouth began to curl in to a smile. “Are you pulling my leg?”

Akaashi huffed. “You didn’t read the email last week, did you? Friday night was his farewell party. It was actually quite nice. He even made a short sp-“

“Yes!” Oikawa raised his arms out to the skies. “Yes!” he cheered. “Oh my god, my prayers have been answered. I’ve been waiting for this day for so long!”

“What have you been waiting for?”

Oikawa jumped and spun around. He let out a disgusted bark. There Kageyama stood, in his usual black sweater and a folder tucked under his arm like every other ordinary day. Oikawa spun to face Akaashi. “You said he left!” he cried in distraught.

Akaashi frowned at him. “I never said he left. I said we had a farewell party for him. As an intern,” He nudged in and Oikawa gaped as he held his hand out. “Congratulations on the job. I’m happy for you.”

Kageyama blinked at him in bewilderment. He burst in to a huge grin and nodded as he shook his elder’s hand. “Thank you. I really appreciate that.”
Akaashi smiled lightly and leaned back to gesture at the new intern, staring at Kageyama in amazement. “This is Hinata Shoyou. The new intern.”

“Yo!” Hinata yipped.

Kageyama stared down at him. He had frighteningly large eyes with a wild mop of hair. The burst of sunkist orange was impossible to miss. A light glimmer caught his eye and Kageyama’s gaze slid over to the other’s right ear. It was adorned with several gold piercings, glinting like trophies. As if his physical appearance was not enough of a shock he wore an alarming red shirt as though to match his untamed hair with a pair of ripped denim. A look completely unsuitable for the office and Kageyama found himself tugging uncomfortable at his sweater. He glanced at the bulky camera hung around the other’s neck, the thing so large he couldn’t possibly imagine how he could hold it with his tiny hands.

“You’re a photographer?” Kageyama asked politely. He didn’t want to build bad associations with anyone in the office, especially on his first day.

Hinata grinned as he lightly flicked his camera. “I’m a photographer and a reporter,” he declared proudly.

Kageyama’s eyes snapped up to meet the intern’s. “There’s no such thing. You can’t be both.”

“Well, then I guess I’m the first,” Hinata puffed out his chest. “I’m going to be the top.”

Kageyama squinted at the new intern and Oikawa scoffed aloud. “Going to be both?” He asked incredulously. “Interns must think they’re going to get everything handed to them on a silver platter.”

Hinata flushed a light red and Akaashi sent Oikawa a dirty look. “Just because you don’t have an intern, doesn’t mean you can bully mine.”

Oikawa gaped at Akaashi. “Really? Really? Today went off to a bright start and here I was, thinking that maybe work would cheer me up from the weekend but no,” Oikawa sighed, covering his eyes with his hand. “I can’t deal with this right in the morning. Get me a coffee,” he ordered.

Kageyama grinned at Hinata. The internship was fun and he learnt a considerable amount working here but coffee runs were one of the main things he definitely wouldn’t miss.

Hinata began to move when Oikawa placed a finger up. “No,” He pointed at Kageyama. “You get me the coffee.”

“But I’m the intern,” Hinata frowned.

“And I’m his superior,” Oikawa grinned at Kageyama. “You know how I like it.”

Kageyama felt his face flush with embarrassment. Of course Oikawa would place hierarchy in to this. ‘Now I’m going to get looked by the intern too’. He glanced at Akaashi who flashed him an apologetic look and nodded. He marched away, worming his way through the office. He received occasional ‘welcome back’ and ‘congratulations’ which did cheer him up. However, upon getting to the staff kitchen he dropped his forced smile and sighed. ‘Some things just don’t change’. He reached over for the sweeteners when he felt a light brush over his neck. He spun around coming face to face with a mop of sunset orange and jolted back. “What th- don’t just sneak up on people like that!” he spluttered.

Hinata appeared nonplussed as he eyed the coffee mug and peered up at Kageyama. “Are you a reporter?”
Kageyama frowned down at him before lightly shoving his chest forward. “Yeah, I am,” he declared.

Hinata nodded. He reached over and grabbed another mug, standing very closely beside Kageyama.

Kageyama sighed and grabbed a teaspoon. ‘One spoonful of coffee, two sweeteners, dash of milk...’ he eyed his left to find Hinata watching him with great concentration. “What are you doing?” he asked suspiciously.


“So, why apply here for an internship?” Kageyama asked as he leaned against the counter, waiting for the water to boil.

“It’s one of the very few places which offer photography at a news business. And being close to home is a definite bonus too,” Hinata tilted his head at Kageyama, large eyes shining with curiosity. "Why did you apply here?"

"Because it has been my absolute aspiration to work at the AobaJousai company. They're one of the top industries, well-credited for their works and some of the most ground-breaking stories have been published by this team," Kageyama paused, reconsidering his answer. "And they have Oikawa Tooru."

"Oh, cool," Hinata chirped. "I initially started off with photography but I thought I may as well give reporting a try too."

Kageyama felt a light tweak of irritation and rolled his eyes at the comment. “Being a reporter is a lot of hard work and dedication, you know. You can’t just declare you’re one and expect it to happen.”

Hinata looked up at him in surprise. “Well, I’m working at one of the highest news industries in the area, aren’t I? Seems to me like I’m on the right track.”

Kageyama stared at Hinata incredulously. ‘This guy is an idiot’ he thought. There was no possible way they were going to become friends, especially in this business.

“You’re not going to be a reporter,” he said with slight annoyance.

“Yeah, I’m going to be a reporter and a photographer.”

“I already said you can’t be both.”

“How come Oikawa senpai makes you grab his coffee. Isn’t that an intern job?"

Kageyama shut his mouth at that and glared at the intern. Hinata stared back, however, not a hint of bad intent in his expression. Kageyama turned, reaching for the boiled water to hide his flushed face. “I think it’s a powerplay thing,” he muttered.

“Oh,” Hinata frowned. “Let me make his coffee next time.”

Kageyama eyed the other with suspicion. “Why?”

“So I can prove that I can make it better,” He reached over and poured the remaining water in to his mug and stirred.

Kageyama stared at Hinata in confusion. Then it dawned on him. “You idiot,” he hissed. “It’s not a powerplay between us, it’s a powerplay between me and h-“
“Then let me make his coffee next time and we’ll see!” Hinata insisted with a pout.

“No.”

“See I knew it!”

Kageyama rolled his eyes and lifted the warm coffee mug. He stepped aside to the left to avoid bumping in to the other but was blocked off. Hinata stood in front of him, face slightly panicked.

“What,” Kageyama started and took a step to the right to find the intern mirror his move.

“What are you-“ he took a step forward, Hinata one step back. “Stop that.”

Hinata grasped his coffee mug, small fingers wrapped about the handle. He flashed a encouraging smile at the other. “Let me give him my coffee first. Just once.”

Kageyama jerked his head back and glared at Hinata in slight disbelief. “What, no! He’ll get angry at me.”

“No he won’t! You’re his favourite.”

“Get out of my way,” Kageyama leaned to the left and bolted as the other moved to slow.

“Hey, come back!” Hinata cried. Kageyama power-walked ahead before he felt a tug on his sleeve.

“Wh- Hey! Don’t!” Kageyama paused to stop the coffee from spilling over. It wobbled near the rim of the mug dangerously.

“Oi!” he snapped at Hinata. Kageyama reached over and grabbed a fistful of the intern’s hair. Hinata yelped, crouching to make sure his coffee hadn’t poured over.

“You’re such a kid,” Kageyama sneered.

“No, you are!” Hinata retorted, wild eyes flashing in defiance. Kageyama reached out to grab another handful of hair but Hinata grasped his hand, interlocking their fingers in a straining hold.

“Let go,” Kageyama snapped as Hinata grinned back.

“Only if you admit defeat.”

“Hell no!” Kageyama squeezed their fingers in a painful grip, relishing the way the other winced. “What’s wrong? Am I crushing your little, baby fingers?”

“Crushing? I hardly felt it!” Hinata bit back.

Other co-workers stared in surprise at the two hand in hand as they fought and bickered their way through the office.

∞

"I can't believe you got a new intern."

"Yeah, well I can't believe you treated him like that."
Oikawa shrugged as he dropped on to his stone slab of a chair. "I told you, it's building character."

Akaashi pressed two fingers against his temple as he flipped through his file. "Sorry, I shouldn't have snapped. It's just been a frantic morning. I hadn't expected it to turn out like this. Did you know I lost him four time already and it...

Oikawa felt his wander. He'd missed two of his usual doses of coffee and he felt himself slowly churning down. 'Stupid Kageyama'. His gaze strayed from the wall behind Akaashi's head down to his desk, before landing on his first drawer. 'I wonder what he's up to'.

Bzzzzzzzzzzt.

The reporter snatched the drawer open and checked his phone. His heart flipped before dropping with a sounded thud and his shoulders drooped at the screen which flashed an unknown number. He swiped to check the message:

I promise I'll stop calling u P-cock :-(
Sincerely B-Dawgs

Oikawa scoffed lightly, placing his phone on his desk. He had to admit it felt nice knowing someone was suffering along with him. His mind drifted back to their last phone call. It was true Iwaizumi had stopped replying since the movie incident. Oikawa couldn't help but think perhaps Kuroo had been right. What is Iwaizumi really did loathe movies? Did Oikawa push it? He recalled the Kuroo's deal from last Friday. 'I scratch your back you scratch mine'.

"Oikawa?"

Oikawa glanced up at Akaashi who looked back with concern. "Oh, sorry. My mind drifted."

"You look like you've eaten something sour."

Oikawa waved him off as he sat back. "So, how's the whole 'handling your own intern' business?"

“It’s been okay,” Akaashi sighed. “It's alot more work than I expected though. Hinata seems like a handful and he's so energetic. I don't think I'll be able to keep up and that kinda worries m-“

“Hey, what do you look for in a partner?”

Akaashi stared at Oikawa. "Is this a joke?"

The reporter shrugged nonchalantly, twiddling his thumbs. "No, I just- we never talked about this stuff. So, tell me."

Akaashi's eyes scrunched in to a squint. “You’re not my type.”


Akaashi eyed him suspiciously. “Why the sudden question?”

"I just want to know. In fact," Oikawa paused as he reached down and pulled out a spare notebook

Oikawa dropped his notebook on his desk and shrugged. "Okay, you got me. I've just been talking to him and it's not that I want to ask you but I honestly had no choice. He just kept nag-

"There's nothing wrong with being in a relationship with a policeman. I mean, it's not really my forte but you have my approval."

Oikawa stopped. He blinked at Akaashi. "What? No. No, no. I was asking about you and B-

"You and that policeman," Akaashi dropped his head, attention shifted to his camera. He flicked the buttons and swiped at the screen. "It pretty obvious from the start. I've never seen you tug at your hair so girlishly before. So, like I said. You have my approval."

"No!" Oikawa pinched the bridge of his nose. "I wasn't- oh my god. You got it all wrong. What is your type? That's all I need to know. Honestly," he confirmed with both hands up.

Akaashi crossed his arms as he eyed Oikawa. "As I recall, you had a ‘movie date’ last Thursday,” he murmured, completely ignoring Oikawa's question. "What’s the deal with that?"

“I never said I went on a movie date with him,” Oikawa pointed out.

“You never hang out with clients,” Akaashi retorted in a heartbeat. “Why the sudden change then?” He stared at Oikawa whose face flushed a light pink.

“Maybe I just wanted to build my web of connections,” Oikawa replied defensively, arms crossed.

Akaashi snorted. “Why, Oikawa?” he probed again. He held a serious expression. “Is it because of his body?” Akaashi continued to stare unaffected when Oikawa let out a strangled choke.

“You make it sound so creepy,” he accused.

Akaashi blinked at him. “So it is about his body then.”

“No!” Oikawa cried as he covered his eyes. “Not about his body. Oh my god, stop saying that. Okay, you know what? I'm sorry for asking. I'm sorry for even bringing this up.”

“Then what? Is it his face? He does have an aesthetic appeal,” Akaashi considered.

Oikawa dropped his hands to shoot Akaashi a put-off look. "First ‘body’, now ‘aesthetic appeal’? You make everything sound to clinical."

“What do you prefer me to say? ‘Hot’? ‘Sexy’? Do you think he’s sexy, Oikawa-san?”

A loud knock interrupted the two and Oikawa silently thanked the heavens. They leaned over to find Kageyama and the new intern huffing and wheezing for breath.

“Your coffee!” Kageyama yapped.

“Uh, okay?” Oikawa glanced over at Akaashi who shot him a disgruntled look which read ‘continue this later’. 
Hinata had a defeated look as he pouted at Kageyama. “Oh, uh. Would you like a coffee, Akaashi senpai?”

Akaashi blinked in surprise. “Just Akaashi is fine,” he corrected but Oikawa noted the pleased look he had as he accepted the coffee from the bubbly redhead. Hinata glanced over at Kageyama with a triumphant look, only for it to die down when he noticed the other grinning back.

“Akaashi likes his coffee black, not with milk,” he bragged.

The colour drained from Hinata’s face as he raced to grab the mug back. Akaashi waved him off. “No, it’s fine. Thank you.”

He stood. “We should get going, Hinata. I’ll show you the rest of the office.”

“Okay,” Hinata grumbled. He shared one last look with Kageyama and thought ‘I am going to beat you’.

“Don’t come back, Akaashi,” Oikawa mumbled, covering his eyes. Akaashi rolled his eyes as he walked out followed by his chatty intern.

Oikawa peeked through his fingers and sighed in relief. He glanced to his right to find Kageyama smiling at the sight of the two heading toward the printing department.

“Tobio.”

Kageyama jumped at the mention of his first name and glanced over, smile completely wiped off.

Oikawa regarded him seriously for several moments before flipping through his papers. “Just because you got the job doesn’t mean I’ll go easy on you,” he groused. “Congratulations.”

Kageyama stared and fumbled as he bowed deeply. “Thank you.”

Oikawa rolled his eyes. “Now, get out.”

“Yes!” Kageyama hurried out, unable to hide his huge grin. ‘Perhaps coffee is important’.

∞

The past two days had been utter hell. After the phone call, Iwaizumi had sped his way back to the department to find Daichi had already begun the interview process. The latest victim was a business man in his mid-thirties. He appeared to be in a daze, looking considered ruffled up and had difficulties keeping up with Iwaizumi’s questions. Iwaizumi’s patience was wearing thin and before he knew it Daichi had placed a hand on each shoulder, stared him squarely in the eyes and ordered “take the weekend off.” Iwaizumi snapped back, but Daichi held his stance until the senior officer grumbled to call him if he needed anything. He had spent the entirety of the weekend cooped up at home, going through each file, each case, each miniscule detail, but snapping in frustration not only at the himself, but at the fact that the new case completely overthrew any possible paths he had construed. Iwaizumi was back at square one.

The first thing Iwaizumi noticed when he had walked in to work on Monday was everything was awfully calm. Which was never a good indication. He glanced around to find Kuroo typing expertly
on the keyboard, his lazy eyes now sharp as they focused on the screen. The light tapping of keys were accompanied by the whirring sound of the fax machine. Officer Bokuto stood beside it as he stared intently at a file.

“Morning,” Iwaizumi said with uncertainty.

Officer Kuroo glanced up, fingers still continuing to tap swiftly. “Morning,” he called before continuing his work. Iwaizumi stared, raising an eyebrow at Bokuto. The other raised his hand in a brief wave before reaching over and stapling his papers. He marched over and placed the file near Officer Kuroo.

“That’s the report from last Wednesday,” he said briefly. Kuroo let out a grunt of acknowledgement as he leaned back to stretch. Bokuto gave a curt nod and returned to the fax machine, collecting the prints and examining each page with great detail.

“Uh,” Iwaizumi started, slowly taking off his jacket. “Did you break anything?”

Officer Kuroo paused at that, looking up at him with a look of disapproval. “Iwaizumi, please. We’re a little behind on our schedule so if you don’t mind,” He rolled his shoulders before assuming with his work.

“I see,” Iwaizumi said cautiously. He glanced around in suspicion but before he could say another comment the back door opened with a familiar face. Iwaizumi straightened upright, giving a sharp bow. “Ushijima. Sorry, I didn’t realise you were here.”

The tall man regarded him seriously before nodding. “I wanted to stop by. See the progress of this department,” He glanced over at Kuroo and Bokuto. “It’s good to see everyone is working hard.”

Bokuto bundled his papers, stapling another file and placing it aside. “Just another ordinary day at work,” he said with a brief smile. Ushijima’s lips twitched up for a short moment before he faced Iwaizumi.

“I also wanted to have a word with you if you didn’t mind.”

Iwaizumi bowed again and rushed over. “Of course,” He opened the door to let Ushijima through. Kuroo and Bokuto glanced up, sharing looks of concern as Iwaizumi shut the door behind him. They walked down the hallway, then a sharp left in to Iwaizumi’s office.

Ushijima placed himself at Iwaizumi’s desk and watched the other. “Have a seat,” he ordered, gesturing to the guest seat. Iwaizumi sat down carefully, placing both hands on each thigh. There was a long stretch of silence before Ushijima finally spoke out. “What’s the progress on the assault and theft case?”

Iwaizumi tightened his grip on his jeans. “Still searching. We have a few culprits but no prime suspects,” He spoke carefully.

“I see. There has been another victim, I heard?”

Iwaizumi felt his insides coil. “Yes.”

“Hm.” Ushijima sat back, watching the other. Neither spoke for a long time before he reached in to his bag and pulled out a paper. “Were you aware of this?”

Iwaizumi stared down at his own face printed on the front page of the paper. ‘The Real Heroes of our City’. Ah. So Oikawa had managed to get the article published. The officer felt his face warm as
he forced himself to make eye contact with Ushijima again.

“I was somewhat aware.”

Ushijima glanced down. He leaned over, pointing at the small print under the bold title. “Written by Oikawa Tooru. Is this the same Oikawa Tooru from the case we were discussing moments ago?”

“Yes.”

Ushijima nodded. “I was unaware he was a reporter. He is also involved deeply in your latest case.”

Iwaizumi grit his teeth in discomfort. “Yes.”

“Reporters are crafty people. It suggest it is wise to avoid them.”

“He approached me asking for a story and I agreed,” Iwaizumi only realised how lame the excuse sounded after it had left his mouth. He straightened his shoulders as Ushijima crossed his hands neatly on top of the paper.

“As the article is irrelevant to the current case, I won’t place a comment,” Iwaizumi's senior officer glanced up, watching him with stony eyes. “Iwaizumi, you are one of our top officers in this area and most definitly one of my favourtite,” Ushijima's eyes sharpened considerably as he watched the other. “But I will not hesitate to remove you off the case if I believe there is no progress. Do you understand?”

Iwaizumi's gut wrenched as he dropped his gaze. “I understand.”

Ushijima nodded in approval and straightened his shirt as he stood. Iwaizumi noted the fact that he had left the paper as he headed toward the door. Iwaizumi rushed ahead, holding the door open for the other.

“Oh, and Hajime?”

The officer glanced up in question.

“I don’t think I commended you on the Karasuno rescue. Well done.”

The praise did little to lighten his mood. Iwaizumi bowed deeply. “Thank you.”

The two entered back to the front office where Officer Kuroo and Bokuto were continuing with their tasks. Ushijima eyed the officers before turning to Iwaizumi.

“Good day,” The senior officer gave a curt nod and left the front door, the echo of his shoes halting when he entered his car.

Kuroo continued to type until the rumble of the car had eventually faded. His fingers eventually slowed to a halt and the officer threw himself back, letting out a loud cheer.

“He’s gone, party time!”

Bokuto half-collapsed on the desk as he wiped his forehead. “Oh, thank god! I thought he was never going to leave and I was running out of paper.”

Iwaizumi frowned in confusion and stared blankly at the several stacks of paper bundles stapled together. “What have you be-“ He leaned over to peer at the assorted papers. “Have you just been stapling blank pieces of paper this entire time?”
“Ushiwaka just burst in and I was standing next to this thing. I panicked and pressed a few buttons and now it won’t stop spouting out paper,” He pointed to the whirring fax machine. “What even is this thing? Do we need it?”

Kuroo flashed him a thumbs up. “Good thinking, bro. You looked super busy with all that stapling and stuff.”

Bokuto beamed at his friend, pausing to push the paper back in to the machine. “Does this have an off button?”

Iwaizumi sighed, massaging his temples. “Where’s Lev? Has he been pretending to do work too?”

“I’m here!”

Iwaizumi frowned as he looked around the office. “Where are you, Lev?” He asked slowly. Kuroo pointed to his left.

Iwaizumi glanced down to find a peek of shoe under the desk. “What the hell are you doing?”

“I got here a little late and I didn’t realise Ushiwaka was doing to be here. I had no choice but to hide.”

Iwaizumi glared at the desk. “I’m fairly sure you did have a choice and hiding should’ve been one of the last options. Now get out.”

There was a momentary sound of scuffling and Lev let out a grunt. “I can’t. I’m stuck.”

Iwaizumi threw his arms up in the air in exasperation. “God damn it, Lev. Of all places why would you choose under a desk? You’re the biggest out of all of us too.”

“I told you, I had no choice!” Lev’s distressed cry rang from the desk. “You could’ve at least warned us he was coming!”

“I didn’t know he was coming!” Iwaizumi snapped.

“What did he want?” Iwaizumi glanced up at Officer Bokuto who had a nervous look on his face. “It’s… It’s not because of the donut incident, right? Because we all know that wasn’t my fault okay.”

Iwaizumi sighed in frustration. “No, he came because he wanted to ask why the one of the victims of the assault and theft case was writing an article about me. You can’t have close associations with the victims of the case. He placed a warning that I may even be pushed off the case,” He couldn’t afford to lose the case now. It would cost the next leading officer weeks to catch up to the progress and by then the incidents could double in number and fatality.

Bokuto slumped back in relief. “Oh, good. Trust Ushiwaka to stalk your love life.”

Iwaizumi’s head snapped up and he squinted over at the other officer. “What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

“Well,” Bokuto blinked at him. “I mean, you two are kinda like,” He paused, then curled both his pinkies together in a little link.

Iwaizumi frowned. “What, no? What does that even mean?”

“Because you went on a date with him,” Lev replied, voice slightly strained now. “But seriously, can someone help me? My back is getting sore.”
“That’s ridiculous. It wasn’t a date,” Iwaizumi snapped defensively.

Kuroo glanced at Bokuto. “Well, you did go to see the movies,” he drawled.

“It was a movie about aliens. A children’s mov-“

“Oh, whaaat?” Bokuto butted in loudly. “You went to see Ultrafonio the Galaxy Warrior? I wanted to go see that!” He eyed Kuroo with a hopeful look.

“Alright, on Wednesday night.”

“Yes!” Bokuto cried, fist pumping. “Was it any good?” He asked, eyes wide and sparkling.

Iwaizumi shrugged. “It makes no sense.”

“Please, I can’t feel my legs and I need to go to the bathroom.”

“So, what did you do after the movie then?” Kuroo prompted.

“I drove him to his place. But only because it was cold and he caught the bus over,” Officer Iwaizumi added quickly when he noticed Kuroo raise an eyebrow.

“Hold up, so you went to see a movie together, then you went to his place together. What else did you do together, Wazzy?”

“Nothing! We did nothing, alright!” Iwaizumi snapped. “If you’re calling going to the movies together a date then what about you two?” Iwaizumi pointed accusingly at Kuroo and Bokuto. “You two dating?”

“What, no!” Bokuto frowed. “That’s completely different to your situation,” He paused before whispering over to Kuroo. “We’re not dating, right? I mean, I’m flattered and you’re a cool dude but I’m committed to Akaashi and it just get weird if you th-“

Kuroo waved him off. “Nah, bro we’re good. But we need to address the fact that Wazzy can’t even distinguish between a movie with a pal and a date. How come you said yes to Peacock but you’ve never once gone out with us?”

Iwaizumi frowned. “His name is Oikawa Tooru. He doesn’t appreciate being called Peacock.”

“Whipped!” Kuroo cried out, pointing at Iwaizumi. “Wazzy is totally whipped! Defending his lover. I always pinned him as a romantic.”

“I don’t get what the big deal is. We’re just friends! First Ushijima was up in my case and now you two. There is nothing going on between me and him,” Iwaizumi growled.

“Woah, defensive,” Bokuto mumbled loudly, glancing up at the ceiling with large eyes. “So when are you seeing him again?”

"I don't know. I have his jacket though. Perhaps I'll just send it to him through mail instead."

“What, why?! No one even uses mail anymore, Wazzy!” Bokuto cried.

“Because you two are making this weird so I’ll just cut ties. He’s written his report so there’s really no need to meet him again.”

“It’s not a big deal, you know,” Kuroo remarked. “I think he’s alright. It’ll be fun to have him
around,” He flashed Iwaizumi a two thumbs up. “You have my approval.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes as Lev called out. “You have my approval too! But please, there’s only so long I can hold till I wet myself.”

Iwaizumi reached down and yanked Lev’s arm out, stepping back as the other popped out with a wheeze. Scrabbling to his feet, he bolted to the back door.

“I don’t need anyone’s approval,” Iwaizumi grumbled, crossing his arms. “I’m dealing with it myself.”

“Are you dealing though?” Kuroo probed. “Because it seems to me like you’re acting like a big baby.”

“A baby?” Iwaizumi glared at the duo. “That’s the most pathetic insult I’ve ever h-“

“Waaahhhh, sorry can’t hear you over this baby whining, waahhh,” Bokuto made childish crying gestures as Iwaizumi stared, unamused.

“And you call me the baby.”

“Because you are. Man up and meet with Aikowi. Nothing wrong with having a relationship, jees.”

“Oikawa Tooru. And it’s not a relationship.”

“Right, okay. So if I went up to you like this,” Kuroo pushed himself up from his seat and sauntered over. He placed a casual arm on Iwaizumi’s shoulder and leaned in. “What if I came up and asked you this,” Kuroo deepened his voice as he gave Iwaizumi a smoldering look from under his lashes. “Want to go to the movies with me? What would you consider that?”

Iwaizumi stared deadpanned at the officer who was trying awfully hard to be sultry, pursing his lips. “Sexual harassment.”

“No, you would consider that a date.”

“Aren’t dates meant to be mutual? I didn’t agree to this.”

“You agreed to Peacock.”

“Shut up, Bokuto.”

“Yes sir.”

“But Wazzy, you have to admit it is a little strange. You never say yes to our invitations, you never go out but out of the blue an admittedly handsome man appears and suddenly you’re going on alien movie dates and going over to his place after. None it seems to match.”

“It wasn’t a movie date,” Iwaizumi snapped. He paused. ‘None of it seems to match’. “Oikawa Tooru,” he murmured slowly in thought. “His house was unlocked and he was certain he had locked it when he left,” He looked up at Officer Kuroo and Bokuto who stared at him in confusion. “The latest incident against a young business man occurred on Friday night.”

Iwaizumi’s eyebrows furrowed as he marched back to his office to retrieve his bag. He pulled out the case files and lined them up. Reaching the newest manila folder Daichi had reluctantly sent over, he flipped through the profile. Scanning through, he pointed at the page and looked up at the police duo with a serious regard. “Look here, the place the incident supposedly took place is not far from
Oikawa Tooru’s address. Oikawa Tooru mentioned he had left the house in the morning, meaning he hadn’t come home since when we both entered. Doesn’t it seem far too coincidental for Oikawa to be targeted twice within a few weeks? If you consider the circumstances, that is definitely enough time for someone to have entered his home and left to end up at the other site. I think,” Iwaizumi said slowly, realisation dawning upon him. “I think our target knows where Oikawa Tooru lives.”

Officer Kuroo blinked in surprise. He crossed his arms slowly. “Iwaizumi, that’s a big assumption,” he said cautiously. “But if it’s true then that’s an even bigger problem.”

Bokuto watched the two as he gently placed a stack of paper he had been holding by the fax machine which had finally stopped whirring. “What if whoever entered Oikawa’s house had been waiting for him to return? He might’ve given up and gone to the next victim,” he suggested. "But if that's the case, and we're only going off this assumption," Bokuto's expression quickly turning terse. "What if the culprit knows the addresses of every other victim?"

The three officers shared glances with one another when a loud, cheerful tune interrupted the solemn atmosphere. Lev strolled in whistling whilst tucking his belt back in to the loops of his pants. “Oh man!” he chuckled. “For a second, I thought I wasn't going to make it! Don't you love it when you've been holding it in for so long and you just let it all-” Lev’s grin faltered as he blinked at their grave faces. “What? What’s wrong?”

Chapter End Notes

Introducing Hinata & Ushijima and ANOTHER pairing in to this fic! I complained about having trouble juggling two ships before but now I got an entire fleet (someone save me)

Updates will hopefully occur sooner now! Thank you for reading (◠‿◠✿)

ALSO: if you have any suggestions, ideas, questions please don't hesitate to drop a comment and I'll get to you as soon as possible - Thank you lovely readers!
I like you... maybe

Chapter Notes

Heeeeey fellas, guess who's back!
hahahahahahhhahhhh.... sorry forthelate update

My laptop decided it would be a great idea to die on me so I've pretty much lost all of this fic which I had been building up
I've tried re-writing the ending but I'm just not happy with it so I've decided to try a completely different route and see where that takes me
Apologies again and I promise next update will be happening much sooner (But I've written an extra long chapter for the long wait so I hope you enjoy)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Possible links. Possible connections. Possible targets. Possible preferences. Possible pattern. So many possibilities. The officer sat at his desk, leg twitching and fingers splayed over his left temple as he skimmed through the files once more. He sat back, his worn-out chair groaning as he too heaved in distress. “I’m going insane,” Iwaizumi muttered to himself. He rubbed at his eyes, checking his mobile. ‘6:03pm’. It was only a matter of time before Daichi would barge in and give him an earful about ‘allowing oneself some recovery time’.

If only. Iwaizumi sighed before standing up for a quick stretch. Bones cracked and muscles pulled briefly and Iwaizumi drooped over again, letting out a satisfied noise. He ran his fingers over his ribcage, up and down as he eyed his office. Files, papers, pictures, sketches splayed all over his desk, floor and walls. It wouldn’t be long until he’d have to resort to sticking papers down the hallway.

The officer tilted his head to the left, hearing another light crack before shifting to the other side. He paused. Then dropped his gaze on to his desk. It was still within vision, in the corner of his eye, nagging him like a pesky fly on a hot summer’s day. Oikawa Tooru’s jacket.

‘I’ll give it back soon’ Iwaizumi thought defensively and plopped himself back in to his seat. Just.. as soon as he went through the case files once more. Iwaizumi had been meaning to give it back but he hadn’t found the time considering the circumstances of his new possible theory. He was already falling behind enough as it was and with Ushijima up in his case, he needed to show him some form of progress. ‘Why Oikawa Tooru’s house?’ Iwaizumi tugged at his hair in despair. There was the possibility of his unlocked house being a pure coincidence. After all, he had been the only victim so far whose house had been broken in to. If it had been broken in to. Iwaizumi paused, frowning in thought. Was anything stolen from Oikawa’s house? He glanced up at the jacket lying in a crumpled heap beside a stack of overdue reports. Surely if Oikawa had been missing something he’d report it, wouldn’t he? Considering he hadn’t messaged him since the incident on Friday, it was unlikely anything was missing or stolen. 'But that means I've been wasting my time again'.

Iwaizumi paused, checking his phone for any messages. It remained empty. He could always call him or ask through messaging. He’d just gotten the hang of texting too. The officer rubbed his chin, feeling the coarse roughness having forgotten to shave since last Saturday, or since he had gone to see Oikawa. A slight pang of guilt dwelled within him. His gaze drifted to the wrinkled jacket. He really should return that soon.
Iwaizumi frowned at himself. It was unlikely that the reporter would hold a grudge against him. After all, they lived individual, busy lifestyles. His left leg had assumed its twitching and Iwaizumi glanced back down at his files.

‘...Oh, what the hell’. He leapt up, grabbing Oikawa's jacket. Tucking his wallet and phone in to his pocket, he left his office in a hurry.

The front office was docile. It was always nice whenever Daichi was around. The other three officers sat obediently at their own desks with what Iwaizumi assumed was their overdue, unfinished reports. Officer Kuroo held a serious expression with his eyes scrunched in to a tiny squint and a light pink of tongue peeking from between his lips. He appeared to be in complete focus, scrunching tiny pieces of paper and tossing it in to Daichi hair without him noticing. Bokuto could barely suppress his snorts, golden eyes twinkling as he egged his friend on. However, Lev appeared to be sitting alone, mostly keeping to himself as he stared blankly at the ceiling fan. Iwaizumi eyed the office before letting out a loud cough and heading toward the coat stand.

“I’m going to take a quick break,” he called as he shrugged on his own jacket.

“It’s not a break if you’re not even on a shift. Go home already.”

The officer huffed in disgruntled amusement as he rubbed at his chest. “The case isn’t going to solve itself, you know.”

“Oh, I know,” Officer Daichi swiveled around to face him with a scornful look. “I also know overworking yourself isn’t going to help either.”

“Hence, the break,” Iwaizumi bantered back easily. “See, win-win situation.” He grinned at the other who frowned.

“If Wazzy gets a break then I want one too.”

Officer Daichi turned to glare at Kuroo. “You’ve already had your break. With overtime. No breaks.”

“Fine,” Kuroo pointed at Lev. “I will use his break instead then.”

This seemed to grab Lev's attention and he snapped his head toward the other. “No way!” he cried, then dragging his chair toward Iwaizumi. “Wazzy, tell him he’s not allowed!”

Iwaizumi sighed, massaging his temple. “Kuroo, you’re not allowed. Besides,” he lifted the dark-coloured jacket. “I’m just going to return this then I’ll be back.”

“Who’s is that?” Daichi frowned.

“It’s from his loooover,” Officer Bokuto squeezed in, mouth stretched in to a lopsided grin. “He left it behind on their date.”

“It wasn’t a date,” Iwaizumi retorted quickly, ignoring Daichi’s raised eyebrows and knowing looks. “I just dropped him off and he left it behind.”

“They went to the movies,” Bokuto continued, content to jibber on. “They watched a movie then Wazzy drove him home.”

Daichi sent Iwaizumi a full-blown look of incredulity. “You went to the movies then drove him home?”
“Well, where else was I meant to drive him?” Iwaizumi retorted defensively. “He caught the bus there.”

“How about just not drive him anywhere? Couldn’t say no to that, now could you?” Kuroo added with a lazy grin.

Iwaizumi pointed at him. “No breaks, extended shift. Yeah, couldn’t say no to that.”

Officer Bokuto let out a delighted hoot, reaching over to smack his gob smacked friend on the arm. “Apply cold water to that burn! Yeouch, Wazzy is feisty today!”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “I’ll be quick. Just dropping it off then coming back,” he paused, before pointing at Lev. “You, with me.”

All four officers blinked in surprise. “Wait, me?” Lev broke in to a wide grin. He stood abruptly, stumbling lightly over his own chair. “I’m going with you? Alright! Let’s go!”

“Wait, hold up, hold up,” Kuroo frowned, hands held out. “Why does he get to go?”

“Because he hasn’t had his break yet,” Iwaizumi contemplated before adding “and there’s less grief for Daichi.”

“You’re a lifesaver,” Daichi called, stacking his files together in a bundled heap. “Wait,” he frowned when noticing several small balls of paper drop on to his desk. He ran a hand through his hair, scrunching his nose in confusion when several more bits of paper fell. “What the hell?”

“Well, before you go, I have something for you.” Kuroo quickly interjected and reached in to the drawer, pulling out a crisp, white envelope from his drawer. “They say chivalry is dead,” He grinned, holding it toward Iwaizumi. “I say otherwise.”

The senior officer stared deadpanned at it. “What is it?” he asked, eyeing it with suspicion.

“It’s a love letter,” Kuroo grinned. “I made it myself.”

“I’m not delivering Oikawa Tooru a love letter.”

“What? Eurgh, no,” Kuroo scrunched his face in distaste. “Wazzy, don’t even joke. It’s for my love interest.”

“Love interest,” Iwaizumi repeated. He stared at Officer Kuroo with a fed-up expression. “You’re telling me you have a love interest.”

The messy-haired officer nodded, tilting his chin up at him. “I’m gonna woo them with my poetry,” he declared. “It’s not too forward, not too passive, even has a hint of mystery to keep them curious and wanting more. The trick is not to give everything away. And before you know it, they’ll be begging for more,” He made an obscene gesture of fake licking the palm of his hands and running them through his unruly hair. Iwaizumi grimaced and Officer Daichi rolled his eyes. “I mean,” Kuroo continued. “I don’t want to brag but I’m practically the modern Shakespeare.”

“K-cat, you’re so smooth!” Bokuto chimed, eyes sparkling. He rocked back and forth on the balls of his feet. “I wish I thought of that,” he added wistfully. “I bet Akaashi would like that.”

“Yaku might like that too,” Lev hummed in contemplation.

“Lev, don’t. I don’t think he’d be that thrilled,” Iwaizumi noted. He reached over, plucking the
envelope from the officer. “So you want me to give this to them?” He flipped the envelope to find it blank on either side. “Name?”

Kuroo waved him off. “I don’t know yet. Look for a small, petite blonde, very cute. Trust me, hard to miss.”

Iwaizumi frowned. “You don’t know their name? How do you expect them to respond if you don’t even know each other’s names? And what if I can’t fi-“

“Hard to miss,” Kuroo repeated. He flashed the other a lazy grin. “I have faith in you, cupid.”

Iwaizumi frowned as Officer Daichi leaned back and crossed his arms. “Why don’t you just talk to them like every other normal individual. Ask them out for coffee or something?”

Bokuto perked up at that. “Ooh, actually, a coffee date with Akaashi sounds nice. Well, anywhere with him would be nice too.”

Kuroo scrunched his nose. “That’s so unoriginal. Where’s the excitement in that? Besides,” he added with a cheeky grin. “Wazzy’s been there, done that.”

Officer Iwaizumi felt his cheeks grow warm as he held the opposite corners of Kuroo’s love letter. “Don’t think I’m above tearing this,” he warned.

Kuroo shook his head in alarm. “Sheesh, B-dawgs is right. You’re extra gritty today. Alright, I change my mind. Lev, I bestow the job upon you.”

The tall officer towered over, picking the letter and placing it in his inner pockets. “You can trust me. As a kid, I was always the first one to find Waldo in those picture books. This is going to be a piece of cake.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes as he herded the giant outside. “I’ll be quick,” he repeated. “Right, sure,” Bokuto grumbled before lighting up. “Make sure you to say hi to Akaashi for me!”

∞

Lev jumped in to the passenger seat, clicking on his seat-belt. “Road trip, road trip!” he cried, swinging his legs and lightly kicking under the car glove department.

“Stop that,” Iwaizumi grunted as he turned the car engine on. “It’s not a road trip. It’s a fifteen minute drive.”

“Fifteen minute road trip,” Lev whispered, his eyes twinkling as he faced the front. “It’s been so long since we’ve driven together! The last time was when it was you, me and Yaku.”

“Mm,” Iwaizumi replied noncommittally. “Now, remember to be on your best behaviour. You’re in your uniform which means you’re representing our department. The last thing I want is you causing grief to any of the citizen- don’t touch that.”

“Oh, sorry,” Lev moved his hand away from the radio.

“I’m only going to be there for a short amount of time,” Iwaizumi continued. “Just dropping off the
jacket then leaving. You need to just go in and drop the letter off then we’re going. Understand? I
won’t wait for you.”

“Okay,” Lev nodded as he stared out the side of the car window. His green eyes flickered as they
darted over the buildings which passed by.

“I’m serious. Absolutely no distractions,” Iwaizumi warned. “Go in, hand the letter then go. Okay?
This is your little mission.”

“Mission?” Lev straightened up at that. “Yeah.. I like the sound of that. Like a bonds movie,” He
aimed a finger gun at Iwaizumi, closing one eye as he squinted. “Call me Bond. Haiba Bond.”

Iwaizumi glanced over with an unimpressed look. “Don’t do that either,” He focused on the road
again taking a turn to the right. “How’s Yaku by the way?”

“Good, good,” Lev replied, dropping his hands and placing them behind his car head rest. “He likes
the new department. It’s a lot less work over there apparently. Maybe I should join them,” he
grinned.

“That would mean Yaku would have to move departments again,” Iwaizumi frowned but he
softened his tone. “You know if it were up to me, I would have let it slide. I do prefer to have him
with us. But you know how Yaku is. Always following the rules.”

“I know,” Lev drooped slightly as he faced forward, watching the people outside cross the road.
“Workplace romances cause damages to morale and productivity within the working environment,
yadda yadda. Yaku is such a goody two boos.”

“Goody two shoes,” Iwaizumi corrected but flashed him a sympathetic look. “You two still live
together, right?”

“Yeah,” Lev beamed. “It’s a lot of fun. He gets so mad when I leave my used boxers on the floor
and he trips on them in the morning.”

Iwaizumi grimaced. “Too much information, Lev,” The car came to a halt and he stared out at the
impressive building. “Well, we’re here.”

“Wow!” Lev shoved in, squishing Iwaizumi tightly in to his seat. “It looks so much better than our
place.”

“Now remember what I said. In then out. No distractions.”

Lev nodded at his senior officer. “Gotcha. Stick to the mission,” He shot a finger gun at Iwaizumi
and grinned as he stumbled off and unclicked his seat-belt.

Everything within the building was enormous. He gazed around in awe, fawning like a child at a
museum. Iwaizumi was busy talking to the receptionist who eyed Lev but eventually relented and
had let them through.

“It’s nice not being the tallest thing here,” Lev commented as they stood in the elevator.

Iwaizumi snorted, facing frontwards. “The things I’d do to grow one more centimeter.” He shuffled
lightly, readjusting the jacket in his hand and sighed. “Just one quick greet. You got this Hajime,” he
muttered. Lev glanced over questioningly but his thoughts were interrupted by the ding! of the
elevator. The moment the doors opened he was hit with intense noise.

People were rushing about yelling at one another with files being passed about in some complex
Lev stared in shock as the scene, completely baffled and speechless. Iwaizumi stepped out, sharp eyes darting about as he scanned the room. "Be quick, Lev," he murmured.

Lev gave an affirmative nod as he reached over to pat his senior officer on the shoulder. "Well, I’ll let you get to it then, Wazzy. See you very soon," He pulled out his fake finger gun and began to make his way through the chaos.

"Little blonde, little blonde.." he muttered under his breath as he glanced around the office. Everyone was bustling about at a fast pace and he could barely keep up with their movement. "Little blonde, li-oh!" he cried as he spotted a glimpse of yellow. "Mission success!" he cheered as he bounded over. "Haiba Bond does it aga- oh." He frowned at the individual. "You’re not little at all."

"Excuse me?" The man shot him a disgruntled look as he adjusted his glasses. He eyed Lev up and down in a condescending manner. "Do you have a guest authorisation?"

He let out a surprised noise when Lev pushed him aside.

"Sorry, no time to talk. I’m on a mission," Lev missed the icy glares from the other when he heard a light chuckle.

"Wow, Tsukki got sassed. That never happens."

The blonde glanced over at the other. "Shut up, Yamaguchi."

His friend flashed him a cheeky grin before turning to Lev. "Hey, sorry to be rude but Tsukki is right. You do need guest authorization to enter here."

Lev blinked mewlishly at the two. "I don’t need authorization. I’m with Wazzy. You can take it to him but I wouldn’t because he can be pretty scary."

Tsukishima stood up but Yamaguchi gently pushed him back and smiled. "Okay then, what mission are you on?"

Lev lit up as he held Kuroo’s crumpled letter. "I’m playing cupid today. Take to me a small blonde please."

The tall man rolled his eyes before shooting him an annoyed look. "We’re not here to help you."

"Alright!" Yamaguchi rubbed his palms together. "Small blonde. I think I can manage that."

"You’re joking, right?"

Yamaguchi shrugged. "Well, it’s the fastest way to get rid of him."

Tsukishima glanced down before reaching over to flick at his friend’s cowlick. "The fastest way to get rid of him is kicking him out. You’re being too nice. Again."

Yamaguchi flashed a grin as he swatted the hand away. "Well, us nice people have to exist or the world would be a pretty crappy place to live in."

The tall blonde stopped at that. He turned away, frown softening a fraction. "Perhaps."

Officer Lev stared at the two in fascination. "Wow, are you two dating?" he blurted. They snapped their heads toward him in shock before sharing awkward glances.

"Uh, it’s well, not like um-"
“I know a small blonde,” Tsukishima offered, nudging his way between the two and walking off at a hurried pace.

“Uh, yes small blonde. Let’s find you that blondie – blonde hair, uh blonde.” Yamaguchi stuttered out, trailing his friend.

“Oh, okay. Okay!” Lev cried, forgetting his earlier question already. “Small blonde, here we come!”

The three wormed their way through the office, pausing occasionally to let others pass through, dipping in and out of smaller office rooms, and finally stopping by a scatter of desks. Lev glanced around in curiosity. People were rushing in between others and the noise never seemed to cease. It was amazing to find anyone in this cluster of an office. ‘I could probably lose Yaku in here forever’ he thought offhandedly.

“We only have one other blonde here that I’m aware of,” Tsukishima replied. He turned, calling over her shoulder. “Yachi, come over here.”

“Well, that was fast’ he thought, spotting another flash of blonde. A girl bounded her way through, balancing a handful of files. She tottered and bumped her way around, only to stop in her tracks at the sight of Lev. The officer dropped his gaze to stare down at her. Huh. Well, she certainly ticked off everything in Kuroo’s checklist. She was a petite-framed girl, with a flow of hair like sweet corn. She had tied one side up in a crooked manner, accentuated by a starry clip. She was a dainty, little thing who blinked wide-eyed up at him.

“Can… Can I help you with anything?” she asked with a hint of nervousness.

“Hmm,” Lev squinted at her. “Small, blonde and cute. Yep, you’re the one!” he beamed down at the girl who had grown several shades of red. He passed the crumpled letter over. “Special delivery from Officer Kuroo who sends his regards. Now if you’ll excuse me. I’d like to hang but I was instructed to be in then out. No distractions.” He turned to the tall blonde and his friend. “Thanks, by the way. Haiba Bond must go now,” He flashed a quick wave before bounding off.

“In then out, and no distractions,” he repeated under his breath. Lev allowed himself a pat on the back. That was much easier than he thought and so far, everything was going according to plan.

‘Kuroo is going to be so proud’. Meow.

Lev skidded to a halt, glancing around in surprise. ‘What was that?’ Nearby workers barely spared a second glance as the officer circled around in confusion. Scratching his head, he took another step toward the front reception when-

Meow.

Lev spun around, eyes darting about. His gaze dropped at an individual perched on the desk, his back facing him. He appeared to be tapping away at his gaming console, the faint sound of chip music coming from his general direction. Curious, Lev tapped over, peering at the screen from over his head. Tiny characters dwindled about on the screen, talking in high-pitched garbles. “Wow, what are you playing?” Lev asked, leaning in further.

The other spun around in surprise, blinking up at Lev. His golden eyes assessed him for a brief moment before returning to his game. “What’s with all these policemen coming in to the office?” he murmured, tapping at the keys.

Lev tilted his head to the left. “Huh?”
“Nothing. It’s Animal Crossing.”

“Oh neat,” Lev perched himself beside the other, watching as the characters roamed around. “Looks complex.”

“It isn’t.”

The other didn’t speak any further, content in playing his game but Lev decided he was content in watching. “What’s your name?” he asked, emerald eyes shining with curiosity.

“Kenma.”

The officer grinned broadly, sticking his hand out and covering the screen in the progress. “I’m Lev. Or Haiba. You can call me whichever.”

“Cool.”

Lev nodded. “So what do you do he-“ he paused, head tilted and large, green eyes sharpened. He pouted. “Aww, I gotta run. But it was nice meeting you. We should hang sometime,” he jumped off the desk and reached over to ruffle Kenma’s hair. The other let out an alarmed noise as he pause the game to stare in bewilderment at the officer. “Cool hair. I dig it,” Lev grinned before bidding a quick farewell and leaving Kenma confused as ever.

∞

“Thanks, by the way. Haiba Bond must go now,” The tall officer flashed a quick wave before bounding off, as the three watched him go.

“Haiba Bond?” Tsukishima scrunched his nose. “Fingers crossed he never comes back.”

Yamaguchi snickered, bumping shoulders with the other. “You’re awful.” He turned before taking a startled step back in to Tsukishima’s chest.

His friend steadied him before scowling at the culprit. “Watch where you’re going, pipsqueak.”

“Who you calling pipsqueak?” Hinata spun around, golden piercings dangling lightly as his eyes shone in defiance. “I’ll fight you.”

He took an alarmed step back when the other loomed over him. “Hey, don’t come any closer, now. No fighting in the office. I’d fight you but we gotta abide by the rules.”

“Right,” Tsukishima retorted sarcastically.

Frowning, Hinata turned to Yachi. “Have you seen Kageyama? I haven’t seen him all mor- oh what’s that?” he asked, pointing to her hand.

“It’s a letter,” Tsukishima butted in. “Something a primal creature like you wouldn’t be aware of.”

“I got it from an officer,” Yachi quickly interrupted, glancing at Hinata who had shot daggers at the other. “It’s from an Officer Kuroo.” She flipped the envelope around, before tearing it open carefully. “Apparently it’s for me. I don’t know an Officer Kuroo though.”
“Wow,” Hinata peeked over at the crisp note. “Why did he send it?”

He watched as Yachi unfolded the paper and began to read. Her eyes darted from side to side before she scrunched her eyebrows in confusion. “This doesn’t make any sense.”

“Let me see,” the intern offered. He held the note carefully with both hands as he read it aloud.

\[
\text{You know who you are,} \\
\text{Roses are Red,} \\
\text{Violets are Blue,} \\
\text{You’ve stolen something of mine,} \\
\text{What shall I do?} \\
\text{K.}
\]

The note was indeed rather cryptic. Hinata raised an eyebrow, flipping the note around for any other possible clues. He glanced up, head tilted to the side. “I don’t get it. What did you steal, Yachi?”

The blonde shook her head madly. “Nothing! I didn’t steal anything!”

“Are you sure?” Hinata flipped the note to face her. “Because it seems to me like he’s accusing you of theft.”

“But I didn’t steal!” Yachi denied frantically. “Or maybe I did.. Oh gosh, I don’t know. I don’t remember taking anything.” Her eyes were wide with fear and worry and she fluttered her hands in distress.

“Don’t worry, Yachi,” Hinata puffed his chest out and flashed her a reassuring grin. “Whatever it is, I’ll protect you.”

“How can you protect her when you can barely handle yourself?”

Hinata spun to glare at the reporter. “No one asked you, Kageyama.”

“Please! No more fighting!” Yachi begged. She held the note to her chest. “I’m sure this is all a big mistake. Officer Kuroo must be mistaken.”

“Officer Kuroo?” Kageyama blinked at her in surprise. “What does Officer Kuroo want with you?”

“Oh,” the blonde girl sunk in relief. “Oh, thank goodness. Do you know him? Could you ask him what I stole?”

Kageyama frowned. “No, I don’t know him well. But I’ve met him once,” He reached down,
flipping open his folder. “He's strange. Seems kinda dodgy. In fact, he looks more like a criminal than an officer.”

Yachi let out a soft squeak and shoved the note in Kageyama’s face. “But I didn’t steal! I would never steal! Tell him it was a big mistake!”

The reporter spluttered from receiving a sudden mouthful of paper. “I told you, I don’t know him.”

“Don’t ask him for help, Yachi. He’s just as hopeless as the pipsqueak.”

Kageyama snapped his head over to shoot a withering look. “Tsukishima.”

“Tobio.”

“Have you checked your emails recently?”

Tsukishima hummed, placing a light finger on his chin. “Yes, I do believe I have. This morning, actually.”

“Then did you receive my email? I attached my article as a file,” Kageyama opened his folder again. “Or I have a hardcopy here too if you prefer that.”

“Hmm, nah. I prefer neither.”

Kageyama looked up in indignation. “Wait, so you’ve received my email? Why didn’t you reply?”

Tsukishima stared down at him, a sneer plastered on his face. “Because it’s awful. Bad. Completely useless. There’s no way I’m going to approve that in for publishing.”

“What the hell,” Kageyama turned to face the other full-on. “I worked really hard on that. At least tell me what it’s lacki-“

“Lacking everything,” Tsukishima cut him off, checking for dirt under his nails.

Kageyama felt his face wrong red as he took another step toward him. He opened his mouth but was beaten by another.

“Hey, he said he worked really hard on it. At least give it a second read.”

Tsukishima paused, half-lidded eyes eyeing Hinata. “Oh? Like you can talk, rookie. I know a good article when I read one. And this guy’s was nowhere near anything decent. At this rate he may as well do photography instead. I hear it’s a no-brainer position.”

“Tsukki, stop,” Yamaguchi pressed as he eyed the other two who shared looks of hurt and fury. “Let’s go back now.”

The tall blonde sighed, as he spun around on his heel. “Alright, but only because I feel like returning to the modern era. It’s like the caveman times with these two.”

Kageyama scrunched his hands in to tight fists as he glared at his back. “Jerk,” he muttered, only to blink when it was echoed beside him. He glanced over at Hinata who appeared equally as surprised. “Uh,” Kageyama scratched the back of his head, unable to look back at the other. “Thanks, I guess.”

Hinata gaped at him for several moments then managed a grin. “It’s no pro- hey! I wasn’t done!” he cried when the other ignored him, spun around and made his way elsewhere. “Double-jerk,” he muttered under his breath as he checked his phone. “Oh- Oh! I'm late!” he yelped, making a swift
dash to Akaashi’s office.

“But I didn’t steal anything..” Yachi mourned hopelessly as she stood alone in the office space and stared miserably at the letter.

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“And… done.”

Oikawa sat back, sighing in relief as he finalised his copy of the latest article and clicked ‘send’. He smiled when the computer let out a little ‘whoosh’ sound effect to indicate the email had been sent. ‘Satisfying’. Oikawa reached for his phone and let out a small “yes!” when discovering it was only ‘6:20pm’. It was rare to finish his work on time and at this rate he could afford to have a quiet night with perhaps some takeaway and a movie. He skimmed through the notifications on his phone, swiping away the usual wave of work updates. ‘One new text message’.

Oh? Oikawa fiddled in his seat, holding his breath when he opened it. To find another reminder to submit his draft copy of his latest work. The reporter let out his breath in a miserable sigh. It was now nearing a week since their last encounter and he couldn’t help but toss his phone on the desk in irritation. ‘At least text me once’ he inwardly grumbled.
He sat in silence for several moments, fingers fiddling before reaching for his phone again. Scrolling through his contact list, his fingers paused at the number. Oikawa had practically memorised it by now. He chewed at his nail lightly, eyeing the screen. Well, it didn’t hurt to get in touch. Hesitating slightly, Oikawa bit the bottom of his lip before finally clicking dial.

Knock knock.

He jumped at the sudden sound, frantically pressing the red phone symbol. His call had ended before it had even begun to ring. “Uh, come in,” Oikawa managed, heart hammering as he placed his phone on the table.

Akaashi’s head popped in to view and he hurried in before closing the door behind him. “Sorry, it’s loud out there and I needed a break,” Trudging his way to a seat, he dropped himself down and sighed in relief.

Oikawa snorted and eyed the noticeable bags under Akaashi’s eyes. “You look like you’ve been dragged through hell and back,” He grinned when the photographer shot him a dirty look. “Must be tiring, with that new intern around. How’s life with your little kid? Not as easy as it looks, right?”

Akaashi struggled as he sat up and sighed. “Not as easy as it looks,” he admitted with a sullen expression.

Oikawa let out an amused chuckle, propping his feet up on the table. “Oh, trust me. It’s only downhill from here. Your intern looks like a ball of fun.. and energy. Lots of energy. Where is he, by the way?”

“He’s on a break. And I’m glad you asked because,” Akaashi paused, pulling out his phone and checking the screen. “He.. appears to be in front of the break room, by the publishing department.”

Oikawa stared. “What the- How the hell do you know where he is? Did you dog tag him?”
Akaashi held his phone up between his index finger and thumb, shaking it lightly. “Mobile tracking device. Kenma installed it for me since I’m always losing Hinata. Makes life infinitely easier since I can’t have him on a child leash.”

“That's impossible. Kenma is good, but not that good.” Oikawa squinted at the mobile in Akaashi’s hand. “I highly doubt it’s that accurate.”

“Well, I paid three apple pies for it so,” Akaashi glanced down, tapping a few keys. “Oikawa Tooru is currently located in the AobaJousai building. If I want specifics, his mobile is situated two metres ahead,” Akaashi glanced up. “Seems pretty accurate to me.”


Akaashi tapped at his phone. “It says he’s about where Hinata is located. Two metres behind and three to the left. Similar area.”

Oikawa scoffed. “What’s he doing there? Probably not doing his job. Figures.” He sat up. “Is this an app you download or has Kenma built his own software?”

Akaashi shot Oikawa a look. “Why? Have someone in mind to track down?”

“Just tell me his number.”

Oikawa hastily reached for his mobile. “You know, I’m only doing this because I want to see if this actually works. I want to see what happens if we search for someone out of this building, not because I’m interested.”

“Auh, sure.”

Akaashi typed the number through when Oikawa called it out, and waited patiently for a response. Oikawa fiddled with the corner of a paper file on his desk. “I don’t even like him, you know. He’s just a client.”

Akaashi opened his mouth when his phone vibrated. He paused, frowning at his screen. “Huh,” he hummed. “It says he’s in the same area as Kageyama.”

“See,” Oikawa leaned back in his chair. “It’s saying everyone is within this building. I’m pretty sure Kenma scammed you.” He drawled. Akaashi ignored him, as he stood and left toward the office exit to take a peek out. “I’m telling you, the app is broken,” the reporter continued. "If it was even working to begin with.”

“He’s here, Oikawa.”

Oikawa frowned. “Hey, don’t joke with me.”

“No seriously,” Akaashi squinted slightly as he continued to watch through the small gap. “He’s here. And he looks like he’s talking to Kageyama.”

Oikawa had leapt out of his seat and was shoulder to shoulder with Akaashi within record time. “Where?!” he hissed.

Akaashi squeezed his arm through to point. “Over there. Isn’t that him?”

And there he was. Amongst the younger crew of the officer, there stood Iwaizumi in his uniform.
attire. He looked considerably roughened up compared to the last time Oikawa had seen him. Even from here, he could spot the bags from under his eyes, the nine o’clock shadow, and his hair ruffled as though he hadn’t touched it since he had gotten out of bed. ‘Still looks good’. Oikawa’s eyes were glued on to the officer who appeared to be frowning at Kageyama who yapped away like an insistent pup.

“What’s he doing here?” Akaashi murmured.

“I knew it,” Oikawa whispered back. “I knew Kageyama was bad news. He’s trying to steal my clients!”

Akaashi shot him a look. “You’re just saying that because you like targeting him. He could just be saying hi.”

Oikawa turned to glare at the photographer, both their shoulders now squished tightly. “No. You’re just saying that because you have an intern and you don’t want to admit how much of a nuisance they are. But I’m telling you, Tobio is a sni-”

“Oh sh-” He slammed the door shut. The reporter gaped at Akaashi who stared back. “Oh no. Oh, god no. What do I- Did he see us? Maybe he didn’t see us,” Oikawa quickly reasoned.

“No, I’m pretty sure he saw us.”

“Oh god, no. He saw us peeking at him. What if he thinks we’re stalkers?”

Akaashi hummed in contemplation. “Well, reporters do stalk people for a living.”

“What do I do?” Oikawa hissed, running his hands through his hair frantically.

“There’s not much you can do,” At least Akaashi had the courtesy to look somewhat sympathetic. “On the plus side, we know the mobile tracking works.”

“That’s not the p-“ They both froze at the heavy knock on the door.

“Should I answer it?” Oikawa mouthed. Akaashi shrugged at him.

“Well, we don’t know that y-“ They jumped at the loud knocking which repeated at the door.

Oikawa stared hard before grabbing Akaashi and rushing to his desk. “What are y-“ Akaashi let out a little huff when he was plopped on to the seat at Oikawa’s desk. The reporter leapt over, placing himself across and fixing his hair. “Come in,” he called.

The door creaked open lightly and Iwaizumi’s head came in to view. “Oikawa Tooru?” he asked with slight hesitation.

Oikawa scrunched his expression at a file placed neatly on his desk. “So, I think we should scrap this report and give tha- oh, Iwaizumi. What a pleasant surprise.”

The officer bowed curtly. “Sorry, I didn’t realise you were busy. I can wait until you’re done.”

Akaashi glanced over his shoulder with an unimpressed look. “No, it’s alright. I was just about to
leave,” He glanced over at Oikawa who looked as pleased as ever. “Well, good.. talk.”

Oikawa waved his fingers in a dainty manner as the photographer picked up his folder and made way to the exit. He bowed slightly at Iwaizumi. “Thank you again for allowing us to interview and take photos. I appreciate it.”

Iwaizumi nodded back. “Not a worry. Bokuto sends his regards, by the way. He’s quite fond of you.”

Akaashi blinked in surprise at the comment. “Oh, that’s.. endearing.” He smiled. “Tell him I said hello.” Ignoring Oikawa’s knowing look, he bowed again before hurrying his way out.

Iwaizumi glanced around at the office, taking note of the impressive wall of certificates and other achievements on the right side. “Sorry I came by unannounced,” He lifted Oikawa’s jacket. “You left this in my car.”

Oikawa huffed as he accepted it and draped it over his own chair. “I waited for your reply all weekend.”

“Oh,” Iwaizumi frowned. “Sorry.”

“I’m just teasing,” Oikawa smiled. He leaned back, peering over at the officer. “Are you always this formal? I bet you’re only like this in front of me.”

Iwaizumi snorted. “Well, you do judge people for a living. Excuse me for being cautious.”

Oikawa watched before sitting forward. “You know I’d never do anything to hurt or damage your career, right?” he said quietly, eyes gone soft. "You can trust me.”

Iwaizumi maintained eye contact for several moments before snorting. He lowered his gaze. “You’re pretty serious yourself.”

Oikawa beamed. “I can be fun too.”

“Oh yeah, lots of fun. Just as fun as that alien movie from last Friday,” Iwaizumi paused before grabbing a seat. “About last Friday, I need to ask you a few questions in regard to your house. It would really help with clarifying my latest theory.”

Oikawa fiddled with his phone in a disinterested manner. Iwaizumi waited patiently as the reporter opened and closed his mouth. He hesitated, placing his hands in his lap as he looked up with a strange expression. "Did.. did you have fun?" he asked quietly. "Last Friday, I mean."

"Fun?" The officer frowned at the random question. "I suppose? The movie was strange, I'll admit but I guess I had fun."

Oikawa thrummed his fingers thoughtfully, mind whirring as he regarded the other with a half-lid gaze. He stood abruptly, reaching for his jacket. “You free now?”

Iwaizumi blinked. “Free? Uh, yeah. I just finished my shift so I wanted to drop the jacket off and talk to you about the case."

“Let’s go then,” Oikawa grabbed his case and jacket. “Lucky for me I finished my shift too.”

“Wait, no, I just need to ask a few quick questions then I’ll get out of your hair. I should get back to the office anyway.”
“What,” Oikawa stared. “You just said you finished your shift. Why go back to work then?”

“I finished my shift but I still have work to do. And I’ve got Lev here so either way I need to drive him back,” Iwaizumi replied as he stood from his chair.

“No! Come on, let’s grab a drink,” Oikawa whined. “Get Lev to drive himself back and you can explain to me about the case.” He held his hands up to cover both ears. “I’m not going to listen to what you say until we at least grab one drink. I’ll even shout.”

Iwaizumi frowned at the other. “I just want some answers. It won’t take long, I assure you.”

Oikawa pouted, dropping his hands in to his lap. “Does it kill to be able to hang out with you? I get movies aren’t your thing but the least you can do is be open about it.”

“Wait,” Iwaizumi raised an eyebrow. “Who said movies weren’t my thing?”

“Doesn’t matter,” Oikawa replied glumly. “Just, forget it. What did you need to ask?”

Iwaizumi eyed the other, his insides tightening in that familiar discomfort. He was going to regret this. “One drink,” he warned. “I’m not usually such a pushover so consider yourself lucky.”

Oikawa blinked in surprise before bursting in to a huge smile. “Yes, I am very lucky,” he agreed. “I know a nearby place. It holds a nice environment and the drinks are decent.”

The officer sighed, tossing his own jacket over his right shoulder. “Alright, but it better be quick,” he muttered.

“Lev,” Iwaizumi called out to the busy office.

Oikawa frowned as he eyed everyone bustling about. “I don’t think he’ll hear you over the noise—oh,” He watched in surprise as a head popped up from the crowds, followed by his neck then shoulders. “Jees, he’s tall,” Oikawa commented as the officer wormed his way through toward them.

“It’s useful for situations like this,” Iwaizumi replied.

“Mission complete!” Lev cheered, raising his hands up for a high-five. Iwaizumi rolled his eyes but returned it nonetheless.

“Mission?” Oikawa questioned.

“Long story,” Iwaizumi muttered. “Lev, I won’t be going back to the department. I’m going with Oikawa Tooru to have a talk,” He spoke slowly as though talking to an infant. “Why is why I need you to drive the car ba—”

Lev sucked in a huge breath. Iwaizumi quickly reached out, covering his mouth with his hand.

“Which is why,” he repeated. “I need you to drive the car back slowly. Slowly to the office, okay?”

He watched as Lev nodded eagerly. “If I find any scratches on the police car I will inform Yaku, understand?” Iwaizumi reached in to his pocket, pulling out the car keys. He clamped down harder over Lev’s mouth when the other let out a muffled squeal of delight.

“Remember, slow down at speed bumps. Don’t try to speed through the red lights like Kuroo does,” Iwaizumi lectured. “Don’t get distracted by things beside the car. Don’t think I forgot about last time. And don’t roll down the window to talk to passerbyers on the street. People don’t like it when you do that. D—”

“Okay, okay, relax dad,” Oikawa interrupted, grabbing the keys from Iwaizumi’s hand and tossing it
to Lev. “Have fun, drive safe, get the car and yourself back in one piece.”

Lev fumbled with the keys as he beamed. “I’ll promise to be careful. I always am,” He grinned at Oikawa. “Thanks mum.”

The reporter blinked in surprise, glancing over at Iwaizumi who glanced back. He coughed lightly, cheeks growing warm as he turned the other way. “Just don’t drive like your other friend. He’s a mad loon.”

The three made their way out with Oikawa and Iwaizumi dispersing from the other officer as they began to part ways from the front of the news building. Oikawa glanced beside at the other. He appeared to be at ease, completely different from the Iwaizumi he had first met. The officer glanced over, frowning when he noticed the other watching.

“What? Why you smiling?”

“Hm? Oh, nothing,” Oikawa tightened his lips to suppress the rising giddiness which grew inside. “So, did you wait long in the office?” He asked lightly. The thought of Iwaizumi talking to Kageyama flashed in his mind. The scene was so bizarre and he found his mouth had twitched downwards. “Did you talk to anyone?”

“Nah, not long,” Iwaizumi replied, ignoring his other question. He tucked his hands in his pocket. “So where are we heading?”

Oikawa pointed to his right. “Just this way. No one? Surely someone would have directed you to my office or s-“

They both jumped at the sudden loud roaring of an engine. Iwaizumi spun around to glare at Lev sitting in the car. He rolled down the window and popped his head out.

“Woops, I didn’t release the hand break. It’s all good! I’m okay!”

The officer sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “I think I’m in need of a drink.”

“Okay, let’s go before you change your mind,” Oikawa said in a hurry, pushing all worried thoughts aside and gently tugging Iwaizumi along.

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“It’s a nice place,” Iwaizumi commented, eyeing the oak interior of the tavern. There was even an in-built stage, presumably for live performances but tonight it remained empty.

“Bands only play on Fridays and weekends,” Oikawa explained. He scrunched his nose in contemplation. “From what I remember. It’s been awhile since I’ve come here.”

They placed themselves directly at the bar counter, considering it was a quiet night with few other individuals. Iwaizumi placed himself at a respectable distance from Oikawa in his seat. “Now, from what I was saying earlier. I need to inform you of something I found about the theft and assault case you were involved in. Last Friday when your front door was unlocked, is there anyone else who may know the pass-“
“Hello yes, can I get a glass of brandy and..” Oikawa looked over questioningly.

“Oh, whiskey thanks,” Iwaizumi nodded at the bartender. “Now, in regards to the case, I need to ask you a few questions-“

“Whiskey?” Oikawa whistled. “Black coffee, now whiskey. You sure like your strong drinks,” Oikawa grinned, resting a palm against his cheek. “But I suppose it’s a different question as to whether you can hold your drink.”

“Whiskey has a smooth texture and has a nice burn to it,” Iwaizumi frowned. “But that’s not the point. Oikawa, I’m building a new case proposal and this involves the incident from last Friday with your house entrance unlocked. Was there any theft-“

“Enough about the case, already. I forgot to lock the front door. I didn’t have anything stolen from me,” he exasperated at the sight of Iwaizumi frowning in disapproval. “Oh, come on. Relax! You’re off-duty,” Oikawa beamed.

“I’m never off-duty,” Iwaizumi muttered. “I need to be on standby incase I get a call or if there’s a sudden emerge-“

“Boooring,” Oikawa yawned. He grinned at the scowling officer and raised his glass towards him. “We’re here to celebrate your front page, not discuss work. Or if you’re secretly a lightweight, you can just say so. I won’t judge you, I promise..” He stared in shock as the officer threw his head back, downing the whiskey in one go. Iwaizumi glanced back from the corner of his eye without so much as a single twitch or shift in expression.

“Wow,” Oikawa whistled. “I bet you were quite the party animal at the police academy.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “More like the designated driver.” He was nudged gently to the left when Oikawa laughed out in delight and draped a lazy arm around his shoulder.

“Responsible even from a young age. Well, today is your lucky day because I release you from that position. As of tonight you shall be renamed as,” Oikawa frowned in contemplation. “The whiskey warrior.”

Iwaizumi grimaced. “No.”

“Party-hard policeman!”

“Definitely no.”

Oikawa frowned. “So negative. How about something cute to suit your personality. Iwaizumi.. Iwa.. Iwachan- ohh,” he breathed out, eyes wide and gleaming.

Iwaizumi shot him the most threatening look he could muster before waving the bartender over. “I’m a fully grown man, not a school girl.”

“It suits though!” Oikawa insisted. “Iwa-chan,” he repeated. “It has a nice ring to it.”

Iwaizumi passed another glass of brandy over before taking another sip of his whiskey. “I suppose I’ll call you Peacock then? See how you like that.”

Oikawa met his eyes for a moment before smiling down at his drink. “I wouldn’t mind if it’s you.”

Iwaizumi froze with a glass of whiskey to his mouth, his eyes fixed on the other. Oikawa avoided his
gaze, readjusting his cufflinks. He let out a muffled squawk of surprise when the officer rushed in to his personal space.

“You need to shut up,” Iwaizumi muttered, holding Oikawa’s drink to his mouth. He watched carefully as Oikawa took a forced gulp of strong alcohol and snorted in amusement at his scrunched expression.

“Eurgh, too much, too much,” Oikawa coughed, shaking his head madly. “I can see why you’re the designated driver. You get others around you so intoxicated that you have no choice but to be the mother hen for the rest of the night. You kinda bring it upon yourself, Iwa-chan.” He grinned, only for it to subside when he noticed the other regarding him seriously. “What? Do I have something on my face?”

“Teddy bear.”

Oikawa blinked at Iwaizumi who continued to stare at him with an air of seriousness. “Excuse me?”

“Your nickname. Teddy bear,” He gestured at Oikawa’s hair. “You have light brown hair and big, round eyes. Like a bear. Tooru the Teddybear. Teddy Tooru.”

Oikawa stared before doubling over and laughing. Even Iwaizumi could hardly uphold his pokerface and grinned back as he took another sip of his drink. His eyes glinted with mischief as he watched Oikawa with a heavy-lidded gaze. His hair was ruffled, bags under his eyes even further accentuated by the dim-lights, and tired eyes rimmed with a slight pinkiness, most likely from lack of sleep. But he was attractive. Beyond attractive.

Oikawa’s mind blanked as he watched the other. He then reached over for his own glass, tilting his head back and finishing the entire glass in one swig. The familiar burn trickled down his throat as he coughed lightly. Iwaizumi stared in alarm and reached to pat the other’s back.

“Woah, slow down. That sorta drink will hit you in one go if you’re not careful,” he scolded.

Oikawa scrunched his face in distaste and waved the bartender over for another round. “God, I haven’t drunk in so long. I almost forgot the taste of cheap brandy” He wiped his mouth as he reached over for his refilled glass.

Iwaizumi snorted as he lifted his own glass to take a tentative sip. “It’s kinda grown on me over the years.”

Oikawa let out a slight giggle. “You say it like you drink it everyday,” he teased, eyes twinkling with mischief.

‘I do drink it pretty much every day’. Iwaizumi offered a tight smile before glancing away. Oikawa’s expression faltered as he watched the officer.

“Ah,” he said with a sheepish grin. “I’m sorry. That was kinda rude of me to say.”

“It’s alright,” Iwaizumi waved him off. “It’s not rude, it’s the truth. In my own defense, it’s helped me deal with my job for several years now.”

Oikawa watched him before raising his arm for another round of drinks. “God, this stuff tastes awful,” he exclaimed, wiping his mouth. “I’m not used to drinking. I only drink when it’s a good occasion or I’m upset.”

“You’re not upset, are you?” Iwaizumi asked slowly. Oikawa chuckled in amusement, placing a gentle, playful punch on the other’s arm.
"No, I’m happy,” he tilted his head lightly to the right, flashing Iwaizumi a lopsided, lazy smile. “I’m very happy.”

Iwaizumi felt his mouth twitch in to a smile and he looked down at his half-sipped whiskey.

"Can I ask something?"

The officer glanced over, as he fiddled with his glass. "Shoot."

"Are there any females working in the same office as you?"

"No,” Iwaizumi scoffed. "I don't think they'd be able to handle it. As you already know, Kuroo and Bokuto are quite a handful. Placing a female in that department would be a painful experience for all of us. I'd rather avoid all of that,” He hesitated before adding "but you seemed to have a lot of women working in the news industry, judging from your office. That's fortunate.”

Oikawa scrunched his nose at that. "Not really. Male or female it makes no difference. It's not as though they're potential partners or anything,” he watched Iwaizumi with a hint of a smile playing on his lips.

“Oh, so..” Iwaizumi poured his entire focus on his glass of whiskey. "Are you.. single?” Iwaizumi asked casually. The blanket of awkwardness seemed to envelope him, and he felt his cheeks grow warm.

“Yeah,” Oikawa smiled. “I've always been occupied by work and time management has always been a big issue- Oh!” he exclaimed. “Nicknames! I remember some I was called by my exes. It starts off simple and sweet like darling, sugar, sometimes even sweetpea. I know,” Oikawa chuckled at Iwaizumi’s disgruntled expression. “Then after a while it changes to workaholic, obsessed, weirdo, crazy-“

“I don’t think you're weird. You have high aspirations and perseverance. It takes a lot of discipline to sacrifice what you have had in order to further your career. It’s not weird, it’s respectful.” Iwaizumi swiveled his drink around before glancing over and taking a sip.

Oikawa blinked at him. The fluttering in his chest returned and he swallowed at the lump in his throat. “Thank you.”

Iwaizumi smiled in to his drink and the two enjoyed the comfortable silence which hung around them.

“What about you?”

Iwaizumi tilted his head. “Hm?”

“Are you single?” Oikawa stared intently, his usual round eyes lowered in to a half-lidded gaze.

“Oh, uh, yeah,” Iwaizumi fiddled with his drink. “I am.”

Oikawa stared before reaching over and downing his drink in one go. He shook his head, mouth lightly pinched. “Good. That’s good,” he smiled.

Iwaizumi felt his throat tighten before grabbing for his drink. “Mm.”

The two drank in companionable silence, chairs pulled over to fill the small gap of distance. Iwaizumi stared down at his whiskey, the warm, honey-syrupy liquid glistening back at him. It felt nice not to
drink alone. There was a light tickle against his left ear and he peeped over to find a mop of mused, milky cappuccino-coloured hair perched on his shoulder. Iwaizumi hadn’t noticed Oikawa leaning heavily on him. “Are you drunk?” he asked in a soft, rumbled tone.

“I’ve been drunk three drinks ago,” Oikawa squinted at his half-finished glass. “Okay, you win. I can’t keep up with you.”

Iwaizumi snorted, leaning back as Oikawa’s face sank further in, now muffled in to the crevice of his neck. His head was swimming and he eyed his glass which had gone blurry around the edges. “I’ve had a few myself so it’s starting to kick in. Let’s go.”

“No,” Oikawa mumbled. “I promised you wouldn’t be the designated driver tonight.”

Iwaizumi frowned down at Oikawa’s hair. “No, you stupid. I can’t drive. Otherwise I’d have to arrest myself for drink-driving. Tonight instead I’ll be your designated,” he paused, thinking hard. “Walker. I’ll be your designated walker.”

Oikawa giggled. “Designated walker.” He pried himself off, though holding on to Iwaizumi to steady himself. “Okay, I’m all yours tonight, Mr. Iwachan walker.”

“I’m only going to say this once,” he said warningly. Oikawa tilted his head in

The two stumbled their way through the streets, illuminated by the city lights and the occasional blinkers of cars driving by. Iwaizumi breathed in the lingering scent of nearby street stalls and sighed. It was nice to clear his mind like this.

“Iwachan.”

“Don’t call me that,” he countered automatically. He stared up at the sky scattered with stars. They winked back in blanket of deep-sea blue. God, he was getting sentimental lately.

“I like you.”

Iwaizumi froze, almost stumbling over his own feet. He glanced over to find Oikawa staring intently at him. “Uh, what?” he said dumbly. Warmth flowed over his cheeks as he dropped his arm slung around Oikawa’s back and shoved his hands deep in to his pockets. “I mean, I like you too. You’re, uh, a good friend.”

Oikawa watched him before chuckling to himself. “Yeah, I am a good friend,” he murmured. He flashed a cheeky grin and strolled ahead. Oikawa could feel his smile losing its touch and found himself staring mournfully down at the cold, grey slabs of pavement a few metres ahead. He blinked at the sudden warm contact and blinked blearily at the hand squeezed around his wrist.

Iwaizumi opened his mouth before closing it. He paused, frowning as though he was trying to figure out what to say. “I’m only going to say this once,” he said warningly. Oikawa tilted his head in
confusion. The officer’s gaze lingered on his before darting away. “You are a good person. I don’t
know how I even ended up in this situation, sitting at the bar with you but thank you. You are a
genuine friend to me.”

Oikawa gawked at the other in stunned silence. He watched in amused fascination at the way
Iwaizumi’s face melted in to alarming shades of reds before throwing his head back and bursting out
laughing. The officer snapped his head over, expression mixed with humiliation and hurt but Oikawa
tugged him in to a friendly headlock. “My god, I can’t believe you even exist. God bless Mama
Iwaizumi,” he quipped. He released immediately and skipped ahead, pointing to a nearby department
store with flickering lights.

“Hey, let’s grab some icecream. I’m in the mood for something sweet.”

Iwaizumi huffed but followed regardless. Oikawa was beginning to walk in a slanted direction and
he quickly steered him in, avoiding the raised eyebrows from the security guards who eyed the two.
“You grab some icecream and I’ll wait here, okay?” he muttered with an undertone of softness.
Oikawa flashed him a ridiculous grin as he rushed down the aisles. Iwaizumi rubbed his palms
together as he strolled around. He blinked slowly, allowing his eyes to adjust to the sudden bright
environment when something caught his eye. A large dump box of plush toys were placed near the
front entrance, undoubtedly to lure children toward it. However, he was focused on one particular
item. In the midst of the bright-coloured toys, a small bear. It was perched on top of a lush-purple
plush mouse, the bright colour emphasising its creamy, light brown body. It wore a ridiculously
crooked smile stitched on by whom had to be an amateur. Even from afar, Iwaizumi could tell it
looked slightly off, as though someone had scrunched its face and tossed it there.
And its resemblance to Oikawa was absolutely uncanny. Iwaizumi glanced around before
approaching it with caution. Up close the smile was even more distorted and he found himself
squinting at its dark, doeful eyes. “God, you’re ugly,” he murmured, scrunching his nose. Still. He
flipped the bear around, examining the small thing.

“Hey, where are you? I got some icecream!”

Iwaizumi jumped at the sound and quickly tucked the bear under his arm. He hurried to the counter
to find Oikawa already receiving change.
Iwaizumi dropped the plush on the table, tossing a twenty-dollar note beside it. “Keep the change,”
his said in a hurry and scooped the bear as he rushed out. He took long strides to reach Oikawa
trudging his way out the supermarket.

“You said you’d wait there but you lied,” he complained, already opening the icecream wrapper.

“Shut up,” Iwaizumi tossed the plush over and watched as the other fumbled with it before dropping
his new icecream.

“Aww, Iwachan look what you’ve done now,” he whined, staring mournfully at the loss cause on
the ground.

“Thirty second rule.”

“No!” Oikawa half-heartedly glared at the other. “That’s so unhygienic! I’d rather starve and..” he
blinked down at the toy in his hand. The bear smiled back, its eyes the size of pennies which
glimmered from the street light. “What’s this? A bear?”

"Yeah? Friends get each other presents," Iwaizumi retorted defensively. “And it kinda looks like you
in a way,” Iwaizumi scratched the back of his head. “The nickname too. I just though that maybe-
Actually, that was stupid sorry. Here, give it back.”
Oikawa yanked his hands away, holding it close to his chest. “You can’t just take back a gift. I’ll report you for theft.” He lifted the bear above his head, examining its face. “It’s cute. I’ll take it.” Oikawa placed it carefully under his arm and turned to Iwaizumi. “Thank you,” Oikawa’s eyes twinkled, the corners creasing as he flashed a genuine smile.

Iwaizumi was momentarily stunned by the sudden sight. He stared at the other in awe before shaking his head. “No, I’m far too drunk for this.” He marched past Oikawa, breath rolling out in to small puffs from his mouth.

"Hey, wait up," Oikawa frowned as he hurried to match his pace but the moment they were side by side, Iwaizumi fastened his pace. "What are you- wait slow down," the reporter whined, speeding up to a light trot.

Iwaizumi could feel his mouth curling up in to a grin as he began to run, heart pumping as he made his way down the lane. Oikawa's house was three streets away, easily memorised from the number of times he had examined his address. He could hear the other cry out in a mixture of delight and feint-annoyance.

The two made a competitive dash all the way with Iwaizumi beating Oikawa with a few seconds difference. They doubled over, breathing hard with the occasional hiccups of uncontrollable laughter. Iwaizumi wiped the light sheen of sweat from his forehead and straightened himself. Oikawa was busy fixing his hair, twirling it between his fingers and pumping his hands through, which made little difference.

"Hey, leave it," Iwaizumi huffed. "It looks better natural."

Oikawa stopped, staring at the other. The rise and fall of his chest deepened as he slowly dropped his hands, not looking away. They continued to watch each other, Oikawa watching the way Iwaizumi’s eyes glistened even in the dark, and Iwaizumi watching the way Oikawa's hands twitched by their sides.

“I mentioned,” Oikawa hesitated, taking a step forward. "I mentioned earlier that I liked you," He hung his head, eyebrows furrowed deeply. Iwaizumi waited patiently as the reporter stared at the ground with great intensity. Finally, he let out an exasperated huff of laughter and shook his head. “I like you. I like you a lot.” He said weakly.

“I like you a lot too,” Iwaizumi replied instantly, his mouth running on its own.

Oikawa’s head snapped up, his slightly frazzled eyes blinking slowly at the officer. “You do?” he whispered. Without waiting for a response, he lunged out, clutching Iwaizumi’s arm with a vice grip. “Come in for coffee. Please,” he pleaded with a hint of desperation in his eyes.

‘No, I should get home’. “Okay,” Iwaizumi replied. He offered a strained smile as Oikawa breathed out and tugged him gently to his front door. “What’s with you and coffee?”

“Everyone likes coffee. I don’t want to brag but I have mastered the skills of brewing the best instant coffees.” Oikawa pressed his hand against the door pin, unlocking it with swift precision. “See, I remembered to lock the door this time.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes as he allowed himself to be halfheartedly manhandled inside. Oikawa clicked the lights on and the officer allowed himself to have a proper look around Oikawa’s house. It was immaculate with every object in its proper place. Either Oikawa fostered an OCD or he was rarely home. “It’s a nice place you got,” Iwaizumi commented as he eyed the intricate ornaments which sat by the antique desk near the umbrella stand.
“I want you here.”

Iwaizumi froze, blinking slowly in surprise. “Excuse me?”

Oikawa squinted lightly as he nudged past him and trudged to the lounge room, swaying to the left as he walked. “Riggggght here.” He carefully placed the plush bear on his tv stand, propping it upright against the big screen. He stood back, examining it before nodding in approval. “Perfect.”

“Oh. The bear,” Iwaizumi rubbed his face with his right hand. A dull pang of disappointment swelled in his chest, which he blamed was undoubtedly from the alcohol. His heart was still racing and he found himself eyeing the toy with disdain. Upon realising what he was doing, he glanced away, huffing lightly in disbelief. “God, I’m going insane,” he muttered to himself.

Oikawa looked over in question, large, tired eyes imitated by the toy. “Hm?”

“Nothing,” Iwaizumi waved him off. “Just thinking aloud. Hey, forget about the coffee. I’m not really in the mood for it anymore.”

“What, no,” Oikawa pouted, head tilting to the side. “I make the best coffees though,” His body began swaying to the right and Iwaizumi hurried over to steady him.

“I’m sure you do but just sit here and I’ll get you a glass of water instead. You can make me your famous coffee next time,” He added quickly when Oikawa began to struggle against him.

“Next time?” Oikawa paused, eyes drifting off in to a hazed daydream. “Okay, I’ll make your coffee next time,” he smiled widely before letting go and allowing his body to drop on the couch in a heap.

“Uh, okay. Good,” Iwaizumi paused, eyes drifting off in to a hazed daydream. “Okay, I’ll make your coffee next time,” he smiled widely before letting go and allowing his body to drop on the couch in a heap.

“Uh, okay. Good,” Iwaizumi rushed off to grab a glass of water and hurried back. Oikawa was already beginning to nod off, head bopping all over the place. Sweet, caramel-y eyes blinked up at him when he pressed the cup insistently against Oikawa’s lips. “Here. Drink,” Iwaizumi ordered.

Without taking his eyes off from the other, Oikawa opened his mouth, sticking his tongue out lightly. Iwaizumi felt his throat run dry as he watched the cool water flow gently in to the others mouth, his adam’s apple moving lightly as he swallowed.

Oikawa pulled off and wiped his lower lip with an index finger. “I'm sorry, but I need to ask the million dollar question here. How come you’re single?”

Iwaizumi looked away, placing the glass on the far end of the coffee table. “I’m in a serious relationship with my profession, that’s why.”

“Why did you choose a police profession of all things?”

“Is this another interview?” Iwaizumi snorted, head resting on the back of the couch. “To help others in need of course.”

Oikawa hummed thoughtfully, fingers thrumming on the couch. “I was kinda expecting an interesting story of you saving an elderly from a building on fire.”

“What’s your reason then? Why become a reporter?”

Oikawa glanced up from the carpet, regarding him seriously. “To help others in need of course-” He squealed in surprise when Iwaizumi grabbed a couch pillow to toss at him.

“Cheeky bastard,” The officer smiled and dropped it beside him.
“Seriously though, why an officer?”

Iwaizumi blinked up at the ceiling as he let out a prolonged sigh. The creamy white seemed almost blinding to his tired eyes. He closed them. “Why does anyone ever want to be an officer? To help those who can’t help themselves. Do you know how many crimes go unreported because some have no faith in the police nor justice system? The dark figure of crime,” he glanced over at Oikawa who was watching him carefully. “My answer may seem mundane but it’s the truth. I want to help others in need.”

“Then why do you seem so unhappy?”

Iwaizumi frowned at the question. He opened his mouth then closed it. Finding himself speechless, he let out a hopeless chuckle and sat up. His head spun as he blinked hard and tried to focus on the teddy bear across the room. It smiled back twice, having grown two blurred heads and three eyes. “I am happy.” He murmured.

“Liar,” Oikawa sat forward, tilting his head to meet eyes with Iwaizumi. “See, want to know why I’m a reporter? Because I’m good at it. I’m good with people. And I know,” he reached over, tapping his finger lightly on the other’s nose. “I know when someone’s lying or not.” The reporter sat up again, mouth curled up in a lazy, knowing manner. His eyes were closed as he hummed. “It’s okay. I’m not going to pressure you to answer or anything. Just remember, I got your back. Whenever you want to talk or you’re having trouble, I’ll be there. No questions asked.”

Iwaizumi pressed his lips tightly as he dropped his gaze. “Sorry,” The two sat in silence, the sound of their breaths filling the lounge room.

“I love my job,” Iwaizumi admitted, interlocking his fingers together in his lap. “I can’t imagine myself doing anything else. But sometimes, I don’t think I’m doing a good job,” he said softly. “I want.. I want to save everyone and stop others from committing crimes but I can’t.” He dropped his gaze.

“Do you know how many victims have been added on to the list of this case since I’ve been put in charge? Too many. I greet them, question them, then inform them that everything is under control and we are closing in on the culprit. But honestly? I don’t know what I’m doing. And to be honest, I’m terrified,” Iwaizumi whispered. He swallowed hard, staring down at the lush, cream carpet. “Everyone’s relying on me to crack this case but I just don’t know if I can.”

Oikawa didn’t reply, hands draped on either side as he sat facing forward.

“I want to quit, give up, pass this burden on to someone else. In fact, did you know I was this close,” Iwaizumi held his fingers in front of his face, pinching his finger to indicate small. “This close to letting this case go. But then I met you,” A small section in Iwaizumi’s mind begged him to stop talking but he couldn’t control his mouth. “I made a friend. How could I pass this case on to someone else knowing you haven’t received your justice.” He sat back and blinked up at the ceiling.

“I kind of wish I never met you,” He murmured. “You’ve gone and messed with my life. I dislike you but I am thankful for you too. Either way I can’t stop thinking about y-” Iwaizumi paused, shell-shocked and slightly mortified at his own words. “Um,” he uttered, suddenly tongue-tied and he shook his head. “I’m sorry, I’m not thinking straight,” he backpedaled. “Forget all this, I di-“ Iwaizumi stopped. He leaned forward, tilting his head at Oikawa. The reporter remained silent, his head hung deeply. “Oikawa?” Iwaizumi murmured. No response. “Oikawa, are you… asleep?”

He gave him a gentle nudge on his side. The other breathed in sharply as his head rolled to the right. Iwaizumi blinked slowly, watching as he began to slide down from the back rest, slumping in to a
crumpled heap on the couch. The officer let out a snorted in amusement before standing up himself. “Okay, here we go.” He leaned over, swaying slightly as he wedged a hand under Oikawa’s neck and legs, and lifted him carefully. He took several steps, pausing as he staggered around to regain his balance. Oikawa appeared to be completely knocked out, head tucked in to the crevice between Iwaizumi’s chest and arm. ‘Cute’ the officer thought in a muddle haze when he heard a loud thump. He stumbled back, almost letting out a surprised noise. Oikawa’s head had collided roughly against the bedroom door and Iwaizumi was stunned the impact hadn’t at least startled him awake. “Oh, woops. Sorry.” He peered down to find the other unaffected and shuffled his weight to open the bedroom door. Struggling along, Iwaizumi dropped Oikawa on to the bed and letting out a relieved sigh. Oikawa bounced lightly, head lolled to the left. Iwaizumi leaned over, checking again for any signs of head wounds before sitting himself on the side of the bed too.

He rubbed the side of his face, finding himself nodding off too. When was the last time he had a decent amount of sleep? Iwaizumi shook his head madly, then glanced back. Oikawa appeared to be at ease, hair lightly ruffled as he curled himself on to his side. “Well, I’ll get going now,” Iwaizumi sighed. It hadn’t occurred to him how bizarre this situation was, talking to an unconscious being. “You stay safe.”

He stood, stumbling slightly to the bedroom door and gently closed the door behind him, hearing a light click. Iwaizumi trudged back to the couches and plopped himself down. “What the hell,” he muttered. He had somehow managed to dodge what may have been the world’s biggest disaster. He could imagine Ushijima’s cold-stone face glaring down at him and lecturing in that familiar tone ‘You don’t have close associations with the victims’. Or worse, ‘What would Oikawa have said if he heard everything’. Iwaizumi burst out laughing. It died down in to a light huff and then silence. He buried his face in to his hands.

“I am an idiot,” Iwaizumi said aloud. It felt nice.

He should’ve gone home. He could feel himself beginning to wind down, the alcohol in his system taking its toll. His ears were ringing slightly and his eyelids felt heavy. He simply needed a few hours of sleep and it’d pass. Iwaizumi sat there, mind whirring slowly. Then closed his eyes.

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Chapter End Notes

I kinda want this fic to end now so I’ve tried to speed up the process as much as possible
- Was this pace of this chapter too rushed? Idk but let me know if you think so

P.S. I had a particular image of a teddybear but it was mostly based of this

I'm not a big pokemon person but I just can't unsee the similarity between Oikawa and
this bear $\gamma (J \nabla L) \tau$
Chapter Notes

To everyone who has made it this far with me, commented, or happened to stumble upon reading this, you are awesome
Thank you for your patience and hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thump. Thump. Thump.

The first thing Iwaizumi noticed was the sound of blood pumping and the unbearable throbbing of his headache. Grimacing from the blunt pain, he pried one eye open, mind still in a haze. The second thing he noticed was he was not at home.
He glanced down to find himself on a cream couch, in his now-crumpled work attire from yesterday. “What,” he croaked. His throat felt parched and he swallowed hard. The window shutters on the right were lightly tilted, reflecting strips of sunlight across Iwaizumi's left eye and with realisation dawning upon him, he let out a tired huff. He was in Oikawa's living room.

Iwaizumi slowly peeled himself off the couch and sat upright. He hissed lightly at the dull muscle ache from the awkward sleeping position and rolled his shoulders gently. ‘What happened?’ He was invited in for a drink, he recalled dragging an unconscious Oikawa to bed then he returned to the couch before- He fell asleep. The officer glanced up to find a disheveled and slightly distorted version of himself staring back from the reflection of the tv screen. "Crap," they both muttered.
Iwaizumi blinked around blearily, scratching his nine o'clock shadow. He paused, tilting his head lightly for any sounds. Silence. Oikawa was most likely still asleep from last night's antics. It was most likely he wasn’t even aware Iwaizumi had fallen asleep on his couch. He could simply sneak out and pr- Iwaizumi froze when he spotted a pair of eyes watching him. The bear remained perched upright by the tv smiling as though it were aware of Iwaizumi's thoughts. The officer stared at it for several moments. ‘Teddy Tooru’. A rush of embarrassment washed over him at the memory from last night and he groaned, covering his face with both hands.

Avoiding its eye contact, Iwaizumi peeked through the gap of his fingers down at the coffee table in front of him. His phone and keys were splayed beside another mobile, presumably Oikawa’s. The officer dropped his hands, frowning lightly. This had to be the longest amount of time he’d managed without calling the office, let alone his thoughts drifting to the case. Oikawa sure had a knack for distracting him. He hadn’t enjoyed himself like this in a long time. Iwaizumi felt the familiar rush of warmth returning and he shook his head. He was meant to deliver the jacket then leave. This was definitely not something he had anticipated. Glancing down at his phone, he reached over and checked for notifications. Only to do a double take at the screen.

Five missed calls from Daichi Sawamura. Two voicemails from Daichi Sawamura. Three missed calls from the office. One message from Ushijima.

His blood turned cold instantaneously. “Shit,” Iwaizumi fumbled, now completely wide awake. “Shit, shit, shit.”

He bolted up, roughly colliding his shin against the edge of the coffee table as he hurried to the front door. He stumbled over the pairs of shoes positioned neatly and hissed in frustration, running his
hand through his hair as he dialed Daichi’s mobile. Shoving his shoes on, he quickly ended the call once it had hit the other’s voicemail. “Come on, Daichi,” he spoke in a frantic, hushed tone. Iwaizumi checked his voice messages instead. He stopped, hand on the door knob when Daichi’s terse tone rang in his ear.

“Iwaizumi, look, sorry to bother you but there’s been another assault. Only this time it has occurred within the household. Give me a call back.”

Iwaizumi felt like he was going to throw up. He slammed the door shut, not bothering with noise anymore and rushed down Oikawa's driveway. He clicked for the next message, pressing his phone tightly against his ear.

“Iwaizumi, it’s Daichi again. Usually you answer calls quickly so I hope nothing’s wrong. I’m about to conduct an interview with the victim and I really need your help with this. Call me when you get this message. Bye.”

His head was spinning and Iwaizumi stopped in his tracks. His heart was doing somersaults and he hunched over, waves of nausea washing over him. The officer checked the time of the calls.

’12:34am’. Over eight hours ago.

He distracted himself and the culprit had attacked again.

“Shit!” Iwaizumi snarled loudly, hitting his head in complete frustration. He crumpled down to his knees in the middle of the driveway, letting out a choked breath. That was another victim. Another person he could have saved. He panted, teeth gritted in resentment. With shaky fingers, he checked the final notification. One message from Ushijima Wakatoshi:

“You and I need to have a talk.”

Iwaizumi snapped his phone shut, mind in a daze as he stared down Oikawa’s driveway. He could already predict what the ‘talk’ was about. Iwaizumi felt his expression scrunch and he shook his head. Now wasn’t the time to cry over spilt milk. He needed to get to the station. The officer sucked in a deep breath, wiping his eyes as he picked himself up off Oikawa’s driveway and rushed down to hail the nearest cab.

∞

The office was surprisingly docile considering Daichi’s urgent messages. Iwaizumi hurried in to find the officer sitting alone at his desk, taking a large bite of a store-bought sandwich. He looked as though he had stayed up the entire night. Iwaizumi felt sick with guilt. He lingered before shrugging off his crumpled coat and hanging it on the rack.

Officer Daichi paused mid-bite when he noticed the other and opened his mouth. He hesitated when the senior officer approached with uncertainty, eyes darting up and down as he took in the state of Iwaizumi.

“I’m sorry,” Iwaizumi managed. “I’m really sorry, I should’ve checked my pho-“

“Don’t,” Daichi interrupted sternly. “Don’t do this to yourself.” He took another bite of his food, chewing manually as he spoke in between chews. “It’s fine. The victim wasn’t physically harmed. Ruffled up, yes but he’s doing okay. He said he spotted the culprit and fought back. I’ll tell you more
later, but now let’s just wind down.”

Iwaizumi could tell he didn’t particularly have a choice considering the pointed look he received from the other and gave a jerked nod. “Okay, I get it,” he mumbled. “We’ll discuss it later.”

Daichi flashed a tired, yet pleased grin over his sandwich and Iwaizumi felt internally grateful. He leaned against the back desk, head resting against the office wall and sighed. Slight remnants of a hangover lingered, as he gently massaged his temples. “Where’s the others?” he murmured, closing his eyes.

“Went to grab coffee. I didn’t really want to deal with any morning antics so I just let them all go. They should be back now though.”

“Sorry,” Iwaizumi repeated. “If you want, I can take now. Go home and get some rest first."

“Excuse the language but shut up, Hajime. You look just as bad as I do and you’ve worked overtime since the start of this damn case. I can handle a few more hours.”

Iwaizumi’s eyebrows shot up as he opened one eye to regard the officer. “Wow. Do you talk to Suga like that too? I bet he would beat the lights out of you.”

Daichi chuckled. "He does it regardless," He watched the other carefully. "Rough night?"

"You could say that," Iwaizumi sighed, closing his eye again. The dull throbbing of the headache lingered and his stomach churned with waves of nausea. He deserved at least this much.

The officer allowed his breath to slowly even out, taking in the peaceful surroundings with the exception of the light crinkle from Daichi’s food wrapping. A distant chatter began to grow which notified him the rest had finally returned from their coffee runs.

"No, the dress actually wasn't blue and black, it's whi- oh, sup Wazzy. Gee, you look terrible."

Iwaizumi cracked on eye open. "I feel terrible."

Kuroo snorted, tossing over a can of iced-coffee. "Amen brother."

Iwaizumi lifted his hands to catch but was intervened by a flash of white and grey. Officer Bokuto lunged ahead, snatching and popping the can open in one swift movement. "Here ya go, buddy," he chirped, flashing a friendly smile as he placed the can in Iwaizumi’s hand.

"Uh," the officer blinked. "Thanks, I guess."

"Not problema, my dear amigo," Bokuto yipped as he patted Iwaizumi on the shoulder. "It's the least I can- oh," He blinked widely, staring down in surprise. "Oh. Oh my. Have you been working out Wazzy? Wow, you're packing the entire gun show in here!" He grabbed a handful of Iwaizumi's arm and gave a tight squeeze.

The senior officer grimaced, yanking away from Bokuto's touch. "Cut to the chase, what do you want?"

Bokuto grinned, rocking on the balls of his feet. “I like it when you're assertive like that. Just wondering if you did it or not,” He was up in his face, eyes wide and hopeful.

Iwaizumi pushed his face back only for it to return even closer. “Do what?” he grimaced.

“Did you say hi to Akaashi for me?”
“Yeah,” Iwaizumi replied offhandedly. He nudged his way through to get past the other. “He said hi back.”

Bokuto sucked his a sharp breath, hand placed over his mouth. “Oh my god,” he whispered, slowly lowering his hand. He threw his head back letting out a loud YES! “Kuroo, did you hear?! He said hi back!” The officer leapt around, criss-crossing in between the desks, pausing to grab Officer Daichi’s hand for a forced high-five. Swooping away from when the other’s reached over to give him a smack, Bokuto skipped about, finally ending it with a little Chaplin tap and landing unceremoniously on one of the office chairs. “Look at us already building cute memories. He’s going to be the death of me,” he sighed.

“Relax now,” Daichi spoke sternly. “Bokuto, nothing good ever happens when you were overexcited like that.”

“I feel like I can face the world!” Bokuto cried, flinging his arms at the ceiling as he spun on his chair. “At this rate, I’ll have him wrapped around my finger.”

“I’m pretty sure it’s the other way around,” Iwaizumi groused. He gently massaged his temples and ducked his head. “Daichi’s right. Nothing good ever arises from rushing in to new relationships.” He glanced up, meeting Kuroo’s eye. He was watching intently, mouth hidden from his hand in a contemplative manner. Iwaizumi looked away.

“You know what?” Bokuto stood from his seat. He inhaled deeply, exhaling in a long, shaky breath. “I’m going to do it.”

Iwaizumi glanced over as Daichi returned looks of concern. “What are you going to do?” he asked slowly.

“Today is the day,” Bokuto declared. “The day I become a man.”

“Because you weren’t a man before,” Daichi frowned.

“I’m going to do it. I’m going to ask Akaashi out on a date,” Bokuto spoke slowly, eyes wide as though surprised by his own words.

“Alright! B-Dawgs taking charge!” Kuroo leaned over, slapping his friend’s behind three times. “That’s my bro! Go make me proud.”

Bokuto turned, flashing him a wild grin over his shoulder. “I’m going in for the kill. K-Cat you can come with me if you want.”

“No,” Daichi interjected. “It’s bad enough having one of you going. But the two of you? Absolutely not,” He turned to Bokuto, furrowing his brows.

“Oh no, he’s doing it,” Kuroo complained. “B-Dawgs, close your eyes. Daichi’s doing his infamous ‘disapproving father’ look.”

“I am not doing my ‘disapproving father’ face,” Daichi scrunched his lips in a stern manner. “Not that I even have such a look.”

“Who you trying to kid? Give you a pair of reading glasses, place you on a lounge by a fireplace and there you have it. The father of all fathers. Even my dad would call you dad.”

Officer Daichi opened his mouth before closing it again and frowning. He leaned back in his chair, crossing his arms and shifting his attention toward Bokuto. “I’m serious, Bokuto. I really advise
against this.”

“No, I’m telling you it’s fate. In fact, I even dreamt of him last night. He was a birds-keeper and I
was his trusty companion, an owl perched on his shoulder. He would stroke my feathers and tell me
how I was his favourite bird in the entire world,” Bokuto’s eyes glazed as he swooned over the arm
rest. “Once, I just opened my little beak and…”

“And what? What did you say?”

Bokuto stopped, frowning at Daichi. “I was an owl. Owls don’t speak, Daichi.”

“Yeah, c’mon Daichi,” Kuroo joined in. “At least pretend you’re listening.”

Officer Daichi squinted back, taking another bite of his sandwich. “Oh, my apologies,” he retorted
sarcastically. “Please, do continue.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Bokuto waved him off. “I’m just saying it was clearly meant to be. But man, I
woke up with the biggest morning wood-“

“Eurgh, Bokuto no.” Iwaizumi grimaced as Daichi tossed his half-eaten food back in to the paper
bag and wiped his mouth with a napkin. “At least give us a warning, jees.”

“A warning? About what? About love? I’m free to express my love as I please.”

“Yes, well keep that love tucked safely and securely in your pants, away from others. Especially us.”

“I’m going!” Bokuto cried, stomping his foot lightly in a petulant manner. “I’m going to go and do
something I should’ve done a long time ago!”

“I just don’t think this is a good idea,” Daichi warned. “I mean, you’ve barely known the guy for th-“

“No!” Bokuto hammered back. “Under the universal declarations and standards of human rights,
every individual is entitled to freedom of independent expression and the right to act upon personal
desires and attitudes so long as they are not negatively affecting the lives of others, as well as
remaining accountable for their own actions!” He finished with a loud huff, holding a heavy pout at
the officers to stared back speechless.

“You know what, this is giving me a headache,” Iwaizumi exasperated, pinching the bridge of his
nose. He pointed to Bokuto. “Fifteen minutes. Absolutely no further or I will make certain you do
not step out of this office ever again. If I find you so much as bother one person in that office I will
personally place your desk in my office-“

“I got it, Wazzy, I got it,” Bokuto crowed, already grabbing his jacket with ill-suppressed excitement.
“I’ll try not to swoon anyone else on my way.”

“Wait B-dawgs,” Kuroo called. He rummaged through his drawers before glancing up at him
through one lazy eye. “Did you pack your lucky robot?”

Bokuto beamed, patting his inner vest pocket. “Already ahead of you.”

“What?” Daichi squinted, eyeing the two in suspicion. “Your lucky what?”

“Lucky robot,” Kuroo repeated as though it were the most natural thing in the world. “It brings you
good luck.”
Bokuto nodded, tucking his shirt in to his pants tightly. “It’s true. If you have the lucky robot, nothing can get in your way. It’s absolutely foolproof.”

“Do I dare ask why a robot?”

Kuroo picked a pen up from his drawer, twirling it expertly between his fingers. “I drew a little robot on one of Bokuto’s business cards and to this day it has brought us immense luck. One time, I decided to tuck it in to my vest to show him the masterpiece later. We had decided to go driving and the car just swerved out of control. It wasn’t even rainy that day but the breaks must’ve gotten lodged because it started skidding all over the place and I couldn’t slow it down. We were heading towards the corner of a building and in that split moment, I thought man, this is it. This is how I’m going to die. But then!” Kuroo paused, leaning to his right to tap lightly the left side of Bokuto’s chest. “Bokuto reached out to hold over my side like he was trying lessen the impact and the moment he placed his hand over the card, I swear to god the brakes were suddenly working. All thanks to this little guy. Lucky Robot saved us. I’m not even kidding, it had never failed us.”

“That,” Daichi stared before shaking his head and scrunching up his sandwich remained to toss in the bin. “That is the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard. More like you were speeding around, which, by the way, you need to avoid doing, and the brakes busted out a little. Either way this wouldn’t have happened if not for your recklessness.”

“Well, if we’re going to point fingers, can I just say you were the last person to use the police car before me so who knows? Perhaps you tampered it as a twisted plan to get rid of us.”

“Okay, I was mistaken. That was the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard,” Daichi sighed, watching as Kuroo began untucking his friend’s shirt. “Bokuto, you do what you want but don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

“It’s okay.” Bokuto flashed a cocky grin, tapping his fist lightly on his chest. “I got Lucky Robot with me. What could possibly go wrong?”

∞

When Oikawa awoke, he blinked around blearily to find he was in his bed. His mouth felt furry and tasted foul as he lightly clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. He groaned lightly, shifting in his bed for a more comfortable position.

He bolted upright before letting out a sharp hiss. His head pounded and he rubbed his temples gently. “Oh god, it feels like I’ve bashed my head a few times,” he whimpered. He paused, frowned as his mind struggled to recall. ‘What happened last night?’

They were at the bar and then Iwaizumi was wrapping his arm around his waist like it were second nature when they left the bar then-

I like you. I like you a lot.

Oikawa took a sharp intake of air as he fumbled with his blankets. “No, no, no,” he whispered frantically. Head rushing as he tripped his way out and hurried to the living room.

Iwaizumi was gone. What happened last night?
‘Did something happen? Did we-’ Oikawa looked down at his crumpled clothes. Surely he wouldn’t redress himself after they…

Oikawa shook his head madly, cheeks growing hot. “God damn it, get a hold of yourself, Tooru.”

He hissed.

He had drunk far more than he had anticipated and the thought of another brandy made his stomach lurch. Did he take a taxi home? Did Iwaizumi take him home? The living room remained as tidy as ever.. except. Oikawa stared at the couch cushions splayed all over the couch, some scattered on the floor. What happened here? ‘Did we… on the couch..?’ Oikawa covered his hand over his mouth, mortified at his own thoughts. “Oh god, no. Please, no.” he murmured frantically. The last thing he wanted was a one night stand. Surely nothing happened. Right? Iwaizumi didn’t seem the type to do such reckless things. Oikawa examined the house, taking hushed steps as he peered around.

Not a trace of him here. Oikawa returned to the couch, plopping himself down. Several quiet moments passed before he ran his hands through his hair and let out a frustrated yell. He was panting heavily, as his eyes darted about. They zeroed in on the object placed on his coffee table. His mobile.

Oikawa lunged out, tapping for the contacts and pressing dial over Iwaizumi’s number. His knee twitched furiously as he gnawed at the insides of his cheek listening to the ringing. Something caught his eye and he froze. The plush bear remained propped upright against the tv screen with its lopsided smile. Oikawa stared, heavy breaths slowly subsiding. He dropped his phone on to the couch as he stared helplessly at the cheerful bear. “Could this day start any worse?” he whispered.

The faint buzz of his phone jolted him and he snatched it up, answering immediately. “Iwa-chan!”

“Uhh, no?

“Oh, its you,” Oikawa slumped back down, shoulders hunched. “What is it?”

Tsukishima’s voice grumbled in his ear. “What is it? How about the fact that you may be late for work?”

“I don’t have work today.”

“Yes, you do. And I would suggest hurrying as you’re already behind as it is-“

Oikawa ended the call, slumping back on the couch. “Crap,” he muttered.

∞

The thought of coming alone seemed frightening before but now he was ready. Officer Bokuto stood at the front of the AobaJousai news building, head craned to peer at the top. Feeling slightly nervous, he reached in to his left pocket, feeling the light outline of the envelope.

“Deliver this for me,” Kuroo had requested, tucking it in to his pocket on his way out. His friend grinned up at him. “

“Considering someone didn’t even hang around to find out their response to my first letter.”

Lev frowned at Officer Kuroo. “Wazzy told me to just go in to deliver the letter, then straight out. I didn’t know I was meant to wait for a reply! But on the plus side, I met this cool guy named Kenma
and he showed me this game where-“

Kuroo held his right hand up, his left covering his eyes in impatience. “No one cares about this so-called ‘cool guy named Kenma’. The time you spent with him, you could’ve used to find out more about my blondie.”

“Why don’t you give them the letter then?”

“Because,” Kuroo explained slowly. “It ruins the whole purpose of an anonymous love letter.”

Lev blinked. “But I told them it was from Officer Kuroo.”

“You what?” Kuroo threw his head back and let out a loud groan. “No! You weren’t supposed to tell! Mysterious, remember? Mysteeerious! Now they know who I am,” he lamented.

Bokuto reached over, giving his friend a light squeeze on the shoulders. “Doesn’t make you any less of a lady’s man, K-cat!” he cheered. “You’re easy on the eyes and you always know the right thing to say to make them fall!”

“It’s true,” Lev chipped in. “Had I not been with Yaku, who knows what would’ve happened between you and me.”

“Okay,” Kuroo pointed to the younger officer. “You’re forgiven. But can you see what they think of me?” The officer turned suddenly strangely abashed as he ran a hand through his hair. “I mean, if they’re happy that they’ve received them or if they’re interested in hanging out with me. No big deal.”

Bokuto smiled at his friend. “You got nothing to fret! You can count on me.”

Ping!

Bokuto blinked, snapped out of his thoughts and he glanced up. He was on the right level. Brushing his hand to feel the light outline of the lucky robot card, he took a deep breath and nodded to himself.

The office was bustling as per usual, though it seemed much less daunting than it had before. Everyone was going about their own business, heads shoved in to files and papers. Bokuto scanned around but frowned at the lack of blonde nor the familiar pretty face. His eyes flickered about before pausing to the right when spotting a recognised face. ‘Raven-haired boy’. He seemed completely different compared to their first encounter, now looking highly agitated and accompanied with a rather small companion whose hair matched his personality. He was a ball of wild energy, hopping and skipping about as he peered over his friend’s shoulder at his work. Bokuto began nudging his way through. It never ceased to amaze him the way people diverted their way out of his path whilst completely engrossed in their own business. He approached the two who had yet to notice him.

“For the last time, I’m busy so go bother someone else. I’m working on something big.”

“You don’t have work,” Hinata accused. “I saw you playing minesweeper earlier. Terribly at that all. Though, I’m pretty good at it. If you ask nicely enough, I can offer you some tips,” Hinata’s teasing grin drooped down into frown when he received no reaction from the other. “Or maybe I’ll just go teach Oikawa. We can play it amongst ourselves.”

Kageyama spun around, eyes wide and menacing. “I will hit you,” he threatened. “I will hit you so hard and you will cry.”

“Hey, hey,” Bokuto quickly interjected. He grinned at the startled two who stared at him with a
blank expression. “I’m in need of a little help. Sweater boy, could you help me out here?” Ignoring the indignant splutters and burst of laughter from the duo, he reached in to his vest pocket, pulling out the letter. “Do you know where the little blonde-“

“Oh man, another one? Again?” Hinata paused mid-laugh. He blinked up at the other, eyes wide with worry. “Sheesh, Yachi seriously has gone and done it now.”

“Shut up,” Kageyama muttered, eyeing the white envelope with discomfort and making no efforts of accepting it.

"Yachi?" Bokuto tilted his head. "Where is this little Yachi?"

The two shared glances, communicating amongst themselves with their eyes. Officer Bokuto blinked in confusion and turned to Hinata instead. “What about you, Peanut? Help a brother out?”

The intern let out an offended squeak and stood up on his tippie-toes, his golden piercings glinting angrily. “I’m not a peanut!” he yapped. Hinata blinked when he felt a sudden ruffle on his head and peered up to find Kageyama lightly ruffling his hair.

Kageyama was chuckling lightly. “Well?” He grinned, head tilted lightly to stare down at a better angle. “You going to help him out, Peanut?”

Kageyama’s eyes had drooped slightly, crinkling at the ends as he flashed a cocky smile. He’d lost his earlier angry demeanor and his hand was lightly scraping Hinata’s scalp in a way which made him want to lean in to the touch.

“I’m just- Okay, I’ll give it to Yachi,” Hinata fumbled. He reached out, grabbing hold of the letter and tucking it in to his jeans. Kageyama stopped, smile now replaced with a confused frown. He dropped his arm from Hinata’s head when the intern stirred, already moving the opposite direction.

Bokuto flashed a sunny smile. “Thanks a bunch. And has blondie mentioned anything about K-Ca-geurg!”

“You chose the wrong day to mess with me.”

Bokuto didn’t have to guess to know whose voice that belonged to. He immediately began to squirm about, doing his best to wriggle his way out. “Peacock, please! This is a matter of life and death!”

“No! Out!”

Bokuto struggled frantically against Oikawa’s grasp. “Hey, come on! Give me a break! I thought we were friends!” He wriggled about as the reporter swore and held on tightly.

“God damn it, don’t make me call security!”

“Friends don’t kick friend ou- oh god, what’s wrong with your face?!” Bokuto cried in alarm as he glanced over his shoulder.

“Wow, gee, thanks.” Oikawa retorted icily. “Pretty sure you don’t say those kinds of things to friends either.”

Bokuto blinked wide-eyed at the other. Oikawa’s hair had lost its usual shine and upright flick, now a ruffled mess. His eyes were slightly drooped and red as though he barely slept a wink. Even his milky clear skin looked clammy and off.
“You look like Ultrafonio’s nemesis. All white and on the verge of death.”

“Okay that,” Oikawa let go and pointed at Bokuto. “That is just insulting. You are one twisted person.”

Bokuto grinned. “Friends tell each other the truth! And you look like you’re in pretty bad shape. You doing alright, Peacock?”

Oikawa opened and closed his mouth. His throat tightened as he swallowed. “I’m fine,” he replied curtly, looking away. “How’s Iwaizumi? Did he mention anything?”

Bokuto watched Oikawa. “No, he was acting kinda different this morning but I’m sure it’s because of the case. He does that sometimes. Why? Did something happen?”

‘I’d like to know.’

“No,” Oikawa replied, reaching for his coffee. “Nothing happened.”

He felt the hairs of the back of his neck prickle in discomfort from the blatant stare coming from the stare. “Stop that,” Oikawa warned. “I’m serious about calling security.”

Bokuto pouted, golden eyes shining. “You wouldn’t do that to one of your closest buddies, would you?”

“Why do you keep insisting on being buddies?” Oikawa exasperated. He reached out, poking roughly in to Bokuto’s chest. “We are not buddies. You and me? Not even close. We have absolutely nothing in common either.”

Bokuto gasped. “You take that back right now,” He surged in again, squeezing tightly on to Oikawa’s shoulders. “We have lots in common! I know you like Ultrafonio and you don’t like being mugged. I wouldn’t like being mugged either. And we’ve shared lots of fun moments too,” Bokuto jabbered, oblivious to Oikawa trying to shrug his hands off. “Like our fun calls at night and that time I surprised you by your car! Or even-“ he paused, reaching for his phone. He tapped a few keys before bringing it up to Oikawa’s face. “Remember this?”

Oikawa frowned as he stopped struggling to peer at the screen. “What is tha- eurgh! Oh my god, what the hell?! When did you take that?!”

Bokuto grinned, turning the phone to stare fondly at it himself. “That was the surprise selfie I took of you the night we first met. Just you, me and K-cat havin’ a good time. Great memories.”

“Delete that,” Oikawa grabbed at Bokuto, trying to hold him down as he lunged for the phone. “Delete it right now.”

“No way,” Bokuto said cheerily. “I’m going to stick it on your upcoming birthday card and get everyone to sign it. When’s your birthday, by the way? I’ll save it on my phone now.”

“No!” Oikawa snapped, oblivious to the stares he was receiving by nearby co-workers. “You get rid of it!” He reached around, jabbing his fingers roughly in to the officer’s sides.

Bokuto let out a high-pitched squawk, wriggling around. “Hey! Don’t, I’m ticklish.”

“Um.”

They both paused, heads craned over to find a highly unamused Akaashi. The photographer tilted his head, raising an eyebrow. “Am I interrupting something?”
“Akaashi!” Bokuto chirped. He shoved Oikawa aside, ignoring when the reporter let out a squawk and collided in to the desk on his right. “How have you been? I got your message about you saying, uh, hello. Just wanted to stop by and make sure work hasn’t been too rough. I mean, Peacock over here looks like he’s been run over a few times. But not you!” he added quickly. “You look good. As per usual. And, yeah,” he coughed, nodding madly. He blinked at Akaashi in earnest.

“Er, thank you,” Akaashi replied slowly, though, sour expression already smoothing out. “Hope work has been treating you fairly too.”

“Work?” Bokuto let out a mighty laugh. “Nah, work is just work. No biggie,” he grinned at Akaashi who frowned.

The photographer bowed lightly. “Well, speaking of work, I have a lot to catch up on so I’ll get going-”

“Wait!” Bokuto cried out. “I need.. can we talk? Just you and me,” he added, ignoring Oikawa’s pointed glares.

Akaashi blinked. “Hinata’s on his break,” he considered as he eyed his watch. “Suppose I have ten minutes to spare.”

“Perfect, yes. Ten minutes is more than enough,” Bokuto smiled, fingers twitching involuntarily. He began to smooth his hair back discreetly when Akaashi nodded farewell to Oikawa and led them to a spare back office room.

Bokuto’s hearthammered as he eyed Akaashi up close. He really did have such lovely eyes. The way they were slightly angled and heavy-lidded seemed so seductive and Bokuto found himself wiping his sweaty palms on his pants.

Akaashi paid no mind to him, flicking through his files as he leaned against the wall. The two were so close like this and Bokuto’s fingers twitched at the thought of reaching up and touching the soft, silky hair.

As though by fate, Akaashi glanced up at him, eyelashes lightly framing his deep eyes. “I’m sorry, I’m just trying to find a few papers I printed out for Hinata. He’s an intern who’s working with me at the moment.”

“Wow, that’s awesome!” Bokuto acclaimed. “You’re so talented, Akaashi.”

The photographer blinked, staring at the other before he shook his head. “You’re so strange, Bokuto,” he smiled. Akaashi placed his folder on a nearby desk and crossed his arms, attention now fully on the officer. “So, what can I help you with then?”

Bokuto could feel his heart seizing within his ribcage and he took a deep, shaky breath. “I’m here because.. I like you. Like, a lot. Not like a friend but I think you and I are..” Officer Bokuto regarded Akaashi seriously as he raised both hands at him.

“Uhh,” Akaashi blinked in confusion as he linked both his pinkies together tightly.

“I think we are this,” Bokuto declared, eyes twinkling with excitement. “So, do you.. do you think we’re this too?”

Akaashi stared blankly at Bokuto’s fingers sealed together before making eye contact with the officer. Neither spoke, simply watching one another and Bokuto could feel sweat pooling near his temple. Just when he couldn’t bear the silence any longer, Akaashi leaned back against the desk. He
had the most sincere smile and Bokuto’s heart did somersaults.

“I’m sorry but I’m going to have to decline.”

Bokuto blinked at the other. “Decline..?”

Akaashi smiled again, so sympathetic and sweet. “I’m not interested, sorry.”


He felt his insides drop, sinking so low they were pooled at the bottoms of his feet. He could feel himself begin to shake and he shifted lightly.

“Is there.. Is there a reason?” the officer questioned softly, large eyes blinking rapidly. “I won’t be mad, I promise.”

Akaashi winced and flashed him an apologetic look. “It’s just, I barely know you and you seem like a nice person but I’m more interested in someone who’s committed to their work.. like me.”

“You want to date yourself?” Bokuto asked, looking severely confused and upset.

“I’m sorry,” Akaashi repeated. “I guess, we can be friends though,” he offered lamely.

“Friends?” Bokuto flashed him a watery grin. “Uh, yeah, friends are cool too. Here, let me just-“ he dug in to his pocket, pulling out a small card and passing it to the other.

Akaashi stared at the little cardboard with a poorly drawn robot.

“Oh, sorry. I got bored. Uh, let me see if I have another card in here somewhere,” Bokuto’s hands shook lightly as he tried to rummaged through his pockets. He stopped, hands dropping on either side and shaking his head. “Here, just take that one. It’s just a card anyway. The luck must’ve run out.”

“Oh,” Akaashi flipped it over to find a professional looking business card with ‘Officer Bokuto’ printed on it. “Thank you.”

The officer nodded madly and flashed him a rather broken grin. “Anyway, I better get going. I got, uh, stuff. Police stuff to do. Lots of it. So, I’ll, er, get going.” He flashed a brief salute, spinning around on his heel and hurrying out with waiting for the other’s response.

The noise of the office clashed and rattled his mind as he felt the ends of his mouth slowly twitch down even further. The officer blinked rapidly, hurrying his way out as humiliation raked his insides. He kept his eyes down as he rushed through, bumping in to a few people on the way. The last thing he wanted was to collide in to Oikawa again who would be more than thrilled to rub his rejection in his face. He was nearing the elevator when a young girl blocked his path. Bokuto skidded to a halt, staring down at her.

“E-excuse me,” she stammered, eyes darting frantically. “I received another letter f-from your o-officer friend,” she paused, taking a loud gulp.

Officer frie- oh. Kuroo’s crush.
Bokuto blinked slowly. "You're not what I expected."

He was met with large, round eyes. She resembled the appearance of a caught rabbit. "What do you mean?" she whispered.
"I didn't expect Kuroo to target someone like you."

The girl let out a frightened squeak, eyes frantic and wide. "What kind of person is Mr. Kuroo? Is he- is Mr. Kuroo a forgiving person?"

Bokuto stared down at her, mind whirring slowly as he watched her squirm and grow more flustered by the second. ‘She wants to know more about K-Cat.’ He contemplated. His heart compressed and shriveled at the thought. ‘I wanted to know about Akaashi.’

“I just, I don’t understand what I did wrong but I am so terribly sor- oh god, are you crying?” Yachi stammered in alarm.

Bokuto shook his head madly, his vision blurred even further. “No, I’m not,” he sniffled. He indiscreetly wiped his eyes before placing a shaky hand on the girl’s shoulder. “I’m sorry. I just wish you the best of luck with Kuroo. I need- I’m sorry, excuse me,” he managed, skirting about her to get in the elevator.

“Oh my god,” Yachi whispered, standing alone in the busy office. “I’m going to die.”

∞

Officer Kuroo was leaning heavily on his chair when Bokuto returned to the officer. He sat up, flashing a huge, cocky grin at the return of his friend. “Well, well, well! If it ain’t our hotshot warrior who has returned from his love journe- oh.” He hesitated, smile dropping when his friend approached. “Aww, sorry it didn’t work out, buddy.”

Bokuto blinked rapidly before wiping his left eye. “You’re like some kind of mind reader, K-cat. You can always tell.”

Kuroo flashed a sympathetic look. “Cause I got the sixth sense. The bro sense. I just know that kinda stuff.” He noted, staring in to Bokuto’s red-rimmed, water eyes. “It’s alright B-dawgs, c’mere.” The officer leaned over the reception desk to pull the other in to a rough embrace. Bokuto wrapped his arms around, gripping tightly on to the other’s uniform as he burrowed his face in.

“The robot wasn’t lucky at all.”

Kuroo held on to his friend, half-lidded eyes glancing sympathetically at the side of his head. He didn’t mention anything when he heard a loud, shuddering breath and reached up to give a friendly noogie then release him. “Hey, who needs luck anyway? That’s for the weak-minded. You still got me,” he grinned, spreading out his arms as he plopped back down on his chair.

“Yeah, you got my back like I got yours,” Bokuto said in a wobbly tone but smiled nonetheless. He sucked in his lips to restrain them from shaking when Officer Daichi walked in from the back. They met eyes and Bokuto hunched his shoulders meekly as he peered up at him waiting for Daichi’s classic ‘I told you so’ lecture.

Daichi stared back before sighing and sitting at his desk. He leaned down, reaching for his drawer and pulling out a white, crumpled bag. “Here,” he called, tossing it over to Bokuto who fumbled and almost dropped it. “You need it more than I do.”

Bokuto tilted his head in curiosity as he pried it open. Two jam donuts were slightly mushed
Bokuto felt his eyes water but nodded madly. Wiping them with the back of his palm, he then reached in. “Well, you are getting soft around the edges,” Bokuto replied miserably as he took a huge bite.

Daichi frowned, glancing down and giving his belly a pat. “That’s what Suga said too.”

“Hey, I heard dad bods are the new trend so consider it a plus,” Kuroo teased. “Actually, you kinda have a similar body to John Kanen. You know, the guy from the movie ‘The Revenge of the Agents’.

Bokuto’s head snapped up. “That’s one of my favourite movies,” he exclaimed, wiping his mouth. There was a smear of sticky, red jelly goo across his mouth. “He was good in that movie.”

“What? No way,” Kuroo sunk in to his chair, yawning loudly. “That movie sucked so bad. I mean, the acting was all over the place.”

“What are you talking about? We watched that movie together!” Bokuto argued back, his earlier woes already forgotten. He leaned over the reception desk with an insistent look on his face. “You know it’s one of my favourites!”

“Huh? I don’t recall,” Kuroo’s lazy eyes regarded Bokuto. “It must’ve been ages ago.”

“No, remember!” Bokuto cried out, flailing his arms slightly. “When the guy falls off the building but he’s still fighting the bad guy on the motorbike airborne and they lrrnmph!” Bokuto paused, waiting patiently as his friend leaned over to wipe off the jam mess around his lips. “Then they land on the dumpster truck going by,” Bokuto continued. “That was my favourite scene. It’s a good movie.”

“Hm,” Kuroo contemplated. “Guess we’ll have to rewatch it so you can rejot my memory. Free tomorrow night?”

“You know it!” Bokuto yipped, eyes twinkling from the forgotten tears. “We’re going to watch the entire series! All five of them.”

“Alright, you’re on,” Kuroo grinned back, ignoring the amused look from Daichi. “I’ll get the pizza. Please don’t puke it up on my couch again like last time.”

∞

It was the late hours of the night by the time he returned home. He sighed, rolling his shoulders lightly as he toed off his shoes. Feet padding lightly as he strolled through his living room he went straight for the fridge.

‘Three cans of beer, half-eaten apple, jar of- how long has that been there for?’

He grimaced, slamming it shut. “Takeaway it is,” he hummed. He scrutinised the several food delivery pamphlets stuck on the fridge before deciding with Chinese. What to get, what to get. He frowned. Then blinked before chuckling and shaking his head. “Why not everything? Afterall,” he paused, reaching in to his ruffled coat and pulling out the rich mahogany, leather wallet. Eyes squinting at the print on the man’s driver’s license. “Mr… Saito will be shouting tonight,” He grinned back at the serious man’s face.
After ordering an alarming amount of food, he made his way to the living room where he plucked the money out of the wallet and tossed it aside. Shrugging off his jacket, he dropped himself on to his small couch and sighed. Fingers flicked expertly and lazy eyes gazed down at the wad of cash. ‘Three hundred and twenty-five dollars’.

Tucking the money in his back pocket, he propped his feet on the table, hands clasped behind his head as he gazed up at the ceiling. He let out an amused chuckle. “Too easy,” he murmured to himself. Sitting upright, he reached for the laptop and clicked it awake. “Let’s see now,” he hummed.

He glanced over the laptop screen at his desk. Wallets, phones, wristwatches, music players - “and this beauty,” he cooed, stroking the side of the laptop. His wide grin slowly died down. He gazed over the various items and frowned lightly. These no longer satisfied the inner thrill he longed for. ‘I want the big prize’.

He clicked through the laptop, typing in the name in the search engine. Several links popped up, most of which directing from the AobaJousai news site.

‘The unspoken truth of Quinn Mourre, The Abundance of Talent within the Streets, The Real Heroes of our City…’ He flickered through, feeling giddy whenever he spotted out the writer of the article. All of whom by the one and only, Oikawa Tooru. “Now that’s what I want,” he murmured. The front man. Surely a guy like him had to be loaded. The sheer size of his house alone was indicative enough. ‘Maybe he’ll write about me after this’

He sat alone, the laptop screen illuminating the whites of his wide eyes as he flicked through the articles with the name repeated in his mind.

‘Oikawa Tooru, Oikawa Tooru, Oikawa Tooru.’

Chapter End Notes

Finally I have pieced it all out and know how this fic is going to end - I'm excited for the next upcoming chapters!!
Hope you enjoyed and stay tuned!
Kenma likes video games. It’s as simple as that. Videos games vary in genres, styles, forms and gaming technique. And he’s fairly certain he’s done it all; from Call of Duty to even Wii fit (though, only within the safe perimeters of his home). Alas, it is true – games hold a dear place in little Kenma’s heart.

He settled himself comfortably in his large, wheelie chair; one leg swinging idly to and fro as he switched on his DS. It chirped its sweet greeting as though pleased to find him back so soon. Kenma’s toes wiggled in anticipation as the screen blackened and the bold title ‘Haikyuu Quest’ faded in, accompanied by grand, orchestral music. “Neat,” he murmured to himself, tapping A to skip the dialogue. He’d been itching to get his fingers on this game and to finally have a tangible copy before him brought waves of bliss. He sunk himself deeper in to the chair, curling in to a sloppy posture.

“Kenma, Kenma, Kenma!”

He paused, glancing up from the screen over at the intern. Hinata was skirting his way through the busy office without hesitation. He was a ball of unceasing energy, always jogging instead of walking, yelling over talking. His wild lion’s mane ruffled from the movement and he grinned widely at the other, eyes twinkling as though Kenma was the final prize at the end of the boss battle. Hinata was the kind of individual who’d place as the main character in one of those intense, action-packed adventure games. Kenma liked those.

“Hey,” He smiled lightly.

“Did you hear? Yachi’s received another letter,” Hinata propped himself up on the edge of Kenma’s desk, legs swinging leisurely. “I think she might combust from all those jittery nerves.”

The intern often showed up like this, sharing a piece of office gossip or update. In a sense, he was the web-designer’s personal news reporter. Kenma didn’t mind; he was content on listening to him chatter to his heart’s content before rushing off to badger Kageyama.

“Mmm,” Kenma hummed, resuming his game. His knight and newly acquainted companions began a steady march in to the forest when stumbling upon a horned demon. It let out a distorted laugh before pointing at the knight then- Hinata.

“What do you think?”

“Hm?” Kenma paused the game again.

“I said what do you think? Do you reckon she’s going to get arrested? Are they going to walk her
out hand-cuffed behind her back?” The intern let out a little chuckle. Kenma dropped his gaze to find Hinata’s fingers fiddling nervously with the hem of his shirt.

“Why would she be arrested? Yachi couldn’t hurt a fly if she tried,” he noted gently, keeping an eye on those fingers.

The twitching died down and Hinata *huh-*ed in consideration. “Ahh, you’re right,” he grinned sheepishly, scratching the back of his head. “Officer Kuroo must’ve gotten mixed up or something.”

Kenma nodded. “I’m sure that’s what it was,” He tapped save on his game. “What did the letter say anyway?”

“Well,” Hinata frowned. “You know what’s strange? He doesn’t explain what she stole but keeps insinuating something bad will happen to her. It’s all very cryptic. Like- ” Hinata glanced around before leaning in to whisper. “The second letter went:

‘As I await from afar,
I mourn with such grief
Because of you, my dear thief
I’ve lost sight of other stars’

Creepy right?” Hinata leaned back. “Kageyama thinks he’s all bark and no bite but apparently he wouldn’t try and mess with him.”

“Why? Is he huge?”

“Well, I don’t know,” Hinata frowned. “But Kageyama has seen him. But from what he says, he’s got abit of a...”

Kenma stared blankly as Hinata held a hand on top of his head and shook it lightly to resemble a rooster.

“He’s been here before you said?” Kenma stared down at his console as he frowned. “Does he have dark hair? Droopy looking eyes?”

Hinata gaped at him, hand frozen above his head. “You know him?” he squawked. “What’s he like? Is he a beast? You reckon I can fight him?”

“He looks rather menacing. But no, you probably couldn’t fight him.”

“What! He must be savage,” Hinata commented, swinging imaginary punches. “Is he really that strong?”

“Not strong,” Kenma frowned. He glanced down at his knight on the screen. “You couldn’t fight him because you wouldn’t need to. He seems like a nice person.”

Hinata gawked at his elder. “You said he looked menacing!” he guffawed.

“He does,” Kenma tilted his eyes to the ceiling as the vague face appeared in his mind. “But he’s nice,” He paused before adding “He’s got bad phone taste.”

“So he’s like Kageyama then,” Hinata ahh-ed, sitting back and snapping his fingers. “I think I get it now!”

He paused, glancing around. “Speaking of Kageyama,” he hesitated slightly, feet coming to a halt. “Akaashi mentioned you built a little, uh, tracking device on mobiles. So you can re-find lost phones
and pinpoint its direction. Is that true?"

Kenma watched him from the corner of his golden eye. “I did. It’s not got any bugs on it, right?”

“No!” Hinata shook his head madly. “Akaashi always finds me in a split second the moment I leave the nest.” His eyes were wide and earnest as he leaned in closer. “It’s very useful.”

“That’s good.”

“I was just wondering,” Hinata began scratching the back of his neck, eyes darting about as though on the lookout. “Does it work on all mobiles? Even one of them awful, brick phones?”

Kenma eyed him carefully, placing his DS on his lap. “You want to track Kageyama.”


His shoulders drooped lightly and he pursed his lips. “He’s always avoiding me saying he’s too busy and he’s working on a so-called ‘big project’. I just want to check what he’s really up to.” His eyes scrunched in to a squint as he eyed the office. “I bet he’s secretly brewing extra coffees for Oikawa to stay on his good side.”

“So..” Kenma spoke slowly and carefully. “You do want to stalk him then?”

“It’s a curiosity thing! Nevermind, you’re right. That’s overstepping the boundaries.”

“Alright, I’ll do it,” Kenma looked away when the intern lit up like a Christmas tree.

“Wait, really? You’ll do that for me?” Hinata’s eyes glowed with anticipation. “Kenma, that’s so cool!”

He paused, rummaging through his pockets and pulling out pieces of trash and odd receipts. “I swear I have five dollars in here. Akaashi told me he paid you with apple pies so let me just quickly duck down to the store-”

Kenma shook his head lightly. “It’s alright. I can’t make an intern pay. Just leave your phone with me and I’ll see what I can do.”

“Wow, thanks a bunch,” Hinata patted his other pockets before pulling out his small mobile. “You’re the best, Kenma. I’m definitely buying you dinner next time though!” With that he bid farewell, waving excitedly as he flashed a genuine grin.

Kenma found himself smiling back slightly before returning to his knight’s quest. Sure, he likes video games, but he supposes work is alright too.

∞

It was bound to happen. He was expecting it to happen. But it didn’t mean he was prepared for it.

Calculating eyes gazed down at him. Iwaizumi stared back, careful not to get his gaze waver.

“I’ve decided to take you off the case.”

Iwaizumi felt his innards grow cold. Ahh, the moment he’d been dreading. Ushijima sat across from
him at Iwaizumi’s personal office, fingers neatly crossed together as he watched the other with ill-
remorse. Iwaizumi had been mentally preparing himself for those exact words but it still hit him with
the impact of a head-on collision. He grit his teeth, working his jaw in consideration. Had this
occurred a few weeks ago, he would’ve been more than happy to pass it on. However.

The senior officer copped a terse nod, before lifting his briefcase. “Your primary focus now is city
maintenance. I am talking about ‘sweeping the streets’. You’ll be handling the common crime acts
like petty thefts and night surveillances. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to notify me.”
He hardly spared a second glance as he smoothed down his tie. “I’ll transfer the case on to another
department.”

Iwaizumi felt his leg twitch from under the table. He had worked on that case for two months. He
had sleepless nights for two months. And after two months, he was finally a step closer to the culprit.
“Could you give me at least another two weeks? I think I’m really on to something else here and I
just-”

“This case has remained opened for too long with unsubstantial progress. This is the best choice for
us all.” Ushijima’s eyes glinted. “Considering the last incident.”

Iwaizumi repressed a chagrined expression. “Yes, but there’s been recent updates. I believe there is a
connection between the victims and the culprit. Well, victim. Oikawa Toor-“

“Enough is enough,” Ushijima’s tone dropped in to an unsettling rumble. “Why am I sensing some
favouritism amongst the victims, Hajime? He is a reporter. They will not hesitate to butcher us alive
when it comes to public affairs. The case is not yours anymore. End of discussion.”

Ushijima left the room without waiting for Iwaizumi’s response. He could hear his footsteps head
toward the front office, without a doubt gone to ‘terrorise’ his colleagues. Iwaizumi felt his blood
boil, pent-up frustration brooding thickly. This wasn’t fair.

He slumped back in his seat and rubbed his eyes with the heel of his palms. Perhaps this was the best
decision. It was true in agreeing the severity of this case had heightened significantly since he had
first received it. A new in charge meant a fresh perspective which could be beneficial for everyone. It
was reasonable. Hajime shook his head. The voice refused to listen to his reasoning, ringing in his
mind as clear as a bell. That voice, that trusting voice.

“*You know, despite our differences, we’re actually quite similar in various aspects. We demand
outcome. Perhaps it’s in our nature to try and take leadership.*”

He was depending on him to fix this. He had to fix this.
His leg continued to twitch. He glanced around his office. The walls were covered with papers, files,
photographs, victim profiles, maps, anything and everything. *His time and efforts sprawled out on
the wall.* “This is a bad idea, Hajime,” he murmured to himself, already standing from his chair and
hurrying to the front.
Ushijima was already on his way out, his coat hung over his suitcase and back turned to him.
Iwaizumi called out.

“You’re being stupid.”

Everyone froze. Daichi gaped at Iwaizumi, pen forgotten in his hand as it rolled from between his
fingers and on to the desk. Lev held both hands together in a ‘prayer’ sign over his mouth, eyes
impossibly wide as visibly paled. Even Kuroo and Bokuto looked stunned, blinking dumbly at their
colleague.
Ushijima stopped, hand frozen over his tie as he slowly faced Iwaizumi. “Excuse me?”

“Ushijima, I respect your decisions,” Iwaizumi spoke tersely, straightening his back. “But taking me off the case? It’s not a wise idea.”

The senior office continued to stare, eyes flashing as he regarded the other. “Oh? Is that so?” His shoes tapped softly as he turned back, walking steadily toward Iwaizumi. He towered over, leaning in so heavily Iwaizumi could see his own reflection in the other’s deep irises. “Then what do you suggest is the so-called ‘wise idea’?”

“Keep me on the case,” the officer replied easily. His heart Hammered like a trapped rabbit. “I know more about the case than anyone. I believe I can bring him down.”

Ushijima’s eyes bored in to his, not a single twitch as he stared with that placid expression. Moments passed before he broke the eye-contact.

“Iwaizumi, you are a good cop. You’re excellent at your job and due to that I have given you the benefit of the doubt on multiple occasions. However,” he turned away, heading back to the exit. “I have already assigned the case on to someone else. You need to step down.”

Iwaizumi bit his tongue, jaw working as he watched the other. Ushijima paused, gaze drifting to Daichi. “It’s good to see the officers doing well here. Keep up the good work.”

Iwaizumi dropped his gaze as Daichi bowed gently. “Thank you,” he murmured. Officer Kuroo, Bokuto and Lev nodded as their senior officer passed, avoiding his eye contact.

Iwaizumi balled his hands in to fists, digging his blunt nail in to the inner-cushion part of his palm until it hurt. Two months of chasing gone down the drain. It almost hurt to breathe.

“Iwaizumi.”

The officer lifted his head to find Ushijima watching him. There was a light tick which flashed across his expression and for a split moment Iwaizumi could have sworn he saw slight regret.

“You are a good cop,” he repeated. “I do hold high regards of your contribution. Do not take this personally.”

Iwaizumi looked the other way. The senior officer gave the office a brief final overlook, eyes skirting around before he gave a curt nod and left the department.

The moment the coast was clear, the others collapsed in to their chairs.

“Oh my god, twice a week?! He never shows up this often,” Lev complained. “He’s like a broken jack-in-the-box toy. What a nightmare.”

“Excuse me,” Iwaizumi murmured as he pushed his way through. He refused to meet eyes with the officers who watched him with uncertainty. Though, he paused when he felt a light pressure on his arm.

“Hey, don’t kick yourself. Like he said, you did well.” Daichi’s calm tone did little to subside the coiling mess within Iwaizumi.

“I’ll be in my office,” he replied, shrugging his friend off and returning to the back.
‘The person you are trying to reach is currently unavailable.’

Oikawa ended the call, tossing his phone aside with a sigh. He sunk himself in to the couch, pressing his cheek against the bony hill of his bent knee. It had been three days since the incident. Three days since Iwaizumi had stopped talking to him. Oikawa sat alone on his couch at home which had long lost the scent of the officer.

He wanted to talk to him so bad. Did he do something wrong? Perhaps Iwaizumi was simply held back by his work. Oikawa gave an affirmative nod. Iwa-chan was probably busy with work. He could always pass by the station, pop his head in for a brief hello. Oikawa considered it for a moment then shook his head.

“He’s going to think you’re a creep,” he scolded himself. There was no viable excuse to be loitering in the vicinity of the station. ‘I could always get mugged again’.

Oikawa flopped down, his back resting on the seat. He skirted around, dangling his legs on the headrest and hanging his head upside down. Teddy Tooru smiled back, hanging from the ceiling in Oikawa’s vision. He chewed his lower lip in consideration.

As much as he hated to admit, this infatuation situation was getting out of control. Especially if Kageyama had approached asking if he was doing okay.

“I’m doing great! Just great!” Oikawa had snapped back. “In fact, I’m fan-freakin’ tastic so thank you for asking!” he hissed, snatching his freshly brewed coffee from Kageyama’s hand and gulping it down in three goes.

He scalded his tongue at least seven times.

He wasn’t doing as ‘greatly’ as he’d claimed. He was considerably behind on his work schedule, not to mention he’d lost his flow of writing which came naturally to him. His struggles hadn’t gone unnoticed either.

"You're going home and taking a break," Akaashi had simply stated. He crossed his arms. "You look like you're still hungover. Get some rest then come back."

"Well ain't that just great," Oikawa muttered, eyes glued on the mobile screen. "What the hell am I meant to do if I'm not working?"

He rested his hands on his chest, blinking slowly at the bear.

"What do you reckon, mini me?" Oikawa murmured, gazing down at the lopsided face. "Should I just let him go? Toss this fish back in the ocean? I mean, I guess it's no big deal. I think I'm getting over him alrea-"

His head snapped up when his phone let out a small bleep. Oikawa sat up too quickly, his mind slightly dizzy as he swiped the screen frantically to unlock it.

‘You have one email notification’.

Oikawa sagged, dropping his back against the couch cushion once more. He glanced to his side to find Teddy Tooru grinning up at him. "Well, it's not like you can judge," Oikawa grumbled before exhaling slowly. “You’re so ugly.”
He tapped and swiped at the update, checking it to find it was from work.

*Congratulations to our youngest, golden boy!*

Oikawa let out a snort. Excellent. Another work party. The office often held multiple work celebrations, using any excuse to finish early and sip some well-deserved booze. Oikawa had fallen for that trap on several occasions, then having to deal with giggling female co-workers who interrogated his ‘bachelor life’. Oikawa shuddered.

“Never again.” He glanced over the email, eyes darting through as he skim-read. Nothing out of the ordinary. “Another reporter’s first front page, give me a break. It’s not as though he-”

Oikawa froze, eyes widening at the print. “What the f-“ He took a double-take at the small font peeking from under the bold title of the article. Surely enough, his eyes weren’t playing tricks on him.

*‘Join celebrating front page success with us and Kageyama Tobio’*

Kageyama? How the hell did Kageyama get front page? Waves of disbelief crashed over him as he scrutinised his phone. The ex-intern had been with them for only a few short months, seven at the max. How did he possibly reel in the front page of the paper? It had taken Oikawa nearly a year and half before he managed to squeeze in his work on the second page.

“No way,” Oikawa murmured to himself, hastily opening up the news website in another tab. This had to be some kind of elaborate joke, right? There’s no way Kageyama’s article could possible top-there it was.

The writing began to blur and the reporter blinked owlishly. His hands were trembling lightly. He straightened himself upright against the couch, zooming in to confirm this was his article.

**GUESS MONSTER LURKING THE STREETS.**

Guess monster? The title itself was absurdly tacky. Undeniably something Kageyama would conjure up. There was no way something like this could be sporting the front page. Oikawa chewed his lip heavily as he skim read through. His heart dropped.

There was a string of incidents involving random assaults on the streets by the supposed ‘guess monster’. He was labled this due to his unpredictable patterns and merciless aggressions, including attacking individuals particularly during the late hours of the night and swiping their belongings. Oikawa stopped, breath slightly ragged as he tore his eyes away. He felt himself slump down in disbelief.

“This is about me,” he whispered. His insides clenched and coiled at the thought. Oikawa grit his teeth painfully as he breathed out through his nose. Waves of cold fury and humiliation washed over him as he tightened his grip on his phone. Circles of technicolour formed around where his fingers were pressed too tightly against the screen. Oikawa relented lightly as he continued to read through. His wide eyes froze at the last column.

*Iwaizumi Hajime, the lead officer of this case advises all to be cautious and remain alert of their surroundings. He also recommends for individuals to avoid roaming in public during late hours and…*

“Iwa-chan.” Oikawa could barely recognise his own voice as he dropped the paper beside him. Since when did Kageyama contact Iwaizumi? The officer’s words rang in his mind from their earliest encounters. “I don’t like reporters. I don’t trust them.”
“Then why are you doing a stupid, damn interview with Kageyama?!” Oikawa snarled, pegging his phone on the couch. It bounced off, landing with a scatter on the floor. Oikawa rubbed at his face as he let out sharp breaths. His chest tightened, constricting so hard he could barely register anything else. Iwaizumi didn’t reply to any of his messages or calls, yet he managed to squeeze in time for Kageyama? What did they talk about? Did Kageyama ask about his incident in relation to the case? Did Iwaizumi tell him everything, from his stolen laptop to him begging Iwaizumi to escort him home that night? His mind whirled with thoughts that only made him assume the worst.

“Stupid, stupid, god damn!” Oikawa stood abruptly, shoving his phone in to his pocket. “Who the hell does he think he is? First taking over my work and now taking-“ Oikawa let out a frustrated snarl. “Guess monster? I’ll show him monster.”

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There was no way Ushijima was going to worm this case out of him; not when he had made it this far. Which, to be fair, wasn’t too far but progress nonetheless. Iwaizumi flipped through his files, hand expertly flicking through the pages.

‘Oikawa Tooru.

He fingers twitched, hesitating for a split second before continuing his research. ‘Don’t even go there, Hajime,’ he warned himself. Oikawa had left a text message and three missed calls. He didn’t have the courage to read through or listen to the voicemails. His chest clenched at the thought and he shook his head.

His thoughts were interrupted by a playful tap on the door. “Don’t come in,” he called.

The door creaked open, the wild mop of hair popping in to view. “Sorry, what was that? Did you say ‘please come in, I’m so lonely and in need of some good ol’ fun times with my favourite workfriend?’” Officer Kuroo snuck in, gently closing the door behind him. “Well, why didn’t you say so? I’m right here, buddy.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes, tapping his pen on the desk. “At least think of a reasonable excuse.”

“Oh, my excuse is reasonable alright. I came to check on my grumpy, wumpy, Wazzy.” Kuroo interlocked his fingers, leaning back to stretch. He let out a strained noise as he arched his back, then rolling his shoulders back. “Man, it’s just doom and gloom in here! First, B-Dawgs and now you. What’s next? Suga decides to run away with Yaku and leave Lev and Daichi to curl up in their own pool of distraught tears?”

Kuroo paused, frowning at the thought. He strolled over beside Iwaizumi and tapped his desk. “Knock on wood. Don’t wanna jinx it.” He grinned sheepishly at the other.

Iwaizumi shook his head before returning to his papers. “I have work to do.”

“Yes, well me too. But here we are!” Kuroo flashed him another cheesy grin. He reached over, giving Iwaizumi a friendly punch on the shoulder. “What’s on your mind, Wazzy?”

“Nothing.”

Iwaizumi was focused completely on his files before let out an indignant squawk when Kuroo lunged in. He grabbed the officer’s cheeks, squishing them together like a fish.
Kuroo’s eyes were scrunched in to a slight squint. “Nope, something’s definitely wrong. You don’t look right.”

Iwaizumi yanked his face out of the other’s grip, shooting icy glares. “You think I’d look okay after what happened?” he snapped. “God damn straight, I’m not okay.” He exhaled deeply, jaw clenched hard.

“Is this about Peacock?”

Iwaizumi’s breath stuttered, hesitating for a brief moment. “What- I’m just-no.”

Kuroo stared, slowly crossing his arms as he squinted over. The two watched one another for several moments. Kuroo continued to lean in closer, squinting harder and harder until his face was scrunched in a distorted expression. Finally, Iwaizumi dropped his gaze and exhaled deeply. “I’m just..” He shook his head. “This was a terrible idea. I’m an idiot. I need to cut ties.”

Kuroo frowned. “Well, if you really think that’s what you need to do then do it,” He paused, eyes staring at the ceiling for a brief moment. “Say you’re already in a relationship.”

“I can’t,” Iwaizumi replied with a frustrated hiss. “I told him I was single.”

“Say you were cheating then. Oh, I know! Say you have a wife and kid of whom you are very devoted to and you can’t possibly ever leave them. If you were even cheating to begin with.” Kuroo paused. “Did you kiss him?”

“No! We just –“ Iwaizumi covered his face with his forearm. “We went for a few drinks, got ice-cream, then went to his and fell asleep. In different rooms.” He added. Iwaizumi didn’t want to mention the bear. The memory was humiliating enough.

“Wow,” Kuroo stared before letting out a strained snort. His shoulders began to shake from the efforts and it wasn’t long before the officer was cackling like a hyena. Iwaizumi dropped his arm to shoot him a withering look. The bedheaded officer was doubled-over, hand squeezed over his sides as he barked with laughter. He struggled about, wheezing and hooting as he clutched on to various pieces of furniture in Iwaizumi’s office to stop himself from collapsing altogether. Finally, he raised his shaky hands. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry. Okay, I’m done.” He said, mouth twitching from the efforts. He wiped an excess tear from the corner of his eye. “It’s just, that has to be the most PG rated night I’ve ever heard. You didn’t even get to first base. I don’t see what you’re so worked up about.”

Iwaizumi sighed, staring at the ground. “I don’t know either,” he admitted.

Kuroo eyed the other, lazy eyes fixed on the nape of neck peeking out from the uniform. He let out a prolonged sigh, draping himself on top of the other. He didn’t budge when Iwaizumi let out a small grunt and attempted to shrug him off. “Well, I don’t know what it is but I guess I can see it,” Kuroo hummed, ignoring the annoyed sounds coming from the other. “You two seem like a good match.”

He finally relented, taking a swift step back to avoid the possibility of any incoming swipes from an agitated senior officer. “Wazzy and Peacock,” he scrunched his lips in contemplation. “I guess I ship that.”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying,” Iwaizumi grumbled, rubbing his shoulders. “You and Bokuto, always with the slang.”

You have plenty of time ahead of you to work. Learn to live a little.”

Kuroo spun around, pointing to his face. “You think I was born with these eyes? No way. I was a cute kid. Had eyes big and round like dinner plates. This is what I get from overstress and working too hard. You want to look like this, huh? Didn’t think so.”

He grinned, relieved to find Iwaizumi finally crack a small smile. “There ya go. Man, I must be the new Mother Hen now that Yaku’s gone. I’m taking care of all these babies.” With that, he strolled out Iwaizumi’s office leaving the other with a contemplative frown on his face.

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"I heard the news, well done!"

"Hey, isn’t this one of your first works too? Impressive."

"Great job on the article, newbie."

Kageyama forced a tight smile as he wormed his way through the office. There were people, both familiar and unfamiliar, stopping him every few steps congratulating him on his first front page. He flashed an awkward thumbs up and hurried on through. 'I can't believe I just gave someone a thumbs up'. He inwardly grimaced.

Getting front page wasn't as thrilling as he'd expected. Kageyama had expected the waves of praise and looks of approval but he found himself somewhat dissatisfied. News was news. Interesting one day, dull the next. Though, he felt a growing sensation of giddy anticipation at the possibility of receiving commendation from one particular individual. He allowed himself a small smile.

"Eurgh, god. What are you even doing?"

His smile dissipated instantaneously at the voice to his left. He turned around to face Tsukishima scrutinising him with disdain. In all honesty, he was surprised to find he had received front page when considering who was the lead of the publishing department.

Kageyama eyed Tsukishima uneasily before forcing a tight smile. “Thanks for approving my article.”

The taller man peered down at him, eyebrow raised with an unimpressed look. “Flattery won’t get you anywhere. You’re lucky to have even sported the paper in the first place.”

“Hey! What did I tell you about bullying Kageyama! Back off, will you?”

Kageyama let out a pained sigh as the ball of sunshine leapt in and stood in front of him, arms spread like an eagle. “Quit picking fights you can’t even finish, Hinata. What are you going to do? Bite his kneecap?”

Hinata’s spun around, spluttering indignantly at the other. “Oh wow! Woooow! So this is what I get for supporting you, huh?

Tsukishima scoffed, sending the intern an irritated look. “Trust me, short jokes aren’t the only thing one can use against you. How’s photography working out for you? I’m hoping you stick to that considering your draft article was absolutely atrocious.”
Hinata ruffled up, cheeks growing several deep shades of red. Finding himself unable to reply, he deflated, shoulders hunching in and eyes flashing with slight hurt.

Kageyama turned, frowning over at the other. “Hey, don’t say that. It’s just working progress.”

The taller blonde loomed over, bored expression regarding him. “I should think,” he murmured with a tinge of force. “You really shouldn’t challenge the person who approves your work for publishing.” He eyed the reporter up and down before glancing away. “You did alright this time. I hope for your own sake you can keep it up.” And with that, he nudged his way through in to the busy office.

Kageyama watched, chewing the inside of his cheek. It really wasn’t a wise decision trying to piss the head editor off. He made a mental note to avoid the other at least until the publish died down. ‘My first front page publish.’ He couldn't help it. His chest swelled with butterflies and he felt his lips twitch up. This was it. He was well and truly on his way to become a great repo-

Kageyama let out a loud squawk at the sudden shove on his back. He stumbled forward, feet tripping over each other before glowering at the other.

Hinata glared back, eyes still flaring with a tinge of hurt and agitation. His lower lip was jutted out in like a petulant child and he kept his ground, hands balled in to fists.

“What?” Kageyama asked irritably. “You going to just stand there or are you going to speak?”

“Why did you say that before? I had your back! You’re meant to have mine,” Hinata accused, stomping his feet lightly on the ground. His camera hung over his neck swung about as though it too were offended. “We both dislike Tsukishima. Aren’t we a team?”

“Team?” Kageyama jerked his head back in surprise. “Who said anything about team? Where did you even get the idea from? Do you even know where you’re working? This is a dog-eat-dog business, alright? You have your own back.”

His response seemed to agitate Hinata even further. “You don’t get anywhere on your own! You need social connection. And no one calls it a dog-eat-dog world anymore! How old are you, sixty?”

“Shut up!” Kageyama snapped. He smoothed down the front of his sweater shooting the intern a disgruntled look. “We are not a team. Get that idea out of your head.”

Hinata gaped at him. His eyes flashed before he ran a hand through his hair in frustration. Kageyama watched the delicate fingers coarse through the mop of wild orange, the hair fluffing up even further.

“Team or not, I thought we were friends.”

Kageyama dropped his gaze to find the pair of wide eyes staring. Often he liked to think they were like swirls of sweet toffee, the kind that get stuck in your teeth and you spend hours trying to get them out. Though this time they were like slopped clay. They were a murky brown, glossed over and shining with slight hurt. Kageyama was taken back by the sudden change in attitude. ‘Friends?’ The thought hadn’t ever occurred or even remotely passed his mind. Were they friends? Hinata was simply the ‘intern’, another colleague in the office. The reporter found himself dumbfounded by the response and blinked rapidly at the other.

“Uh,” he said lamely. “What?”

Hinata worked his small jaw, as though trying to refrain himself from blurting out an insult. “It’s not all about work, you know,” he said finally.
Kageyama opened his mouth but was saved the trouble.

“Tobio!”

He turned around to find Oikawa storming up to him. He blinked in surprise. Oikawa didn’t have work till noon. Perhaps he received news about the front page. Kageyama felt his insides flip with excitement and slight anticipation. He gave a hesitant smile. “Oikawa senpai. I wanted to tell you about the article but I thought I’d surprise you. This may sound far-fetched by you were my inspiration for th-“

“Who the hell do you think you are?”

Kageyama’s smile faltered as he blinked at Oikawa. His eyes darted about to other co-workers who had paused in their work and gaped at Oikawa in surprise. Even Hinata seemed to have forgotten his earlier rage, staring at the elder, shocked. “Uh, excuse me?” Kageyama twitched nervously. “I don’t, I’m sorry? I don’t unders-“

“First, you come in here with that stupid facade of a hopeless intern so others will pity you, then you pull this ridiculous stunt! You might have tricked others but not me,” Oikawa snarled at the frightened boy. “How dare you steal my client behind me back! You think you can come in here and take over my position just like that? I have worked my ass off in this business. My blood, sweat, and tears and poured all over these articles and you dare snatch my client in order to raise yourself up a few rankings? How extremely low of you.” Oikawa imposed himself over the other, hands balled in to tight fists as though ready to fight. "In my entire experience of new reporting, you are by far the most pathetic excuse of a reporte-“

“Tooru.”

Oikawa snapped his head over at Kenma. He stood by his desk, DS disregarded on the desk. He was watching Oikawa carefully and even from here, Oikawa felt the brunt of the disapproving look. It was only then he had realised the entire office had gone quiet and everyone staring at him. His heart was pounding and he couldn’t control his haggard breathing. Oikawa looked back at Kageyama and suddenly his anger had depleted. The child blinked rapidly at him, eyes slightly shiny. His arms here glued to his side and shoulders hunched together meekly. Kageyama’s mouth was scrunched tightly as though to stop them from quivering. Oikawa didn’t know what to say. He didn’t know what to do.

So he ran.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading!
Hopefully expect a quicker next update γ (´蜗`;)Γ
There was rarely ever a time when Iwaizumi took advice from others. Sure, he listened to their opinions and what they had to say, but he preferred to rely on his own instincts, what he felt in his gut. So to find himself at the front reception, picking up his coat and informing he was going out for a short break was groundbreaking news.

“I won’t be too long. Just going out for lunch,” he justified, when everyone stared at him with blank expressions.

“Wait, out?” Lev blinked owlishly. “Out?” He pointed out the window, glancing over at Iwaizumi. “As in you’re going to go... out there? You are leaving the office?”

Iwaizumi frowned. “Yes? Is there something wrong with that?”

“Oh, no. No, no. By all means, take your time,” Daichi waved him off with a strangely proud look on his face. “I’m just glad you’re finally getting some fresh air, that’s all.”

“Daichi, quit acting like you’re a father on his daughter’s prom night. It’s so weird,” Kuroo grinned when the other scowled back. “But seriously, I can’t believe this is happening.” He reached in to the drawer to pull out an old camera they used for evidence photos. "This must be what it’s like to witness your baby’s first steps. Incredible. Wazzy, could you kinda turn this way? Pretend you’re taking a step outside the office and stay in that position. We need to remember this moment.”

“Shut up,” Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “It’ll be brief, alright? Don’t give Daichi too much grief while I’m gone.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you take a break voluntarily before,” Lev pointed out. “Do you even know where you’re going? What happens if you get lost?” He asked, looking genuinely concerned.

Officer Daichi leaned in to his chair, crossing his arms. “Guys, come on. He’s not going to get lost,” he reassured, though not looking too convinced himself.

“I know my way around,” Iwaizumi replied tartly as he shrugged on his jacket. “I’m meeting someone today.”

This seemed to work up another frenzy as the officers scoffed in disbelief.

"You've never gone out when we've asked!"

"Must be someone special then."

"Probably his mum."
Iwaizumi shook his head at the bombardment of comments. "Alright, settle down, settle down," he muttered. "We're professionals, not hyenas."

Though, he couldn't help but notice there was one person who didn't react to his announcement – he was perched at a desk away from the rest, shoulders hunched and arm shifting slightly as he scrawled something on a piece of paper. Iwaizumi peered over at him, then back at the others questioningly. Officer Kuroo shrugged, flashing a sad smile.

“Bokuto?” Iwaizumi called.

“Mm.”

“I'm going out for a break. Don’t bother Daichi too much.”

“Mm.”

Iwaizumi frowned at the lack of response. Usually Bokuto was thrilled whenever he left the office. ‘What is he doing?’ Iwaizumi tilted his head, squinting over. And inhaled sharply. He blinked rapidly as though unsure of what he had seen and shifted to face the others. ‘Is he actually working?’ he mouthed. Daichi nodded discreetly, eyeing the other with slight concern.

Iwaizumi stared in shock at Bokuto finishing off a report, placing it aside in the neatly stacked pile and sliding over a new one. A quiet Bokuto was never a good sign. He hesitated, checking his wristwatch and chewed his lower lip thoughtfully. He was going to be late. He'll just have to talk to Bokuto later.

"I'll be back soon," he called, though aiming more specifically at the white-grey haired officer. There was hardly a reaction - a slight twitch of a nod to confirm he'd heard. Flashing him a final glance, Iwaizumi nodded farewell to the rest and mouthed "keep an eye on him".

Officer Kuroo saluted half-heartedly whilst Daichi shooed him off, watching him with a gratified expression. Iwaizumi hurried on out, rolling his eyes when he heard the faint ka-shik of the camera the moment he left the office.

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[BLACK CAT TAVERN]

Iwaizumi eyed the sign - It had weathered down significantly since the last time he was here. His friends had always dragged him here during their early years, always eager to get utterly smashed and kicked out by security. Those were some of his best and worst memories. He placed a hand on the heavy, brass handles and allowed himself in.

The place was considerably empty during lunchtimes, usually filling up when happy hour commenced. He eyed the interior, a small satisfied feeling forming in his chest. The tavern hadn’t changed at all. The faded, leather booths were still situated in the far corner, the same retro jukebox station by the bathroom doors, and the bar centred smack-bang in the middle. His eyes darted about drinking in the nostalgic sight, before zeroing in on a familiar figure.

He found him sitting alone, sipping a pint of beer and idly picking at the peanuts set in front of him. Iwaizumi dropped his gaze to find his feet dangling slightly, not quite able to reach the foot stool. He
allowed himself a small smile and called out “Drinking already, Yaku? It’s barely one.”

The other paused, peering over his shoulders at Iwaizumi. His lips twitched in to a slight grin. “Long time no see,” he replied, lifting his beer. “And shut up.”
He reached over, kicking out a chair beside him. “You just gonna stand there or what?”

Iwaizumi snorted. He came over, perching himself on the rock-hard stool. “Man,” he sighed, breathing in the sickly scent of spilt alcohol. “Just like old times.”

“Mm,” Yaku agreed, taking another sip of his beer. “Cept no one has puked yet and there’s no shots,” He eyed Iwaizumi carefully over his glass.

“No shots,” Iwaizumi repeated warningly. Yaku snickered, large eyes twinkling from the memory.

“How’s work at the new department?” Iwaizumi asked politely, falling in to conversation straight away as he waved the bartender over. “It’s in the Nekoma region, right?”

“Yeah, it’s good. A lot less stressful, actually,” Yaku admitted, picking at a peanut shell. “I don’t have to deal with Bokuto and Kuroo’s antics so that’s always a plus. Oh, and whilst we’re on this topic - Just to clarify, Lev pays for his own damages now. So if that's what all this..”

Iwaizumi chuckled, turning back to his friend. “No, that's not why I called you. Don't worry, Lev didn’t do anything wrong,”
He paused. "If anything, he’s pretty well-behaved since you've transferred.”

Yaku exhaled deeply. “That’s good. Does he still hit his head against the door frame?”

“Sometimes. He doesn’t cry from it anymore though.”

“He’s so damn tall,” Yaku grumbled as Iwaizumi accepted a glass of whiskey from the bartender. He glanced over, letting out a low whistle. “Well, well. Someone’s going all out today. Is this really the same Iwaizumi who passed out from a gulp of sangria and was carried home by his five friends?”

“I still don’t forgive you for the photos,” Iwaizumi muttered. “I bet you still have them lying around somewhere.”

“Oh, I do. I think Lev’s got them.”

“Fantastic.”

The two sat in comfortable silence, each taking occasional sips of their own drink.
Iwaizumi exhaled deeply, allowing himself to wind down. It was admittedly nice being away from the office and stacks of paperwork.

“How is it between you guys?” Iwaizumi asked casually, swirling his whiskey. “You and Lev, I mean.”

“Good. We're good,” Yaku shrugged dismissively. "You know how he is. Always yapping, never shuts up,"He shot the other an exasperated look, though Iwaizumi didn't miss the fond twinkle in his eyes. Yaku paused, contemplative before scrunching his nose. “Who's Akaashi, by the way? Apparently Bokuto talks about him all the time.”

“Some guy. Client’s associate,” Iwaizumi let out a light hiss when taking a large sip of his whiskey. “Does he usually talk about work? Must've mentioned how I 'hound' him all the time,” he joked.

His smile faltered at the sight of Yaku shooting him a small smirk. "What?"
"Nothing."

"Has Lev said something about me?"

"I wonder."

Iwaizumi nudged him with his shoulders. "What? Come on, you can't do that to me. What did he say? Was it something bad?"

Yaku hummed, lower lip jutted out in mock contemplation. "I wouldn't say it's bad. Just surprising," he let out an amused chuckle when Iwaizumi shot him a dirty look. "Did you seriously call Ushijima stupid?"

"Are you serious?" Iwaizumi let out a groan, reaching over to take another huge gulp of whiskey. "I can't believe he told you that."

"I can't believe you did that," Yaku let out a delighted laugh, smacking his friend roughly on the arm. "But really? You had one chance to have a go at him and all you could think of was 'stupid'?"

"You do realise I want to keep my job, right?" Iwaizumi muttered, hiding his red face. "And can I just say that this is the last thing I want to deal with right now."

Bzzzzzt. Bzzzzzt.

"One sec," Iwaizumi interrupted before Yaku could say anything else. He dug in to his pocket to check his phone.

[Incoming call: Oikawa Tooru]

'I stand corrected' Iwaizumi thought to himself. He discreetly tucked him phone back into his pocket, taking another sip of whiskey. Yaku raised an eyebrow but didn't comment when Iwaizumi waved it off. The buzzing lasted another twelve seconds or so before it finally died down.

Yaku glanced down pointedly before meeting his eye. "Let me guess, a desperate ex-girlfriend who wants to get back together?" he asked lightly.

Iwaizumi opened his mouth, only to get interrupted by yet another buzz. He shot his friend an apologetic look and rummaged for his phone. There was a message left this time.

[We need to talk. Let's meet tonight. Tooru]

The officer exhaled through his nose, chewing the inside of his cheek. He couldn't keep doing this - It wasn't like he could avoid Oikawa forever. His fingers hovered over the keys, hesitating. He glanced over to find Yaku frowning at him in question. "What's wrong?" the other asked.

"Something happen?"

"Nah," Iwaizumi shook his head, exhaling deeply. "It's.. It's just Ushijima. I'll call him back later."

He could see Yaku watching him from the corner of his eye but he didn't return the gaze. They both knew he was lying, though neither commented. Iwaizumi felt a ball of guilt coil inside his stomach and reached for his drink.
"I had my fair share of Ushijima’s disappointment after I told him I was moving departments."

Iwaizumi paused, glass hovering over his lips. He glanced over questioningly at the other. Yaku was focused elsewhere, frowning as he did so. His lower lip jutted out the way it always did when he was in deep thought. "He advised against it, of course. Said I was throwing away a golden opportunity," he huffed in amusement. "Little did he know."

Iwaizumi worked his jaw, gaze focused on the bar counter. "Weren’t you afraid?" he murmured softly. "How do you know you’re making the right decision or not?"

Yaku frowned. He tilted his chin to peer up at the dim bar lights and hummed thoughtfully. “I suppose you don’t know. I mean, my career is important to me. I worked hard to get here and I knew deep down I was fortunate to land a place in your department. I was happy with where I was and in a sense I suppose Ushijima was right too. A position like that is hard to come by. However," he leaned back, watching Iwaizumi with a glint in his eye.

“When it comes to relationships, it’s not something you can push aside either. People aren’t that simple. They change and over time, feelings change too. So, you can either choose to get dragged along and hope for the best or you take the leap. Sometimes you need to sacrifice one thing in order to gain something bigger, y’know?”

Yaku leaned back with a satisfied smile. “Besides, I kinda got the best situation out of it all. I avoided a potential in-office relationship scandal which, hypothetically, would have jeopardised my future career, and I got to keep my relationship with Lev,” he clapped his hands and spread them out like a magician showing a trick. “Boom. Win-win situation.”

Iwaizumi let out a huff in amusement, staring down at his glass of whiskey. The golden, brown liquid was refracted by the dim bar lights and he couldn’t help but admire the warm colour. He’d seen a colour like this before.

“Surely you didn’t come here to talk about Lev though. What’s been bothering that stoic head of yours?”

Iwaizumi peered over to find Yaku regarding him from the corner of his eye. He glanced back down at his glass before pushing it aside. “Nothing,” he murmured.

Yaku stared for a long time before nodding in affirmation. He raised his arms for a stretch. Then spun and swung a solid arm over Iwaizumi’s chest. Iwaizumi let out an off-guarded yelp, the sudden impact causing his arms to spring out and almost knock the whiskey off the counter completely. He shot his friend an alarmed look. “What the hell?”

Yaku stared unamused as he held both hands up. “Don’t blame me. I do stupid things when I drink,” he clarified. Iwaizumi glared at him and opened his mouth but Yaku beat him to it. “You’re a good guy, Hajime,” he murmured lightly. “You’re great at your job and when it comes to efficiency, no one can beat you. But seriously, sometimes you’ve get so focused on one thing, you get tunnel-vision,” The officer shook his head in disapproval. “You’re like a dog chasing its tail. Learn to widen your view alittle. Once you do, you’ll see that there are all these people around you who are willing you help you. Accept their support because you’ll find that when you do, you’ll be back on track and stronger than ever.”

Iwaizumi stared, baffled and speechless. He blinked slowly, taking in the advice. “Okay,” he replied. “I’ll do that next time,” He reached out for his drink again, closing his fingers over the glass. The whiskey sparkled as the liquid sloshed about. “Thanks,” he muttered, nursing his sore chest.
Yaku smiled in to his beer. “Any time.”

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“So what we need to do once we’ve edited the shots and it’s been approved is to deliver to the publishing department. Tsukishima is the lead of that section but I suggest you see Hinata.”

Hinata blinked out of his daze. He shook his head, shooting Akaashi an apologetic look. “Sorry, my mind drifted.”

Akaashi watched him before sighing and tucking the photos together. “It’s okay, I understand. You can take a break if you want,” he suggested.

Hinata gave an eager nod before he quickly clarifying. “I mean, I won’t take long. Just going for a short ten-ner,” He leapt off his seat, leaning back for a brief stretch.

Akaashi nodded and turned away to type out an email. He looked thoroughly exhausted, his shoulders hunched slightly as he focused on the screen. Hinata couldn’t help but note there was a touch of sullenness which hung around his elder. He hesitated slightly, shifting on the spot.

“Thank you, Akaashi senpai,” Hinata called earnestly. Akaashi paused, before raising a hand in acknowledgement. Hinata didn’t have to see to know he was smiling and with his spirits lifted, he rushed off with a pleased smile plastered on his face.

The intern bustled through the office, dodging other co-workers as he checked his phone. ‘Gotcha’.

He scurried his way to the elevator, pressing the button insistently until he was scolded by the ladies at reception. “Sorry, sorry, sorry,” he quickly apologised as hopped in, pressing for the highest level of the building.

Hinata had come here a few times and often liked to view it as his own secret space. The rooftop was particularly chilly today with the wind swirling and playing with the lapels of his jacket. Hinata glanced at his phone one final time before he circled the area. ‘He should be here’.

And there he was.

He sat alone, shoulders hunched near the edge of the building. His raven hair swayed lightly and he appeared to be watching the people below. Hinata hesitated. He took a cautious step, shuffling about just for good measures. The last thing he wanted was to frighten Kageyama off the building. The intern continued to drag his shoes along the ground until he was beside the other. Kageyama didn’t acknowledge him, far too fixated at the life below. Well, it didn’t mean he wasn’t welcome. Hinata plopped himself down, bumping shoulders with the other. Kageyama didn’t complain. The two sat together in silence as they observed the people crawl by and cars swirl around like complex ant colonies.

“How did you know I was here?”

Hinata glanced over at the other who was avoiding his gaze. He grinned, pulling out his phone and tapping the screen. “Kenma’s tracking device is pretty useful like that.”

He felt his smile falter at the lack of response and let out a prolonged sigh. Hinata leaned back, hand raised to shield his eyes. He squinted up at the sky – There was an occasional cloud drifting by on what was to be a clear, blue sky. The sunlight leaked through his slim fingers and he closed his eyes,
allowing himself to leech in the warmth and a moment of calm bliss.

There was a soft rustling to his left and Hinata peeked over with one eye. He let out an alarmed choke at the sight of the reporter who had taken a considerable step closer to the edge. “Wh- Kageyama, no!” he cried out in alarm. He lunged out, grappling on to his back. “Love yourself!”

Kageyama let out a hysterical yelp, body flinging itself back sharply. He flapped his arms out to regain balance. “What the hell?!” he shrieked. “Are you trying to push me off the ledge?!”

“Push you? You were going to jump off yourself!” Hinata snapped back. He was wheezing just as loudly as the other, hand clutched over his chest. “Oh god, you almost gave me a heart attack. Good going, Kageyama.”

“Only you would blame me for your mistakes,” the reporter flash him a full-blown glare. “And I wasn’t going to jump, idiot. I was looking at the person down there.”

Hinata blinked owlishly. “Who?” Earlier crisis already forgotten, he pressed in to Kageyama’s side to have a peek below. “Who were you looking at?” People bustled about in professional attire and matching suitcases and Hinata found himself squinting hard to get a clear look. He pointed over at the left. “Were you looking at her? The one with the impressive stack-“

“No!” Kageyama snapped, face growing bright red. “I’m not a pervert like you!”

Hinata grinned, pleased that the old Kageyama was beginning to return. “Yeah right, Kageyama. No need to deny it, I know you were looking at her,” He glanced down again and hummed in consideration.

“What?” Kageyama asked suspiciously, eyeing the Sunkist orange hair. “You fancy her or something?”

“What? No,” Hinata reeled back in surprise. “She’s definitely not my type. I don’t, uh, like.. She’s just not my type so,” he cleared his throat and placed both hands on the ledge of the rooftop.

Kageyama was now staring directly at him. Hinata could feel it drilling in to his temple like a laser beam as he occupied himself toward the sight below. His eyes flittered about in a sudden spurt of nervousness and he chewed the inside of his cheek.

Kageyama finally glanced away. He leaned in slightly, shoulders bumping in to his. “Good,” he muttered quietly. Hinata peered over in question.

“Because she doesn’t look like the type who’d date midgets,” The reporter clarified. “You probably would only reach her elbows.”

“Wh- seriously? Again with the short jokes? Dude, why you so mean?” Hinata shot him a disgruntled look. “Not like she’d date you either. She doesn’t look the type to date guys with a chronic bitch resting face.”

Much to his dismay, Kageyama didn’t seem too offended. “I can probably score a date with her faster than you could,” he pointed out.

The intern opened his mouth before closing it again. He peered down, eyeing the lady from afar. She had stopped walking, digging in her purse for something. “Hey,” Hinata spoke lowly. “Do you reckon if I spit from here, it’ll hit her?”

Kageyama stared. “Don’t.”
“I wasn’t going to!”

“You’re disgusting.”

“No! I’m just- this is hypothetically spea-“

“Absolutely foul, Hinata.”

“Yeah, okay maybe I was going to. But only if you told me to,” Hinata grinned at Kageyama. His large, playful eyes danced as the wind played with his fluffed up hair. Kageyama watched him wearily before looking away. “I would never say yes to that. Clearly, you don’t know me at all.”

“No, I do. I know you.”

He glanced over at Hinata again. The intern was leaning his back on the ledge, hands shielded over his eyes as he gazed up at the clouds drifting by.

“I know your name is Kageyama Tobio. Your birthday is on the 22nd of December and I remember that because it’s three days before Christmas. I know you’re 180.6cm because we all know how much you like to rub that in. You don’t drink coffee because it gives you a stomach ache so you just stick to milk. I know your favourite food is pork curry because you always bring it in for lunch, either home-made or store-bought. I know you like neatness and order from the way you always stack everything in individual files and folders and categorise them on your desk,” Hinata grinned at the sky. “I mean, I could go on all day. I know a lot of things about you.”

He hesitated before looking down. “I know you’re passionate about your work. You always hand things in early and it has to be perfect. I know you put all your hard effort and work in to that article which got front page,” Hinata looked up at him, toffee-coloured eyes meeting with steel-blue. “And it really was a good article. I’m super happy for you, congratulations.”

Kageyama felt like he had been punched in the gut. He grit his teeth and nodded, unable to find words. Hinata simply smiled, examining the sky once more.

“Oh, hey! The clouds are gone,” he pointed out excitedly.

Kageyama couldn’t help but think how stupid it was to get so hyped up over a clear sky. He watched as Hinata grinned and admired the clear blues. “Yeah, nothing but sunshine,” Kageyama murmured, unable to keep his eyes off his bizarre friend.

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‘The person you are trying to reach is currently unavailable. Please try again.’

Oikawa let out a frustrated sigh, feeling an ever-growing urge to hurl his phone on the ground. Today was an utter nightmare. After his stunt in the office earlier, his mobile was bombarded with calls, messages and emails from work, some of which regarding overdue deadlines and many of which regarding workplace ethics and behavior. It seems he has lost his celebrity-status in the office and now pretty much everyone was out to grab him. He let out a rough sigh, closing his eyes. Kageyama’s face flashed in his mind, eyes wide with hurt. He shook his head to disperse the image. “I don’t care. I really don’t care,” he muttered under his breath. He did care.

It was particularly chilly tonight and he rubbed his arms for some warmth. He was waiting by a street
light, shifting from side to side in the middle of the city. Iwaizumi had agreed to meet him here at six pm to ‘talk’. In all honesty, Oikawa had absolutely no idea why he’d asked to meet. ‘To see him? Speak to him? Question him?’ Oh, he had so many questions. He paced up and down, mind whizzing about frantically. The waiting certainly didn't help and Oikawa found himself checking the time every few seconds. Iwaizumi was now fifteen minutes late. Oikawa let out a distressed huff. What if the officer had decided not to show up? Surely he wouldn’t leave him stranded here without warning, right? He flicked through his contacts and dialed again. He chewed his bottom lip impatiently as the ringing echoed in his ear.

‘The person you are trying to reach is currently unavailable. Please try again.’

“For god sa-“ Oikawa moved the mobile to his mouth, yelling loudly. “I know you’re ignoring me Iwaizumi! You answered my text so the least you could do is speak, you c- oh.”

His voice died off when he glanced over his shoulder to find Iwaizumi waiting patiently behind him. Oikawa lowered his phone slowly, staring blankly at the other.

Iwaizumi looked like an absolute wreck. There were dark bags under his eyes as he blinked sluggishly over at him. He looked significantly pale like he had been kept hidden in the dark and his shoulders were hunched. God, Oikawa missed him. The officer leaned heavily against a street lamp, arms crossed as he gazed over at the reporter.

“Oikawa Tooru. I’m aware you wanted to discuss some important matters with me?”

Oikawa gaped at the other, the waves of anger suddenly dispersed. “You look like you’ve been run over a few times. Are you alright?”

Iwaizumi shot him a disgruntled look. “I’m fine, thank you.” He shifted uncomfortably, avoiding the reporter’s concerned gaze. “It’s pretty cold out here. We could go back to the station to have our talk.”

Oikawa scoffed in disbelief. “Are you sure you’re even going to make it to the office? We could grab something to eat first or-“

“No,” Iwaizumi quickly interjected. “No, I’m fine. Really. I’m just here to talk then I’ll be going.”

“Quit being so stubborn,” Oikawa frowned. “You look absolutely terrible. Iwa-chan, what did I say about getting enough sleep? When was the last time you had a decent amount of rest?”

“I’m fine,” the officer snapped, eyebrows furrowing.

“Fine?” Oikawa let out a high-pitched hah! as he rolled his eyes. “Tell me that after you’ve shaved your five o’clock shadow.”

“Maybe I wanted to keep it this way.”

“I highly doubt that.”

Iwaizumi gave an exasperated sigh. “Look, either you want to talk or not. Make up your mind Oikawa Tooru-“

“I like you.”

The officer froze, body gone completely rigid. It was like someone had doused a bucket of water on Iwaizumi’s face. He blinked. Blinked again. "What?" he said dumbly.
Oikawa opened his mouth. Closed it. Then he shook his head, letting out a nervous laugh. He was blinking up at him, large honey-brown eyes framed by a set of fragile lashes. His hair was ruffling lightly in the cool wind and Iwaizumi glanced down to find the tip of his nose gone slightly pink. There were puffs of breath tumbling from his red lips which looked like he had been chewing on them. Iwaizumi lifted his gaze to find Oikawa watching him carefully. His had mouth tilted up in a wobbly, tight smile and he shrugged. "I like you," he whispered. "I think I like you, Iwa-chan."

Iwaizumi couldn't breathe. It felt like every emotion crashed over him like a brutal tidal wave. Panic was lodged in his throat and he held back a choke. Christ, was he supposed to answer that?

He focused the other, steel-blue eyes locking in with Oikawa's wide caramel eyes. "I need you to stay away from me."

Oikawa flinched back like Iwaizumi had shoved him. "What-" his smile faltered. "What do you mean?"

"What I mean is I need you to stop calling, stop messaging, stop contacting me. I am an officer. Do you even realise what you're suggesting here? I could lose my job and entire career from this," Iwaizumi was babbling. He paused and swallowed hard, working his jaw. "It would never work between us."

Oikawa stood there, completely rigid and expression completely blank. "I won't tell anyone," he whispered. "I wouldn't- Your career is important to me too, Iwa-chan."

"Listen to yourself right now! What you're asking for is highly unprofessional, not to mention seriously impractical. Just stop. My answer is no."

"But.. Iwa-chan," Oikawa's voice was cracking. His eyes had grown glossy and he took a step further. "Iwa-chan.."

The officer grimaced and had to look away. "Please stop calling me that," he spoke lowly. "You're a victim of the case and it's.. it is my duty to ensure you feel safe and comfortable. Nothing more," Iwaizumi could feel himself start to crack. "I understand you’re unhappy right now, probably undergoing.. emotions such as stress and trauma but rest assured. I’m confident we’ll find the culprit who had done this to you but in order to do so, I require your co-operation, Oikawa T-"

"No! Stop!" Oikawa cried, throwing his arms up in the air. "Stop with the Oikawa Tooru. I am sick to death with the Oikawa Tooru! Why are you always so formal?"

"Because that's my job. It's called professionalism. Wouldn't a reporter of all people know this?"

"I don't know, why don't you ask Tobio?" Oikawa snapped. He sounded lost and upset, on the verge of being hysterical. "Why him, huh? Of all people, you chose him! Why?"

"Tooru, stop," Iwaizumi warned. "He has nothing to do with this." This was all too much for him to handle right now. He let out an exasperated sigh. "Look, there’s nothing else to say. Please just give it a break. It’s getting weird and I just really need some space."

Oikawa was wrong. This day could most definitely get worse. "You think I’m weird?" he whispered. He hated how wobbly his voice sounded.

Iwaizumi opened his mouth but couldn’t find the right response. Oikawa didn’t give him the chance. He charged in, swinging his arm back and striking him on the chest. The impact knocked Iwaizumi back and he staggered back. He was blinking rapidly, completely stunned. Oikawa took a step back, breathing hard. He shot Iwaizumi a dirty look. His ears were ringing and
there was a moment of high-strung tension, neither taking their eyes off each other. It lasted a few seconds before Oikawa swore loudly and turned the other way. “Christ, is your chest made of bricks?! Oh my god,” he hissed, shaking his hand vigorously. “Argh, what the hell!!”

“Oh,” Iwaizumi stared at the reporter walking around in small circles, nursing his red hand. “Do you need any medical help?” He took a hesitant step forward.

“Don’t come near me,” Oikawa snarled.

Iwaizumi stopped, tucking his hands in his pockets. He stood afar with Oikawa’s back facing him. Neither spoke for a long time.

Finally, Oikawa broke the silence, letting out a small exhale. “Well, it turns out I’m not as good at reading people, after all,” Oikawa chuckled, shaking his head. “Clients are just clients and in the end, work is work. You of all people know that, right Iwaizumi?”

He turned around, tilting his head at Iwaizumi. He held a pained expression, mouth twitched into a ridiculously wide smile. “Well, it was nice meeting you. I’m glad the article received such a positive response on the public and well done on your collaboration with Kageyama Tobio.”

He leaned down in a low, polite bow. “I apologise for any inconveniences. Good bye.”

Iwaizumi hesitated. “I’m sorry it turned out this way-“ He stopped when Oikawa held a hand out.

His eyes were glassy and his face scrunched in a tight expression. “Don’t,” he croaked. ”Please, just don’t.”

Iwaizumi stood alone by the street light, watching the other walk away.

∞

When Oikawa entered his house, it was silent. The click of the front door shutting echoed throughout the hollow house. His mind felt thick and numb. Oikawa felt like absolute shit. The drinking didn’t help at all. He looked around blearily for a distraction but the image of Iwaizumi’s shocked face nagged his mind. Oikawa didn’t know how he lasted being single before because tonight he felt like the loneliest person in the world. The silence was overbearing like a thick, suffocating blanket hung over his head and he found himself pulling out his phone and tapping the first contact on his list. Akaashi answered after two rings.

“Oikawa? Why are you up so late?”

For a few seconds Oikawa didn’t say anything. He breathed lightly, listening to the soft static sounds.

“Hello? Oikawa? Are you there?”

Oikawa shook his head and let out a huff. “What? Can’t I call my favourite work buddy?” He laughed weakly.

There was a moment of pause before Akaashi’s cautious voice rang in his ear. “Are you okay? What’s been bothering you-“

“So, Iwaizumi and I met up again,” Oikawa blurted. He staggered around, left to right, before
flopping down on to his couch. He exhaled deeply, allowing himself to sink in to the plush leather. “Y’know, for work. Like it should be,” Oikawa grinned wobbily, looking around his living room.

It must’ve been awkward for Akaashi as he didn’t reply, simply waiting for Oikawa to continue. He nodded to himself. “Though I may have overstepped the boundaries tonight. So much for branching out to other resources,” Oikawa let out a harsh bark of laughter.

He then whispered “I think ruined it all, Akaashi.”

Oikawa blinked slowly at the hazy state of his living room. The large platinum TV screen reflected his face in a horrid, distorted manner and he looked away.

“Oikawa, have some rest. It will feel better in the morning. Or I can come over?”

Oikawa’s focused on his cream-white, expensive TV stand. It was from last year but it still had the label slapped on the side. Why did he buy that? He didn’t even like it that much at the time and he certainly doesn’t like it now.

“Oikawa?”

Oikawa nodded to himself. “Yeah, yeah, sleep. I’ll go to sleep,” His voice wobbled slightly when he noticed the small teddy bear lying on the table. ‘Teddy Tooru’ Iwaizumi had called him. It was just as ugly as its owner. He tore his eyes away as fat tears welled up. Regret raked his insides and he scrunched his eyes shut. He felt stupid.

“Sorry for bothering you Akaa-“ Oikawa froze.

Wait.

He opened his eyes, peering across the room. The bear smiled back, head lopsided to the right. Its switched mouth looked even further crooked from this angle. “That’s not right,” Oikawa murmured to himself. ‘I left you propped up’.

Oikawa glanced around the room. None of his windows were open. He never bothered with them considering he was always out. Oikawa frowned in confusion. Had he knocked it by mistake? His mind struggled to recall. Had he bumped it whilst cleaning? Oikawa shook his head. Who was he kidding? The last time he cleaned the house was weeks ago. There simply was no bother to clean the house. His sad, sad, lonely bachelor house. He eyed the bear. ‘How did you fall over by yourself?’

Then he heard it. The lightest of creaks. He probably would’ve missed it if he hadn’t stopped talking. It came from behind him, near the study room.

Someone was in the house.

“Oikawa? You still there?”

“Oh, yeah, yeah,” Oikawa replied, eyes wide and feeling much more alert. He clutched tightly on to his phone and gently rolled up on to his feet. “I’m just- I just wanted to tell you something.”

There was a hesitant pause before Akaashi murmured. “You really should just get some rest. You can tell me about it tomor-“

Oikawa burst out laughing. “Yeah, yeah, I know. But it’s just.. I really, really need to tell you now. Just to get it off my chest,” His heart was flittering in his chest and he stood there for a few terse moments, listening. Something felt wrong.
The hairs of the back of his neck rose. Oikawa glanced over to his side, eyes straining to peer over. He waited.

There it was again.

A soft sound. It was so soft. As though someone was crawling slowly, as quietly as they could. Oikawa stilled his breath, eyes darting about. Where were they? Were they watching him?

“Well, what is it then?”

Oikawa jumped at the sudden loudness of Akaashi’s voice ringing in his ear. Think, think. Oikawa couldn’t keep his eyes away from the small left corner of his vision. Waiting for something. Then the thought occurred to him. “Hey, remember.. remember that Quinn Mourre interview we did weeks back? You remember, right?” Oikawa asked casually.

There was a long period of silence. “I do.”

“You remember her story, don’t you? I think it was that survivor story.”

“Of course. You know I do.”

Well good,” Oikawa let out a sheepish laugh. “You won’t believe what happened today. I bumped in to her dad today.”

There was a painful stretch of silence. “Oikawa, is there something wrong?”


“Oikawa, you’re scaring me. What’s wrong?”

Another creak. This time it was much closer behind him. Oikawa’s heart pounded as he slowly reached for the nearest object – a TV remote. He babbled on. “Just wanted to let you know, that’s all. Oh, and Akaashi? Could you tell that funny, owl-looking boy and the bed-headed fella that they’re invited to the dinner too? Please let them know. Tell them the dinner with Quinn Mourre’s father is next week and they are invited. Don’t you forget now.”

Akaashi’s voice turned harsh. “Oikawa, I’m coming over right now. Where are you?”

Oikawa laughed. “Yeah, I know, I know. It is late notice so Akaashi, you have to inform the other two ASAP, alright? You know how their schedules are. Busy, busy, busy.”

Oikawa’s breath hitched. His gaze was focused on the floor. There was now another shadow stretched behind him. He rolled his wrist holding the remote slowly. “Anyway,” Oikawa yawned and stretched exaggeratedly. “Sorry to bother you at this time. It’s just I was so excited I had to let you know. Talk to you about it later.”

Akaashi sounded shrill in his ear. “Oikawa, run. If you can get the hell away, then r-“

Oikawa ended the call. His breathing was slightly ragged and he didn’t dare to glance up at the TV screen reflection. Then it all happened in an instant. Oikawa flipped around, coming face to face with the other. He wore a balaclava with the slit revealing a set of wild eyes. He didn’t have time to react. Oikawa swung his arm up, bringing the remote down on the other’s head. They let out a surprised grunt as the remote shattered, sending small shards of plastic flying. Oikawa leapt back and bolted to the front door.
His feet thudded thunderously on the ground and he staggered slightly from the poor co-ordination. He let out a harsh breath as he was tackled from behind. The two skidded forward, colliding against the corner of a décor desk. Oikawa’s head was spinning, his sight a complete blur as he squirmed about in defiance. The man was also breathing harshly, raspy breath near Oikawa’s ear as he grabbed Oikawa’s arm. Oikawa let out a hiss of pain as his arm was yanked back roughly. He rolled swiftly to his right, knocking the other off him. Oikawa stumbled forward, arms outstretched and fingers grappling on to whatever he could find. They closed around the antique lamp he kept on an old stand nearby.

He heard the slither of clothing from behind and spun around, striking the other on the head again. The intruder collapsed on to his back, and Oikawa fumbled on to his feet. He stumbled about, colliding harshly against the nearby wall. His vision was completely hazed. ‘Run, run, run!’ Oikawa’s mind screamed in mad panic. He staggered to the front door, hand clutched around the door knob when he was knocked forward by a sudden, splitting pain at the back of his head. Oikawa raked his head roughly against the wooden door. He scraped at the front door desperately, legs crumbling under him. He received another staggering blow to the side of his head. He toppled to the ground, landing painfully on his left shoulder with a sickening crunch. The last thing he registered was the swimming darkness, the deep, ragged breath near his ear then-

Chapter End Notes

Thank you guys for reading and I hope you've enjoyed it!

For anyone interested I've started a side tumblr blog and I'm thinking of writing small fics or taking requests from people
You can check that out if you're interested or you wanna maybe get updates on when and what I'm updating next
http://leurauxe.tumblr.com/

Thank you again readers - you guys are awesome
Save the Peacock Part 1

Chapter Notes

It's finally here - an update!
Sorry it took so long I've just had so much stuff in the past month or so and I've had to change this chapter ALOT because none of it seemed to match with the rest of the story but FINALLY it is done
Hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He sat upright on his bed, heart hammering and breath unsteady. Blinked at the darkness, mind whirring over the bizarre phone call he’d just received. Akaashi ran a hand through his messy bedhead, allowing his eyes to adjust in the darkness. “What the hell was that?” he murmured. He tapped his mobile awake. ‘2:08am’.

This certainly wasn’t the first occasion Oikawa had called at this late time – his work partner had a tendency of losing sense of time when he was completely engrossed in his works and Akaashi was now more accustomed to the random 3am calls and messages of an over-eager reporter asking him to email a single file. Though, this one caught him off-guard.

Oikawa was distraught.

It happened sometimes. He was human afterall and there were times he’d get stuck in the rut and required Akaashi to help pull him through. Akaashi had even come to him for guidance too - they were partners, it’s what they did. Oikawa calling him whilst intoxicated was new though. His words were slurred and unsteady, tone jumping all over the place. Akaashi bit his lower lip in contemplation. Was this all some elaborate joke? Or perhaps he was far too drunk to realise what he’d said? The photographer eyed the phone in his lap, waiting for it to ring, to hear Oikawa’s teasing voice in his ear.

“Gotcha Akaashi! Scared ya real good this time, didn’t I? I just wanted to ask about tomorrow’s article…”

The phone didn’t ring.

Akaashi’s heart palpated, an air of unsteadiness hanging in the room. He bunched his blankets closer to his chest. Something definitely was not quite right here. Oikawa’s voice rang in his mind, voice cheery and casual. But Akaashi didn’t miss the undertone laced with tension and…

“Fear,” Akaashi murmured under his breath. He’d heard fear. No, as bizarre as Oikawa was with his odd, snarky sense of humour and phone calls at ungodly hours, nothing deterred Akaashi as much as when he had mentioned him.

Quinn Mourre’s father.

Sadao Mourre. Akaashi was familiar of the name. This particular individual had come across their works several times, in fact reeling them in a double-paged, front cover article on three separate occasions.
The infamous father who murdered his family.

The man was sick, mentally-ill. He had to be. There was no possible reasoning for a father to kidnap his own daughter and brutally murder the other family members, without some sort of twisted mishap in his mind. Oikawa once had told him he believed the man was the human incarnation of the devil.

“Quinn Mourre’s father is here.”

The hair on the back of Akaashi’s neck rose and he rubbed at it, eyes darting all over his bedroom. He shook his head, inwardly scolding himself for being so recreant. There was no way Oikawa could’ve bumped in to him. He’d passed away in the confines of his cell months ago.

Akaashi’s fingers flittered nervously over his sheets, the ruffled sounds deafening in his ears. He dialed Oikawa’s number, heart thudding as he listened to the ringing. “Come on, come on,” he whispered.

“Hi, this is Oikawa T-“

“Oikawa!” Akaashi called out. But paused when he had realised it had passed on to his voicemail. The photographer ran a hand through his hair in confusion and slight frustration.

‘Remember the Quinn Mourre interview we did weeks back? The story of the last survivor.’

Akaashi felt the hair on the back of his neck rise again at the sound of Oikawa’s frantic tone. He slid out of bed, reaching for his pair of jeans nearby. ‘What do I do, what do I do..’ Akaashi heart flittered and he pressed his back against the wall, feeling panic rising in his chest.

Oikawa had been upset earlier. Why had he called again? Akaashi frowned in confusion. He strained his thoughts but his mind remained a blank slate. He let out a frustrated hiss, ruffling his hair in irritation. He couldn’t think straight. Oikawa’s voice kept ringing in his mind.

‘Tell that funny, owl-looking boy and the bed-headed fella that they’re invited..’

“Owl..” Akaashi murmured aloud. He paused, before jolting to the study room. He rummaged through, shoving files and papers aside when he found the familiar drawing of a robot. Akaashi flipped the card, fingers shaking as he quickly dialed the number. He kept slipping, pressing the wrong digit and he exhaled sharply through his nose. “Come on, come on…” Finally, he’d managed to click dial and leaned back chewing his lip impatiently as the phone rang.

Ring. Ring. Ring. Ri-

“Yo, yo, yo. B-dawgs in the huzza-“

“Bokuto-san,” Akaashi called out in relief. He jolted at the sudden loud ruffling.

“Akaashi? Is this Akaashi?”

The photographer stared blankly as he heard Officer Bokuto’s voice slightly muffled as though talking to another individual. “Bro! Bro! I think it’s Akaashi! What do I sa-“


“Oikawa? Peacock? What did he do this time?”

“No,” Akaashi interrupted feeling piqued. “There’s something wrong here. He sounded distressed and was asking for help but I didn’t know- I don’t know what’s happening and now he’s not
answering his phone anymore and I do—"

“Akaashi, stop for a second. Relax abit th—"

“I can’t relax! My friend might be in danger!” Akaashi snapped. He panted lightly, breath coming in short, frantic bursts. “I think Oikawa is in danger and he’s not answering his phone and I don’t know what to do and what if he’s getting mugged again or somethi—"

“Keiji, stop. You may be having a minor panic attack,” Unlike Akaashi, Bokuto’s tone was bizarrely soft and calm. “I want you to take a deep breath first, okay? With me now, deep breath.”

Akaashi took a long, shuddery breath. He leaned against the wall allowing himself to wind down. Eventually, his breaths evened out and he closed his eyes. His heart was still pounding but he felt considerably less-worked up.

“See, there we go,” Bokuto’s voice soothed. “Now, tell me what happened to your friend.”

“I got a call at approximately 2am. Oikawa sounded slightly slurred, I think he had gone drinking. He was upset about... about something then he suddenly his voice... his tone changed and—” Akaashi paused, refocusing on his breathing which had quickened again. He heard Bokuto murmur light encouragements and he continued. “It’s not like him to suddenly do this and I don’t know, I just—what do I do?”

“Do you know where he is? Is he at home? Or is he elsewhere, perhaps work?”

“No, he left hours ago. There was a slight.. mishap at work,” Akaashi rubbed his eyes with his left forearm. “I don’t know where he is, he wouldn’t say. Bokuto-san, he sounded intoxicated. He wasn’t making much sense but I know something was up. What happens if he really is in trouble? He can’t defend himself. Last time he was caught up in a fight he cried about how it had ruined his hair, oh god Bokuto-san this is not—"

“Hey, hey, hey! Listen to me,” Bokuto spoke carefully as though not to stir the other. “He is going to be fine. I’ll file a report and my partner and I can go looking for him ASAP, alright? Will that make you feel better?”

“I’m coming too.”

“No.”

“Bokuto—“

“No, I can’t let you do that.”

“I am not going to sit here, fiddling my thumbs idly whilst I wait for updates,” Akaashi argued with a firm voice. “I’m going to check his house—"

“Keiji.”

Akaashi opened his mouth then hesitated. Bokuto’s voice had grown steely and the sudden change of tone had thrown him off-guard. He bit his lower lip, brows scrunched together. Then sighed and shook his head. “You’re right, I’m sorry. I overstepped. Just let me know if you find anything. Please.”

Bokuto’s voice softened again in a comforting tone. “We will and I’m sorry too. But well done, Keiji. You’ve done a great job helping us out. Officer Kuroo and I are on our way and we’ll update you if
“anything comes up, okay? You just stay indoors.”

Akaashi nodded despite being aware Bokuto couldn’t see him. He ended the call, immediately
greeted by the uncomfortable atmosphere, and let out a sigh, slumping against the wall. “Oikawa,
where are you?” he murmured. He tossed his mobile aside, and closed his eyes. Inhale. Exhale. He
could imagine Bokuto’s encouraging smile alongside that strangely soft voice echoing in his mind.

“Keep breathing for me. Just like that, you’re doing so well. You’re so great, Keiji.”

His heart stuttered but he tampered it down, pouring his entire focus on his breathing. He felt his
muscles relax and he began to come down from his initial fright. If only he could just find out what
Oikawa was up to, even if it was just finding his whereabouts, then everything would be oka-

Akaashi paused. He opened his eyes, blinking slowly at the darkness. “Kenma,” he murmured
slowly. Of course. Kenma’s mobile tracking device. How did he not think of that before? Akaashi
stood, legs no longer shaking as he bustled to his bedroom, grabbing his coat. He pulled open his
drawer near the front entrance, grabbing his car keys.

The photographer silently apologised to Bokuto for already breaking his promise of staying indoors.
“I'm sorry, but my friend is in trouble.” He bolted out, slamming his front door and rushing to his car.

Shoving his keys in to the ignition he dialed Kenma’s number, leg twitching as he waited. Kenma
answered after one ring.

“Hello?”

“Kenma, I need you to track down Oikawa’s phone and tell me the whereabouts immediately. This
is a serious situation,” Akaashi urged. Reversing out his driveway, he sped his way to the unknown.
“He’s gone missing and I think he’s in trouble.”

∞

He was woken by waves of throbbing headache and muscle pains. It felt like the entire room was
spinning and his stomach churned with nausea. The copious amount of liquor from his earlier antics
didn’t help either, swishing within his stomach in an unsettling manner. He scrunched his nose, a soft
hiss slipping from his lips. Everything hurt.

Oikawa pried one eye open and his breath faltered.

“What the hell,” Oikawa murmured, eyes blinking sluggishly at his surroundings. “What the hell is
this?”

The place was enormous – the ceilings reached sky-high with commercial light fixtures looming
overhead. It was hollow too; no furniture in sight excluding the rickety metal chair he was placed in.
Oikawa craned his neck to peer over his shoulder. He was positioned smack-bang in the centre with
the walls at least thirty metres away from him, and the floor one murky slab of concrete which left his
feet cold and numb.

It looked to be some sort of warehouse.

“Oh god, okay, don’t panic.’ Oikawa’s mind reeled as his heart began working up a frenzy. His
breath stuttered as he squirmed about. His wrists were tied together with what appeared to be a thick,
weathered rope, and it was also looped across over his chest. Oikawa shuffled slightly to find his feet
at least were free. He contemplated making a dash for it, chair and all but froze at the sudden scuffle
from his right. Oikawa tilted his head to the side and inhaled sharply.
A man was approaching, cladded in all black from head to toe. His face was covered with a dark balaclava with one large slit to reveal his eyes. They stared, wide and unblinking as he approached him slow and steady. “Long time, no see, Oikawa Tooru,” The voice was low, laced with confidence and Oikawa’s mind ticked.

‘I’ve heard that voice before’

The man paused nearby, reaching to grab a wooden chair and dragged it over. The loud, scraping echoed through the entire room, setting Oikawa’s teeth on edge. He stopped in front of the other, placing it down and sat backwards. The large pair of eyes continued to watch him, wild and frightening as he waited.

Oikawa stared back and forced himself to stop squirming. His mind whirred rapidly as he struggled to recall where he'd seen him from. Who the hell was he? His thinking skidded to a sudden halt and he felt himself grow cold.

No.

Surely not. It was as though his lungs collapsed in on him and he swallowed hard. “You again?” he croaked.

The man’s eyes flashed darkly. “Me again.”

The one who stole his laptop. The thief.

He snickered at Oikawa’s speechless expression and placed both hands to rest over the back of the chair. “You know, I’ve encountered many people in the past three months,” He lifted his chin and gazed down in a smug expression. “But who would’ve known I’d bump in to such a celebrity? Oikawa Tooru, one of AobaJousai’s top news reporter. According to the local websites, that is. Then again, your laptop was worth at least two thousand so you must be, at the very least, loaded.”

He cleared his throat and rolled his neck back to stretch in an exaggerated manner. He leaned in closer to the other. “Alright, Tooru. Here’s what’s going to happen. We’re going to do what I call a money compensation, okay? You give me money and in exchange I won’t hurt y-”

“What the hell?!” Oikawa barked, causing the other to falter in surprise. “You’ve mugged me once and you came to mug me again?! Who the hell does that?! Couldn’t you go mug someone else? Of all the millions of people in Japan you just had to come back for me again, didn’t you? How inconsiderate!” He snapped, wriggling in his chair. He paused to look down at the frayed roped which had been binded around his wrists.

“And what the hell is this? Couldn’t you at least buy some new rope? This is disgusting. How many people have used this before me? So unhygienic!”

The man was rendered speechless as he blinked blankly. This seemed to agitate Oikawa even further as he spun to glare at him. “I honestly can not believe someone would have the nerve to return after they’d already stolen from me. I want my laptop back! You know how much that costed me, you little punk? Just wait till I get out of these ropes.”

Thief stared, eyebrows raised in an incredulous look. “Are you-“ he held his hands out as he spoke slowly, like he were addressing a child. “Are you.. even aware of the situation you’re in right now?”

Oikawa jerked his head back, squinting over at the other with his mouth slightly ajar. “Excuse me?” he replied slowly. “Was that a rhetorical question or are you just that blank-minded? Of course I know what the situation is. I am in the middle of the world’s worst heartbreak. And you’ve just made
it a million times worse, so well done. Give yourself a big pat on the back, you bug-eyed thief.”

The man turned a light pink at that. “Shut up,” he groused.

Oikawa shot the other a moody glare. “No, you shut up! It is like 3am in the morning, my head is pounding, which, thanks by the way I really appreciate you indenting my skull. Not to mention I am tied to a chair in the middle of,” he paused to examine his surroundings, nose scrunched in disgust. “Some.. some dank warehouse which could substitute for a sex dungeon! And I’m tied to this rock-hard chair with the world’s oldest rope digging in to my skin! Seriously, could you not afford to get some more? I will literally pay you to buy some new ones because this feels scratchy!”

The guy sighed and peered at the ceiling. “Great. A chatter,” he muttered to himself.

“How did you find me?” Oikawa demanded, eyes scrunched in to a squint. “Are you one of them over-the-top fans? Did you wait for me to leave the office then follow me home?”

Thief stared down at him, eyes half-lidded in a bored manner. “No, I found your address from your account on the online shopping site set in your favourited tabs,” he replied, raising one eyebrow. “And can I just ask, why did you have three ‘Ultrafonio galaxy space lord’ action figures saved in your cart? Not even one, but three. And they were pretty pricey too. Don’t tell me you were actually considering buying them.”

Oikawa felt his cheeks warm as he gaped at the other. “Excuse- how dare you! There’s a thing called privacy!” he snapped. His breath hitched at the sudden movement from the other and Oikawa blinked as the man leaned in, their noses almost brushing. From here, he could see the faint outline of a smile.

The man balanced on the front legs of the chair, left leg dangling in a casual manner. “Now, you listen to me. You can scream and yell all you want but there’s no one within the vicinity to hear you so you’re wasting your time right now,” His half-lidded eyes stared, waiting for a reaction and Oikawa noticed they were a deep crimson.

“It’s just you and me,” The man dropped his smile. “And you’re going to do as I damn say.”

∞

Iwaizumi had certain experience when it came to relationships. He had a few of his own, ranging from a brief two months to even a year and a half, so he was quite familiar of the processes. He was also familiar with fights and break ups - but he wasn’t ready for this bitter, raw, tangled mess of emotions he felt after the encounter with Oikawa.

The front door clicked softly as he entered his house. It was as cluttered as ever but it still felt so hollow. The officer rubbed his face and sighed. He kicked off his shoes, making a beeline to the kitchen. He opened the fridge and grabbed a can of beer, hesitating. He shook his head and reached in, grabbing another four and kicked the door shut.

The table was still covered with files and reports so he staggered to the bedroom. Laying the cans gently on the bed, he snatched one up. It was dark, if not for the city lights out his window and he stared at the precipitation already forming around the cold can. Little beads of water quivered as they began to bond together, forming a large enough droplet which slid down and in to the crevice of his fingers. Iwaizumi sighed again, dropping his hand to rest on top of his thigh. What the hell was he doing? He tried to balance his work and a single relationship for the past few weeks, and now he’d lost both in one day. The officer grit his teeth. “I’m so sick of this,” he muttered to himself. “Just so
damn sick of it all.” He shook his head and focused on the floor.

Was he too harsh? Oikawa’s face kept appearing in his mind, his upset expression replaying like a broken record. Despite wanting to break ties, Iwaizumi felt nothing but guilt. He hadn’t meant to call Oikawa ‘weird’. He knew it was a personal topic for Oikawa and it was the one thing he personally vowed not to do. Iwaizumi’s lips twitched down. Regardless, it was too late now. He’d never have to see the man again.

He jumped at a sudden clank, thoughts dispersed. The officer peered down to find he’d dropped the unopened can of beer. God, he just couldn’t do anything right nowadays. He let out frustrated hiss and snatched the can from the floor. He was a few moments away from snapping the tab open but his mobile rang, causing him to fumble with it again.

Iwaizumi let out a frustrated snarl, pelting the beer on the bed. He yanked his mobile out and answered the call. “What is it now?” he barked.

There was a faltered moment of silence before he heard Kuroo’s hesitant voice ring in his ear. “Oikawa Tooru may be in trouble.”

Iwaizumi stopped. His entire surroundings was frozen as he stood there in complete shock. There was a slight ringing in his ears and he stared blankly at the discarded cans on the bed. “What?”

“We received a call from a co-worker who reported Oikawa Tooru had called him for help. He’s not answering his mobile nor the home phone,” Kuroo’s voice sounded distant, muffled almost. Iwaizumi barely register what he was saying.

“What the hell do you mean he’s in trouble? I was with him just under an hour ago,” Iwaizumi argued.

“Bokuto and I are going to his house to check. For now, we don’t know whether this is a emergency situation but..” Kuroo hesitated for a split moment and Iwaizumi felt his heart sink. “If this is linked to the mugging situation, and your hypothesis is true then..”

Oikawa was gone.

“That’s impossible,” Iwaizumi rasped. “He was.. How is that possible?”

“We’ll contact you ASAP once we get to his. So Iwaizumi, what’s the decision?”

Iwaizumi ran a hand through his hair, breathing heavily. Oikawa was missing. This wouldn’t have happened if Iwaizumi hadn’t left him alone. Why had he left him alone? Iwaizumi grit his teeth and shook his head. He’d promised Oikawa he would take care of him, take care of this entire case and now-

“Iwaizumi, we need to know. What’s your call?”

Come on, think Hajime. He closed his eyes, and exhaled slowly, allowing time to wind down. He stood as still as possible, letting the moon light bathe his eyelids. He nodded in affirmation. “Notify me when you arrive at the scene. Check for any signs of break and enters,” he ordered before hanging up.

He stood alone in his dark apartment, mind numb and blank. He rubbed his face with both hands. “Shit,” he muttered. “Shit. Shit. Shit.”

He rummaged through his pocket and snapped open his mobile. The officer dialed Oikawa’s
number, chewing his lower lip. No response. He tried another three times but still no answer. The officer hissed in frustration, running a hand through his hair. Christ, he did not need this right now.

Iwaizumi left the cans on the bed as he hurried to the front. He grabbed his jacket, shrugging it on as he slipped in to his shoes once more. The officer gripped tightly over his mobile and brought it up to him. He hesitated for a moment, chewing his lower lip, then shook his head. No, now wasn’t the time to delay. He snapped it open, fingers shaking as he hastily tapped through contacts. They answered after two rings.

“Iwaizumi? What’s wro-“

“Yaku, I need your help,” he called, slamming the front door on his way out. “I have a hostage situation.”

‘Christ, Oikawa.’ He grit his teeth, heart floundering in his ribcage. ‘Please be safe.’

∞

“Argggggghhh!” Oikawa screamed in frustration. He snapped his head back down and shot the other an indignant look. “Just thinking about it makes me so mad!”

“You know what the worst part of it was? He said I was being unprofessional about all of this. Unbelievable!” Oikawa scoffed loudly and jutted his lower lip out in a sulky manner. “I mean, why would you lead me on then say, what, ‘stop coming on to me’? I mean, no offense but that in itself is quite rude!”

He shifted in his seat, frowning in contemplation. “I just don’t get it. Like, we were doing so great before then out of the blue he pulls a runner. Does that make sense to you?” He peered over at the other.

Thief was sitting across from the other, arms crossed with his head dropped back as he squinted up at the lights overhead. He pinched the bridge of his nose. “I messed up,” he muttered to himself. “I seriously messed up.”

“That’s what he was saying!” Oikawa’s eyes flared in indignation. “He said it like we were some kind of mistake! Can you even believe that? I didn’t want to go all ‘he said this, he said that’ but he bought me a teddy bear too. A teddy bear for Christ sakes! He even called it Teddy Tooru! If that ain’t smitten then I don’t know what is. All I did was invite him for some friendly drinks, nothing out of the ordinary, then he turned it in to a stupid date with his stupid bear, and stupid charm and.. his stupid.. stupid face…” Oikawa’s voice died down as he stared off into the distance. There was a moment of silence before he let out a shuddery exhale, shoulders hunched in. “His stupid face, god I love his stupid face,” Oikawa’s voice had grown wobbly and he threw his head back. “I miss him already! I miss him so much! Iwa-chan! I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to get angry!” he wailed.

Thief stared with a blank expression as Oikawa whimpered and whined. Oh my god,” he spoke slowly, rubbing his temples. “Is this humanly possible? Doesn’t your throat hurt? I mean, how can someone talk for this long? You know what, I will literally let you go if you shut up, okay?”

“You know what I love about Iwa-chan? He has this honesty about him. He seems like the type who isn’t afraid to express how he feels,” Oikawa continued, completely disregarding the other. “He does this thing where he scrunches his nose when he’s confused or trying to act annoyed when he’s not.
Or he does this cute thing where he’ll get all grumpy an-“ Oikawa jumped in surprised at the sudden scream coming from the other.

“Oh my god, just shut up!” Thief screeched. He was blocking both his ears. “Shut up, shut up, shut up! You’re like a parrot, it’s just endless! Always Iwa-chan this, Iwa-chan that!” he cried out, throwing his arms left then right. “My god, it feels like I’m being tortured right now. No wonder he rejected you!”

Oikawa blinked at him in surprise. “Wha- okay, first of all, how dare you,” He straightened his back to shoot him an angry look. “Second, were you even listening? He lured me then pulled back! I didn’t have a choice but to be reeled in and get smacked across the face!” Oikawa pouted and let out a sad sigh. “And my heart.”

“Oh Christ,” Thief groaned. “You know what? This isn’t going to work. I’m just going to have to resort to other measures.”

“Other measures?” Oikawa stared blankly at the other. “What do you mean other measures? It sounds kinda sexua-“ He inhaled sharply, eyes wide with accusation. “Oh my god, you’re a pervert, aren’t you? A thief and a creep. My god, what did I do to deserve this?”

“I’m not a pervert!”

“That mask says otherwise.”

“I’m not-“ He let out a frustrated hiss before looming in close. “You better be quiet,” he warned in a low voice. “You really wouldn’t want to.. piss me off.”

Oikawa stopped, and tilted his head to regard the other. He stared in incredulity, eyebrows risen in disbelief. “Was that a threat just now?”

Thief stared back, gazing down at him with frighteningly wide eyes. He didn’t respond but the reporter could see he meant business.

Oikawa watched, expression blank as he tried to process what he had just said. He threw his head back and burst out in a loud cackle. “Oh my g- are you serious? What kind of- I have never in my entire life heard anyone say that out loud. God, it sounds so cool in the movies but the way you say it just- hah!” Oikawa’s entire body was shaking with uncontrollable fits of laughter, causing his chair to rattle. Thief stared over, irritation growing on his face which, infact, only made Oikawa laugh even harder.

“Oh god, please, please don’t look at me! Ow, god, my stomach hurts too much! Just look over there in that corner. Just for a few minutes,” Oikawa had small beads of tears growing as he bit his lip hard to fight the giggles. “I mean, what kind of threat was that? At least make it sound scary- what are you doing?”

Oikawa stopped mid-chuckle as he blinked over at the other.

Thief had stood, one hand grasped on the lapel of his black jacket. He glowered at Oikawa with unblinking eyes and slowly began to pull it back. Oikawa’s gaze dropped to find he was sporting a huge bulge in his pants.

“Oh god, please, please don’t look at me! Ow, god, my stomach hurts too much! Just look over there in that corner. Just for a few minutes,” Oikawa had small beads of tears growing as he bit his lip hard to fight the giggles. “I mean, what kind of threat was that? At least make it sound scary- what are you doing?”

Oikawa stopped mid-chuckle as he blinked over at the other.

Thief stared at him through the slash of the balaclava. “You really don’t want to irritate me... and my friend,” he repeated. He placed a hand over the bulge, patting it lightly.
“What the hell,” Oikawa uttered. He began to struggle against the ropes again. “What the actual f- eurgh! Oh my god! I knew it, I knew it! I knew you were a pervert! That’s just disgusting - oh.”

He blinked as the other reached in to pull out a thick, sheathed knife. “Oh,” Oikawa let out a hysterical laugh, sinking in to his chair with relief. “I have never been so glad to see one of those in my entire life.”

Thief shot him a confused look. “What do you mean?” He peered down in question. “Why would you- oh,” his face scrunched in a disdainful look. “Dude, that’s just- eurgh, no. You have one sick mind, you know that?”

Oikawa felt his face warm up and he shot him an offended look. “I’m sorry but if a man approached you in suspicious outerwear who looked to be sporting a huge one, are you honestly telling me you would not think the same thing? That’s right, I didn’t think so. Or, then again, you’re probably in to that kind of stuff,” Oikawa added, eyeing the other up and down in suspicion.

“What’s that even supposed to mean?”

“It’s alright, I get it. I won’t judge,” Oikawa looked up at the ceiling, brows raised in a contrary manner. “I guess everyone has their preferences.. some kinkier than others.”

“I am not kinky!” Thief snapped, placing both hands on his hip.

“And yet here I am. Tied. In the middle of a secluded warehouse,” Oikawa shot him a suspicious look. “Completely succumbed to your every will. Unable to defend myself as you ravage me with your wide, frog-eyes. Yes, of course I believe you. Of course you’re not a pervert.”

The reporter sat up, wriggling about. “Or at least take off the mask. I don’t know why you put it on but just to let you know, no it does not make you look intimidating. At all. If anything, you look like you ought to be kinkshamed-”

Oikawa felt a blunt pain as he was punched heavily in the gut. He doubled over, coughing out and the other snickered before walking away. “Finally that shut you up.”

Oikawa was hunched over, catching his breath. He felt a small coil of discomfort and whispered “oh no.”

The guy whipped his head around and barked. “What now?!”

Oikawa hung his head as he took deep, shaky breaths. “Oohhh no. Oh no, oh no.”

“What is it?”

Oikawa was breathing hard, eyes wide with sheer panic. His brows were furrowed together with worry and he looked up at the other. “… I think I might throw up.”

The guy stared. “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Oikawa glowered at the other. “Well, what do you expect? I went drinking then came home ready for a good cry myself to sleep session before you dragged me out here in to your sex dungeon. I was already feeling queasy as it was but you just had to go punch me in the stomach, didn’t you? Not the arm, not the face but the stomach,” he groaned loudly. “Oh god, it’s going to be bad. I can feel it. It’s like the calm before the storm.”

“Don’t you dare.”
“I can feel it coming up,” Oikawa’s shoulders began to shake slightly.

The guy now looked a little alarmed. “Then force it down.”

Oikawa retorted sarcastically “Oh yeah, because I like to go around puking for the fun of it. I can’t control it!” As if to emphasise his point, he leaned over and retched loudly.

The guy put his hand over his mouth, gagging slightly. “Oh, dude. No. That’s disgusting. Don’t make those noises. You’re making me want to puke.”

“Get me a bucket,” Oikawa moaned. The guy ran off and returned with a small rusted container. He stretched his arms out, trying to wedge it between Oikawa’s thighs.

Oikawa glared. “Excuse you, you can at least hold it upright. There’s no way I can aim it all in there myself.”

The guy scrunches his face in disgust and cautiously leaned closer.

Oikawa scrunches his eyes closed as he kneels in front and inhales deeply. He reeled his head back, then swung it forward as hard as he could, smashing their foreheads together.

\textbf{CRACK!}

Thief’s head snapped back, feet stumbling as he fell. The bucket clattered to the ground, the sharp clang sound resonating in his ears.

The impact left Oikawa in a shocked daze, the crunching collision of the headbutt which rattled his brain. He let out a rough hiss and blinked rapidly. He needed to work fast.

Oikawa yanked at the ropes, feeling them begin to coil away fraction by fraction. The knot had finally loosened up from his constant fidgeting earlier and he wrenched them harder, breathing hard. His heart was lodged in his throat and he could hear the other swearing from the pain. His head felt like it had split in half and the pounding headache made him dizzy. The rough friction of the ropes burned his arms but he finally managed to jerk one arm free.

“Urgh.”

Oikawa snapped over, panic rising. Thief was nursing his head, fingers wrapped over the dark balaclava. He lifted his head, and Oikawa came face to face with the pair of furious ruby-red eyes.

“You little piece of-“

Oikawa wrenched his other arm out and flung it hard. The impact of the backhand was so sharp it felt like he’d busted his knuckles open. It met with Thief’s left temple and there was a sickeningly crack and a rough cry.

Thief was thrown back once more, this time eyes stunted in a complete daze and Oikawa inhaled sharply. He ripped at the ropes, fingers trembling in a mad struggle. ‘\textit{Come on, come on, come on!’} Oikawa’s mind screamed frantically. He squirmed hastily, dropping to the floor. He grabbed the last of the ropes and twisted his head under. The reporter let out of rough grunt as he stumbled forward, landing awkwardly on his arms. He was free!

Oikawa staggered forward, feet tripping over the other before floundering in to a full sprint. The sound of pumping blood rushed in his ears as his mind screamed at his body to move \textit{faster}. His throat was constricted so tightly, his breath came out in ragged, uneven pants. Oikawa scrambled to
run harder, arms swinging as adrenaline coursed through his veins.

There loomed a wide door ahead, rusted streaks running down like melted paint. A small square of window was positioned in the top centre though Oikawa couldn’t register what was on the other side. Anywhere was better than here. He forced himself to run harder, each step bringing him closer to the exit.

Heavy thudding sounds echoed from behind and Oikawa felt panic levels skyrocket. He charged ahead, focused on nothing but the doors which were now only a few metres away.

Oikawa didn’t even have time to slow down. He slammed directly in to the exit doors, the impact causing them to swing open. They were heavy and the reporter found himself stumbling again as he tried to regain his balance. He was surrounded by darkness. The outer moonlight seeped in to the windows to his right and he found himself staring down a lengthy corridor. It was difficult to see any further down and he began to speed up again, more than eager to get out of here.

He didn’t expect the pair of arms which shot out from behind and wrapped tightly around his waist with a vice grip. Oikawa had little time to respond before he was jerked to the left and thrown roughly to the side.

He slammed in to the far left wall, colliding right in to the brick block. Pain tore through his right arm and he heard a distinct crunch of bone. Oikawa let out a heaved choke and curled up in agony. His head spun, the walls caving in on him and he could barely breathe.

Thief’s face hovered in over, only his eyes visible in the dark. He was breathing heavily, the sound coming out distorted and muffled from the mask. He towered across Oikawa and reached in to grab at the reporter.

Oikawa let out a rough choke, hands shoving at the other’s face.

Thief snarled in fury. “Keep still you lit- augh!”

Oikawa fought back, struggling with his chest filled to the brim with panic. “Get the hell away from me,” he cried, voice shrill in hysterics. His grip kept slipping from the balaclava and he let out a sharp pant. “Get away fro-“

Oikawa scrabbled frantically, fist coming up and grabbing a handful of the mask. He yanked it roughly. Thief’s head was jerked down from the sudden force and he swore in frustration. He shoved the reporter back, feet stumbling as he regained his balance.

Oikawa whacked his head back against the wall, the force enough to make his ears ring. He panted harshly, chest heaving as he struggled to focus. There was the soft cotton texture of the mask in his hand and he blinked down sluggishly at it. Then back up at the other.

Thief stood over him, his looming figure casting a shadow over Oikawa’s face. The reporter felt his breath hitch.

This was him. The face of the man who mugged him. He found his gaze rising up. His hair was wild and unruly, shot up from the rough brawl earlier. Oikawa blinked up at the deep, maroon-red mess. It matched the colour of his wide eyes which flashed a fiery crimson. They peered down at him, unblinking as he breathed heavily through his mouth. His upper lip was curled in a wide snarl as he glowered down at him.

He looked like a complete maniac.
Oikawa blinked sluggishly up at him, peered down at the balaclava in his hand then back up. He held it up to the other. “Actually, you know what? Keep the mask on. It looks better that w-” He let out a rough choke when the other leaned in, a hand wrapped tightly over his throat.

Thief was right in his face, eyes impossibly wide and livid. His mouth curled in to a wide grin as he breathed over Oikawa’s face. “You like to play rough, do you?” he hissed. “Alright, then. No more games.”

∞

The car slowed to a halt, gravel crunching under the tyres. Akaashi peered out the window. “Of course,” he muttered, anxiety dwelling within. “It just had to look like a horror movie scene, didn’t it?”

Ahead loomed a town of abandoned warehouses which towered over, blocking the rays of moonlight. His stomach churned with uncertainty and he peered down at his mobile.

‘1-4-10, Natsui, Tainai-shi’

This had to be the right location. Kenma confirmed it for him. Akaashi glanced up from the lighted screen, eyeing the rusted buildings.

Oikawa was in one of these blocks. Or, at least his mobile was.

He swallowed, finger tapping against the steering wheel. He checked his mobile for the hundredth time to find it blank. Bokuto had promised to call him once he’d received any updates but there was no news. The photographer bit his lower lip, frowning with worry. No, Bokuto was going to be fine. He was an officer. He knew what he was doing.

Akaashi sighed. His argument sounded weak even to his own ears. He unclicked his seatbelt and opened the car door.

It was cool tonight, and he straightened his back, sore from the hunched position he had driven in on his way here. He squinted over at the blocks and counted softly under his breath.

“One.. two.. three.. four.”

The fourth block was where Oikawa’s mobile was kept in. It was a shabby place, looking like a deserted ruin in the dark. It was unlikely that one would steal a mobile and keep it in such a place, right? Did that mean Oikawa was in there too? Akaashi’s fingers twitched over his phone and he tightened his grip. He should have received at least a message update by now.

He contemplated calling Bokuto again when he heard it.

Akaashi jolted, fumbling with his phone as he stumbled to hide behind his car. His heart raced and he pressed a clammy hand over his chest. The air was chilly, swirling under his shirt but he couldn’t help but wipe a bead of sweat which had formed on his temple. His breath slipped from his lips in short, small puffs and he peered over the car boot crouched in to make himself as small as possible. He stared wide-eyed at the building on the left and waited, ears straining to pick up on any other noises.

He swallowed hard, eyes darting about as he watched with uncertainty. He was certain of he didn’t
imagine such a thing, and yet it made him even more weary.

It was soft, distant, but surely distinct. A muffled cry.

Akaashi’s icy fingers gripped on to the car as he chewed his lower lip. He had to call Bokuto.

But what if Oikawa was in there? Was he in immediate danger? He couldn’t just idly wait around until the others arrived. He sat back, chewing his lower lip. Then shook his head. “Damn it, Oikawa,” he cursed under his breath and scurried out from behind his car and toward the great building.

∞

Akaashi edged his way down the hallway, heart pounding. His breath sounded deafening in his ears and he forced himself to exhale slowly. It was dark and the only source of light was from the moon which cast jagged shadows everywhere. Akaashi took another step forward. This place was huge. This was his third corridor he’d gone down and he had yet to detect any signs of life. It was some time since he’d entered the building and he estimated at least twenty minutes to have already passed. Akaashi tightened his lips. Had he been wrong? Was this some false alarm? But even so, the facts just didn’t quite match up. He took another step forward. His shoes clacked on the rock floors and it echoed through loudly, making him want to curl up and cover his eyes. Akaashi just wanted to go home.

He glanced over his shoulder to find the hallway empty and shuffled closer. He just felt an unfamiliar tug at the back of his head and the hairs on the back of his neck rose. He spun around. No one.

Akaashi was panting softly, and he brushed his fringe back with a shaky hand. It was slightly damp from the formed sweat and he exhaled sharply. He could feel panic rising again and he squeezed his eyes shut. What the hell was he doing? He should’ve just waited like he’d been told. Save Oikawa? Who was he kidding?

Akaashi paused, eye’s darting around. He wasn’t meant to be here. Did he even remember the way out? Akaashi felt a suffocating wave rush over him and he let out a small gasp. Oh god, not another panic attack. ‘Just breathe’ he told himself. ‘Everything is going to be fine. Just brea-

He had little time to react as a hand reached out from behind and clamped tightly over his mouth.

He let out a muffled yelped in surprise and another hand reached over his torso and dragged him back. He struggled about, trying his best to wriggle his way out but the other didn’t seem fazed. Akaashi’s heart jumped up in to his throat as he yanked and wrenched at the thick arms. His feet scuffed the floors as he was pulled further and further away from the corridor. He let out another stifled yell but almost tripped back when he was dragged in to a darkened room.

The arms wrapped over his chest had loosened and he was spun around so fast he felt dizzy. The other had was still securely fastened over his mouth and Akaashi considered biting a finger off. He froze when he saw the perpetrator.

Officer Bokuto’s face came right in front of his, so close he could make out every individual lash. He was holding a finger over his mouth and Akaashi immediately held his breath and waited. Bokuto’s golden eyes flickered to the left as he listened for any noises. Akaashi’s heart was pounding and his
lungs felt like they were going to explode but he remained still, only taking very small, soft breaths. After a few minutes or so he felt the fingers loosen over his mouth and they slid away from his face.

He opened his mouth but Bokuto held his finger up again. He raised all fingers in a ‘stop’ motion and Akaashi nodded. The officer backed away and peered out the door, checking his surroundings before returning. He spoke in an efficient, hushed tone.

“Akaashi, what are you doing here?”

“I could say the same to you!” Akaashi hissed in a low voice. “How did you know I was here?”

“There was a reported call which directed us to this address,” Bokuto leaned in, eyes wide and doeful. “I told you to stay inside.”

Akaashi was on the verge of collapsing with relief. “Bokuto-san,” he whispered in a weak voice. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to lie—” He let out a surprised wheeze when he was yanked in to a tight embrace.

An arm slid around his waist, pulling him in closer and Akaashi’s breath hitched when he felt Bokuto press his face in to the crook of his neck.

“As long as you’re okay.”

His heart skipped and Akaashi stood as still as possible. He reached his arms around, hovering just over Bokuto’s back but hesitated.

The officer let go, seemingly unaware of his own actions. He tugged the other in again, a firm hand place over his shoulder. “Akaashi, listen to me. I want you to listen to me and follow my instructions, okay? What I want you to do is stay here, stay low, and do not move elsewhere unless you are certain you are in potential danger,” Akaashi opened his mouth but Bokuto held his hand out again.

“Listen carefully. Akaashi, under normal circumstances I would escort you to a clear, safe location but your friend is still in here and we need to find him. Do you understand?” Akaashi’s heart sank at the grave indication of his words. Oikawa was in great danger. He nodded and eyed Bokuto as he reached around the back of his uniform. He unclipped a small black device and clicked the buttons with swift precision. He leaned toward Akaashi and the photographer held his breath. He was so close, their breaths mingled slightly. Bokuto didn’t seem fazed, his eyes squinting in concentration.

He reached down and clipped the device on to Akaashi’s front right pocket before glancing up and meeting eyes.

“This is a tracking device right here and I’ve alerted the backing squad to come get you straight away. Now, your friend is still in here so I need to go find him next, okay? Will you be alright here by yourself?” Akaashi nodded again numbly, unable to find words. Officer Bokuto’s expression relaxed and he offered a gentle smile Akaashi had never seen before. “Okay, good.”

He stood and reached over to his side, pulling out another black device. Lightly clicking the button on the side, he held it up over his mouth and murmured. “Bokuto speaking. Currently have found subject two. Subject one has yet to be located. I have left a tracking device on so please send a few over to fetch him immediately. He is in the first left quadrant of the site. I am moving on, over.” He let go of the button and showed Akaashi.

“Someone will help you, okay? Stay right here. I need to go,” he turned to leave before Akaashi instinctively clutched him arm tightly. Okay, he didn’t want to admit how scared he was, but it was dark and dank and the last thing he wanted was to be left alone.
Bokuto peered down at the hand then back up at him. His mouth split in to a wide, apologetic grin and he shook his head. The officer gently pried Akaashi’s hand off and gave it a brief pat. “You’re going to be okay. Yaku is coming to get you,” he consoled, trying his best to look calm but Akaashi could see the worry in Bokuto’s eyes.

“What about you? Do you have an extra tracking device?”

Bokuto nodded, holding up a small walkie talkie. “Don’t worry, I got this bad boy right here, see? I’ll be okay,” he squeezed his shoulder briefly then took a swift step back. “Don’t be scared. You’ll be okay, I promise.”

Akaashi stared at him and he scrunched his nose. “Bokuto-san, I’m not scared for myself I’m scared for you,” Akaashi tightened his lips, face terse with worry as he examined Bokuto’s face. “Stay safe. Please.”

Bokuto blinked at the other in surprise. He flashed his familiar cheeky grin and brief salute. It was like his entire core lit up, giving comfort in the dark room. Akaashi suddenly wished he had his camera with him so he could capture the way those eyes seemed to glisten even in the dark room.

“Oh, come on now. Have some faith in me, Akaashi! I am a licensed profession, you know,” He leaned in close and Akaashi held his breath. There was the slight ghost of a whisper which tickled his ear and his heart skipped a beat.

“I’ll be back soon. Promise,” and just like that he was gone, and Akaashi was alone once more.

Chapter End Notes

Go go team officers!

PLOT TWIST: Oikawa ripped the mask off to reveal Ushijima and he says "You should have come to Shiratorizawa"
(I've actually had a few people ask if the culprit was Ushijima but no it is not - nice guess though)
ONLY A FEW MORE CHAPTERS TILL THE END OH BOY I'M SO GLAD - I honestly did not think this fic would ever last this long dear god
Hope you guys have enjoyed it and once again a huge thank you for reading this far!

tumblr: leurauxe.tumblr.com
The caller you have reached is unavai-

He snapped his mobile shut, exhaling through his nose. Still no answer. Fingers clenched around the phone for a brief moment before he tossed it aside in the passenger seat.

The road was empty, stretched out like a highway. It was expected though, considering the time. He pressed his foot harder and his car groaned in protest.

“Just bear with me,” he murmured, placing his left hand back on to the steering wheel. The churning chug of the machine roared in his ears, the view within his peripheral vision melted in to a blur as the car accelerated down the road.

Iwaizumi was sweating particularly hard tonight. He wiped an arm across his forehead, not bothering to catch the ones which slid down and eventually glossed over his eyes leaving a slight sting. He was focused on the road, ignoring the speed limit signs as he zoomed past. Honestly the last of his worries tonight.

Iwaizumi glanced to his left, eyeing the mobile for any updates – but so far none. Bokuto and Kuroo had gone ahead to check the site beforehand but there was no way in hell he was going to stay on standby. The officer chewed the insides of his cheeks which had already been reduced to a sore, gummy mess. He needed to calm down. Working himself up would only make situations worse.

But just how bad was this situation?

He inhaled a shallow breath before releasing again. This had to be all some misunderstanding. Oikawa was safe. They’d only just seen each other a few hours ago. There was no possibility that something could happen to him within that short span of time. Iwaizumi’s fingers tightened around the wheel.

This wouldn’t have happened if he’d reacted differently since their last encounter.

He grit his teeth letting out a hiss of breath. There was just no way. Just no-

The officer turned the wheel sharply, bracing himself as the car squealed in to a sudden turn to the left. He’d almost missed his exit. ‘Focus, focus.’ Iwaizumi inwardly scolded. Not long to go.
He jumped at the buzz to his left. Iwaizumi slammed on the breaks – the car screeched to a sharp halt and he was jolted back in to his seat. He was breathing hard, panting almost, heart racing. Iwaizumi peered over at his mobile. He didn't imagine it.

*Incoming call: Oikawa Tooru*

He lunged for his mobile, fumbling it open. “Oikawa!” he answered. For a brief moment he was greeted with a static silence then-

“**Hey Iwa-chan. I’m sorry, did I wake you?**”

Iwaizumi’s heart stuttered. His eyes shifted off the road to the side as he felt himself grow cold. He swallowed hard.

“Who is this?”

∞

Ropes were thrown across his chest, tightening and constricting until his back was glued against the chair support. Oikawa let out a small grunt as they dug in to his skin, making it hard for him to breathe. “You sure are in to his bondage thing, aren’t you?”

“Shut up,” Thief muttered as he tied a final, secure knot from behind. He side-stepped his way in to Oikawa’s vision and scrutinised his final result. That should do the trick. There was no way he could possible escape this time without him knowing. Thief glanced down at his wrists and frowned. Actually, on second thought maybe he should tighten the wrists one more time. He didn’t want to risk another backhand to the face. His cheek was *still* sore. Thief reached over toward the other, only to jolt back again at the sudden sharp inhale of breath.

Thief peered up at the reporter. “Jees, you scared me. You wanna get hit again?”

"What” Oikawa jerked his arm back. “What was that?”

The other blinked in confusion. “What?”

“That!” Oikawa looked down at his arm before glaring accusingly at him. “You just stroked my arm.”

“What, no I didn’t.” he frowned.

“Yes you did! You just stroked my arm!” Oikawa insisted.

“Hey! For the last time, I’m not a creep!” he snapped back. “I didn’t stroke your arm, I just bumped in to it.”

“Oh right, because I got a bump mixed up with a stroke,” Oikawa retorted sarcastically. “What are you going to ‘bump’ next? Better cross my legs.”

“Why would I be stroking your arm?! I’m here for the money, not you!”
“No, I understand,” Oikawa looked away, closing his eyes as he tilted his nose to the ceiling. “A pretty face like this is hard to come by. Considering your mediocre self, an opportunity like this comes once in a lifetime. You’re going to deflower me, aren’t you?”

“I didn’t-” the other pinched the bridge of his nose, exhaling sharply and loudly. “I didn’t touch you like that, okay?! Quit acting like a drama queen.”

“Drama queen? Drama queen?” Oikawa guffawed. “Oh, so I get kidnapped at 3am, dragged in to his hell hole, get sexually harassed and now I’m a drama queen?

Thief took a step back and crossed his arms. He shot Oikawa a withering look. “Okay, you know what? You’re not the only one who’s had to deal with shit tonight, alright? I’m pretty sure I’ve suffered a fair amount too.”

The reporter blinked up at him with surprised, wide eyes. He threw back his head and let out a sharp bark of laughter. “Oh, so you’re the victim now?” he guffawed. “Oh yeah, it must’ve been so hard having to tie these ropes over me. I bet your poor fingers are all sore and scruffy considering you had to touch these disgusting, frayed ropes! Just poor you!” he snapped.

Thief seemed nonplussed, brows raised as he stared blankly. “Thank you for your consideration.”

“Oh my god, sarcasm! It was sarcasm!” Oikawa let out another yell of frustration. He glared as the other simply shook his head and began to wander to his left, then out of his vision. “God, how is it that for someone whose made it this far without ever getting caught, has the smallest brain in the entire universe! Or maybe your head is actually tiny and you’re hiding it under all that horrible, bushy hair.” He threw his head back, calling loudly. His voice echoed throughout the room. “You know what you remind me of? One of them troll dolls. That’s what you are. Ugly, little, gremlin on a bad hair da-

He froze at the sudden sharpness against his lower spine and straightened his back immediately. The tip of the knife was pressed ever so lightly against his lower region and he inhaled slowly. “Um,” Oikawa swallowed hard. “That thing has been resting against your groin and I really do not feel comfortable with you pressing it against me.”

“You know, for the first time this entire night you’ve said something that we both agree on.”

“You... look like a troll doll?”

“I’ve never been caught,” Thief replied, completely dismissing Oikawa’s answer. “Want to know why I’ve never been caught?” His coy voice echoed in the reporter’s ear. “It’s because I’m very specific with whom I pick.”

“I can read people like the back of my palm. And trust me, the moment I saw you, I knew you had to be one. Just another pathetic, lonely office dweller with no one to run to.”

There was a mock sigh to Oikawa’s right. “I’ll admit, I don’t repeat targets. I’m not that reckless. Infact, you’re the only exception. You know why I came back for you?”

Where was he? Oikawa strained to peer to his side, only to find the knife shift along with him. The voice returned much louder this time, spoken right in his left ear, causing him to jolt.

"You have been boasting about your ever undying love for your ‘Iwa-chan’. But does he love you back?”

Oikawa paused at that. He frowned as he glared off to the side. “I really, really don’t like you.”
Thief’s head popped in to view and Oikawa came face to face with his delighted grin.

“When I saw that house of yours, man,” he let out a low whistle. “I must say, it was very fancy. Expensive furniture, spacious rooms, nice private estate. Your bed, what is that, a double queen? Super comfy.”

“Oh god,” Oikawa forced out. “You lied on my bed? I slept in there, you sicko! I’m gonna burn all those sheets when I get home. God knows what you’ve done in them—” his breath hitched when the knife dug in a fraction deeper.

Thief hummed, nonplussed. He paused, mouth curled up in consideration. “Despite what you think, I’m not as daft as you say. I’m known for my keen eyes.”

Oikawa opened his mouth to protest but froze at the sudden brush against his hip. The hand drifted lower, fingers skimming over his upper thigh. “Okay,” Oikawa said slowly. “Can I just say that I’m not hiding any weapons in there so you really don’t need to be touching in that region. And this is by far the creepiest thing that has ever happened to me, so please stop.”

There was a brief snort which warmed his right ear and Oikawa had to suppress a disgusted shudder. The hand reached up, rubbing against his hip again. It leaned in, reaching deep in to his pocket and the reporter held his breath.

Wait, no. No, no, no, no..

There was a faint rustle and he stared helplessly as the man tugged his mobile out of his pocket. Thief’s head popped in to his vision, eyes scrunched in to a sharp crescents and mouth curled in a sly grin. “What?” he chided. “You thought I didn’t know about this?”

He tapped the mobile awake, and Oikawa strained to peer over at what he was doing. “No, I was just saving the best part to last,” Thief replied, the fluorescent light of the mobile was cast over his face, illuminating his wide eyes. He turned the mobile over to show Oikawa.

‘ Iwaizumi Hajime ♡ ’

“That’s cute,” he snorted mockingly. “Do you send him cute emojis in your text messages too?”

“Yeah, I do.” Oikawa shot back. “In fact, I have a frog emoji that looks just like you too—” His head suddenly snapped back and an explosive wave of pain bloomed over his left cheek. The reporter let out an off-guard choke, feet scuffing the floor as he struggled.

“I said no more games,” Thief replied in a low voice.

“Wow, take a joke,” Oikawa groaned. “You just went right for the face, didn’t you? Your insecurities are showing through, you know. Talk about jealous.”

Thief paid no mind, tapping at the mobile again. “Do you think he’ll even answer?” he asked, eyes glistening in an unsettling manner.

The knot in Oikawa’s stomach tightened. “Stop that,” he muttered, refusing to look up.

“I think we should give him a call,” he decided, ignoring Oikawa’s dirty look. “This can be your final parting gift. If I asked for a ransom, would he fall for it?”

“Leave Iwa-chan out of this,” Oikawa snapped, irritation dwelling inside. He shuffled lightly, the tight strain on his wrists causing sharp waves of pins and needles up his arms. “He’s not a part of it.”
“Oh? I think he is,” Thief pressed his thumb lightly on the screen and tapped speaker. “Let’s see what beloved Iwa-chan has to say.”

The loud ringing echoed throughout the entire room and Oikawa held his breath. Was he going to answer? What if he didn’t? Oikawa had made it quite clear he didn’t want to speak with him anymore. It was Iwaizumi’s decision to separate, after all. His heart throbbed in light grief as dull pangs of hurt grew in his chest. Oikawa grit his teeth. The phone rang once, twice-

He scrunched his eyes closed, heart racing with heightened nervousness. Don’t pick up Hajime. Please don’t pick up, please don’t pick up, please-

“Oikawa?”

His head snapped up, eyes wide and mouth ajar. Like a bucket of ice dumped over him.

Thief watched him with a predator’s unwavering attention. He held the mobile close, to lips which began curling to in a wide smile. His eyes glinted with a knowing look.

“No.” Oikawa mouthed.

Thief scrunched his brows in a patronising look. His eyes squinted as he flashed another scornful smile. “Hey Iwa-chan,” he cooed, taking in the way the colour drained from Oikawa’s face.

∞

It was dark. And cold. And quite frankly, pretty damn terrifying being here by himself. And yet here he was. In the dark. Cold. And very much terrified.

Akaashi exhaled softly, eyes darting back and forth as he strained his ears. Still silence.

He contemplated calling Bokuto on his mobile but the last thing he wanted was to distract him from doing his job.

But still.

The photographer shrank himself smaller, curling himself in as he wrapped his arms over himself. He gnawed at his lower lip, the heavy ball of discomfort dwelling within the pit of his stomach. He’s been stuck here for awhile now and there was still no sign of others. It took everything in him not to just bolt out of this room, and get his ass to safety because he felt like a sitting duck right now.

‘Just stay put’ he scolded himself. Bokuto instructed him to stay unless there was a potential danger. The photographer lowered his gaze.

Bokuto.

That man was a living, breathing contradiction. Just when Akaashi thought he’d gotten him pat down, he completely threw him off with a side of him completely new.

Akaashi let out a soft snort. He closed his eyes. “What an odd guy.” He whispered softly to himself.

An image of Bokuto formed in his mind, with his seemingly exaggerated smile and outlandish, gelled-up hair. He flashed another toothy grin, eyes melted in to a soft gold.
Akaashi could feel himself slowly wind down, heart beat finally reducing. He exhaled, tilting his head to rest a cheek on his knee.

The Bokuto in his mind flashed a big thumbs up. “You’re doing so great, Akaashi!” he crowed, pleased. “It’s all going to be okay.”

“It’s going to be okay,” Akaashi murmured under his breath. It was going to be alright. Bokuto had told him so. Akaashi simply needed to place his trust on him.

It was going to be okay-

Crunch.

Akaashi’s eyes burst open as a cold rush waved over him. He was on high alert now, the hairs on the back of his neck risen and prickly. He straightened his back as he watched the door with unblinking eyes. What was that?

He clutched his fingers tightly over his mobile and held his breath. Waited.

Crunch.

Okay, he definitely didn’t imagine it the second time. And sounded as if it was much closer. His heart hammered within his ribcage and Akaashi let out an unintentional choke. He clasped a tight hand over his mouth, shocked at himself.

Oh god.

He shifted slightly, balancing himself on the balls of his feet. The urge to run hit him like a five year old – like there was a monster lurking under the bed and he couldn’t quite get his feet off the floor fast enough. Akaashi felt like he was going to be sick. He began to position himself, eyes darting all over the place. There was nothing here, nothing to protect himself with. His heart was caught up in his throat.

Another noise.

Dizziness swirled through his head and he fumbled with his phone, almost dropping it. Oh god, oh god. He needed better lighting – he was completely defenceless here.

He needed to get out right now.

He made a move to get up, feet scuffling on the floor. It sounded like the scraping of wallpaper
pressed right against his ears. He let out a panicked pant and took a hurried step toward the exit-
He froze in place.

It took a second to understand what he was looking at.

The dark outline outline of a person at the doorway.

Akaashi stared, completely paralysed in place. Not that he would even have a chance to escape now. His tongue felt thick in his mouth and he knelt there, mind blank and petrified.

The individual took one step in.

Akaashi shifted slightly back. He couldn’t breathe, let alone even think. He slumped back on to his bottom as he stared up at the other.

They loomed over like a shadow, coming in closer and closer until Akaashi was forced to be face to face with-

A child.

Huh? Akaashi blinked dumbly at the other. He had a boyish face with messy, cropped hair framing his face. The boy stared with an intensity which unnerved the photographer deeply.

“Are you lost?” the child suddenly asked.

Akaashi gaped, wide-eyed. The thought had never occurred to him until now and he felt himself growing numb around the edges.

Was there really just one victim?

How did this child get here? How long has he been here?

Before he could even think straight, he lunged out to grab a hold of the other.

The boy let out a muffled noise of surprise. “What, woah, relax there-“

“It’s going to be okay!” Akaashi panted. He didn’t even care that he sounded nowhere near as convincing as he’d have liked to sound. “You’re going to be okay. Stay here and I’ll protect you.”

The child raised his brows in surprise. He was staring at Akaashi as though he’d lost his mind. “Sir, I’m here to help-“

He let out a loud squawk when he was yanked in close.

“Hey, hey, shh. It’s going to be okay,” Akaashi spoke in a hushed tone, careful not to stir the child. He hesitated before placing a tentative hand over the back of their head, cradling it softly. God, he was so petite.

The boy was rigid in his arms, completely shocked. The poor thing. Didn’t even realise what was lurking somewhere within these rooms. How long was he cooped up in here for?

“Akaashi Keiji?”
He paused, hand still pressed against the back of his skull. He blinked once. Again. Akaashi leaned back to peer down at the other.

The child carried the most petulant look he’d ever encountered. He crossed his arms, squinting up at him in disdain. “Bokuto always gushed about how you were the ‘cool, silent type’. Clearly his judgement was off by a mile.”

Akaashi’s mind ticked sluggishly at his words. “Boku...to..?” he questioned slowly. What was goi-

Wait. Don’t tell me.

Akaashi felt himself grow red, completely mortified at himself. He let go immediately, practically yanking himself off. “Oh god, I didn’t- I wasn’t- I’m so sorry, I wasn’t thinking straight and-“

The man let out a snort and crossed his arms. His eyes pierced through all the pathetic excuses. “Yeah, clearly you weren’t thinking straight.” His tone was laced with a wry amusement. It made him want to melt in to the floor even further.

The man straightened himself up, then leaned back for a quick stretch. “Officer Yaku. I’m here to escort you off the premises.” He nodded sharply and held a hand out.

Akaashi accepted, still completely humiliated at his own personal misinterpretation. “Yes, I- uh, yes. Akaashi Keiji. Thank you.. for helping me.”

The officer shot him a haughty look. “Relax, don’t sweat it. You’re safe now.” He mocked with a cheeky grin.

Akaashi wanted to curl up and shrivel in his own embarrassment. He straightened himself, downright refusing to note the way he towered over the other policeman.

Officer Yaku was busy checking his surroundings before he peered over his shoulder at him. “The coast is clear. Come along then.”

“Wait, what about Oikawa? Was there any updates? Have they found him?”

The man paused at that, then shot him an apologetic smile. “Not yet. But don’t worry. Hajime is on his way.”

Iwaizumi was here too? Akaashi released an exhale he hadn’t realised he’d been holding his entire time. See, it was okay. Bokuto had backup.

“How long?” Akaashi asked, staying close to the other. “How long until we find Oikawa? Is he in danger?”

There was a light huff of laughter and Akaashi blinked in surprise.

Officer Yaku turned to face the other, his mouth tugged in to an amused smile. He shook his head. “I know it’s hard not to, but don’t worry. It’s only a matter of time. “

“This is Hajime we’re talking about, afterall.” Yaku tipped his head over to flash a sharp grin. “My boy’s like a hound dog. The moment he gets a taste of that blood, he’s going to chase you down, and fast.”
"He's not going to come, you know."

"What a tragedy."

"Iwa-chan has enough on his plate as it is and you're just stirring more trouble for him."

Thief jutted his lower lip as he tapped away on Oikawa's mobile. He didn't even bother sparing the other a glance. "Well, I would like to meet this so-called Iwa-chan you've been gushing so much about. Let's see just how great he is."

"He's really not that great. I may have exaggerated the facts." Oikawa grit his teeth at the lack of response. "Hey, I'm talking to you!"

"Mm."

The reporter scrunched his nose in irritation. He leaned over to get a closer peek. "What are you looking at?"

"Hm?" Finally he glanced up. "Oh, just going through your personal files."

"Wh- hey! Get your grubby fingers off my phone! Personal privacy you punk!" Oikawa snapped, writhing against the rope.

He paused when his phone was thrust in his face, the sudden brightness of the screen causing him to squint. He blinked several times before finding himself staring at the picture. He'd forgotten all about it - a picture he'd saved to show Iwa-chan after their movie night.

Thief studied the screen, then pointing at the right corner. "It says here Ultrafonio the saviour of the nine galaxies." He slowly turned his head from the screen toward Oikawa with one eyebrow raised.

Oikawa felt his cheeks turn pink and he snapped defensively. "I saved it by accident,"

"There’s another eight of these files."

"Everyone has their own personal interests alright? Give me a break!"

The other shook his head as he turned the mobile screen to his favour.

Oikawa opened his mouth, ready to spit another round of insults when he spotted it.

A flurry of movement from the corner of Oikawa’s eye. It happened so quickly he barely had time to register and immediately his voice dried up in his throat.

Hajime.

Oikawa’s breath stopped at the sight of him. He’d never seen him so wild before. His eyes were wide, sharp and focused as he watched them, crouched low behind an industrial sized pipe. How did he get in? Oikawa’s gaze followed as the pipe led to an upper window slightly to his right side. Did he honestly climb his way up there? Their eyes met for a brief moment.
Oikawa’s heart skipped a beat.

Thief was busy clicking through his mobile, snorting every now and then.

Iwaizumi’s gaze shifted, jumping from the man then back over to him. He held a finger up, placing it over his lips.

Oikawa blinked up him, lips parted in shock. His chest thrummed as a prickly sensation of fear washed over him. *What was he doing here?*

A soft huff interrupted his thoughts and Oikawa glanced over at the other. Thief scrunched his brows in disdain. His eyes drifted up to meet the other's. "It's as I thought. You really do have no one out there for you."

From the corner of his eye Oikawa noted the way Iwaizumi paused, body rigid. It took everything not to look at him right now. The reporter cleared his throat. "Way to hit below the belt."

Thief raised an eyebrow. He lowered the mobile, his entire attention directed toward him once more. "But it's the truth, is it not?" He leaned in, chair creaking dangerously as he did so. "There's nothing but work here. Work, work, work."

Thief paused, lips pouted in thought. "Well, actually no. You had 'Iwa-chan'."

It was as though the air had been sucked out of the room. Oikawa didn't dare look over at the other. He swallowed hard, forcing the hard lump down his throat. "I didn't." He peered up. Oikawa could feel Iwaizumi's laser gaze set on him. He forced a polite smile. "He was never mine to begin with."

He was greeted with a nasty leer. "How tragic." Thief's eyes flashed like bloodstones before he resumed back to tapping away on Oikawa's mobile. "What does it even matter if you have the title as one of the top reporter of Aoba Jousai news industry? You have nothing. You're a nobody."

The tension snapped like a rubber band.

Iwaizumi didn't bother hiding anymore. He was storming up from behind, eyes shadowed and arms spread, ready to strangle the living death ou-

"Wait!" Oikawa called out and Iwaizumi froze. The reporter did his best to focus on Thief who glanced up from the mobile screen. His mind raced, thoughts pingponged back and forth. "Okay," he spoke slowly. Oikawa peered up at the man towered over him, catching his gaze and keeping it there. Then he nodded.

"Okay," Oikawa repeated. "You win. No more of this. You win."

Thief paused at that. He looked slightly taken back. "I.. win?" he repeated lowly. "You’re finally going to comply?"

The reporter swallowed. From his peripheral vision he could see Iwaizumi beginning to make his way behind another pipe closer. "Yes," Oikawa managed. "I’ll do as you say."

Thief glanced up at him with a piercing stare. "Why the sudden change?"

"Because," Oikawa murmured quietly. "He’s not going to come."

He avoided meeting eyes. "He’s never going to come."

Thief studied his face with quietened intensity. Then his eyes widened slightly. "Oh?" his lips curled
in to a knowing smile. “Too easy.”

He leaned back and tugged his arms in an exaggerated stretch. Then lunged in close. For a split moment Oikawa thought he was going to get his revenge from the headbutt earlier and flinched. The ropes dug in to his skin roughly, the sensation now feeling like thorned wires.

There was a low chuckle coming from the other and Oikawa couldn't repress the frightened pant which slipped from his lips.

Thief was watching him, the unwavering gaze which seemed to cut right through to his core. They were almost nose-to-nose now.

Thief was smiling, eyes drooped in to a squint. He leaned in close, warm breath prickling Oikawa’s ear. “You know,” he murmured. “I love seeing the look of despair in your eyes.”

From the corner of his eye, Oikawa could see the screen of the mobile which hung loosely in the other's hand.

It was set on camera, reflecting a small aspect of the wall behind him.

Oikawa’s heart sunk in a knowing manner.

He knew. He knew this entire time.

Thief hummed a dainty tune as he sat back in his chair. “I don’t appreciate games,” he called. His voice echoed throughout the warehouse. “If you’re going to face me, then face me directly.”

He waited patiently, and sure enough there was the soft crunch of gravel as Iwaizumi stepped out from behind the thick pipes.

"Take ten steps forward, no more, no less,” Thief instructed, eyes dropped in a lazy stare. He crossed his arms and regarded him lightly, lips curling in to a smile. "Don't be shy, Iwa-chan."

Iwaizumi paced forward until he hit his tenth step, falling short by a metre. He didn't seem fazed by the other, far too occupied on Oikawa.

"Oikawa." His voice was significantly hoarser than usual. Iwaizumi's face was tense with slight fear as he eyed the red welts of rope burn which had formed over Oikawa's arms. "Are you okay? He hasn’t done anything to you, has he?"

“Iwa-chan!” Oikawa wailed. He wriggled about in his chair letting out small whimpering noises. “Iwa-chan, be careful! He’s a pervert! Watch out the bulge in his pants, he'll use it against you!”

Iwaizumi looked completely bewildered. “Wait, his what?” The officer whipped his head over at Thief, eyes wide in outrage. “Just what the hell have you done to him, you sicko.”

“For god sa- I didn’t touch him like that!” Thief snapped in frustration. “I didn’t, I swear! I didn’t!”

“It was terrible, Iwa-chan!” Oikawa cried in a woeful voice. “He’s crazy!”

“He’s more psychotic than I ever imagined.”

“Okay, I’ve had enough beating about the bush tonight!” Thief shot Iwaizumi a malicious look. “You are going to do as I say.”

“You say that as though I am going to listen to what you have to say.”

“I thought I explained quite clearly of the situation on the phone.”
“You did.”

“And your response?”

“No.”

Thief peered up, brow raised in question. “No?”

“No.” Iwaizumi repeated. His dark eyes grew flinty. “I don’t negotiate with perpetrators.”

“Oh. I see.” Thief scrunched his brows in mock contemplation. Then nodded.

Oikawa barely had time to register the hand on his head before he was yanked back by the hair. He let out a pained hissed but froze at the sharpness against his throat.

The colour in Iwaizumi’s face drained completely and his lips parted in shock.

Thief pressed the knife deep in to the skin, digging it against Oikawa’s bone. A shadow passed through his rich, crimson eyes as he watched with an unwavering gaze. His lips stretched in to a knowing smile. “How about now?”

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“Don’t move,” Thief warned, digging the knife in deeper. “Don’t test me.”

Iwaizumi froze, eyes wide with shock. He was focused on Oikawa’s neck. Very slowly, he raised both hands in surrender. “Let’s just stop and discuss this,” he said carefully.

Thief didn’t lower the knife. “Don’t even try to pull any tricks on me or who knows. My hand may just slip.”

Iwaizumi’s eyes darted from the knife to Oikawa. He looked at the other with a strangled expression. “Okay,” he finally said. “What do you need me to do in order for you to lower the weapon?”

“Lift your shirt.”

“Excuse me?”

Oikawa glanced up at the other. “You know, you say you’re not a pervert then you go and say these things.”

The knife dug in deeper. It was starting to prickle Oikawa’s skin painfully and he forced himself to remain still. Thief raised an eyebrow. “Well then?”

Iwaizumi clenched his jaw, then sighed. He untucked his shirt, holding it up and now Oikawa could see why. He could feel the waves of smug satisfaction oozing from the man behind.

“Drop the gun. Then kick it away from yourself.”

There was a brief flicker which flashed across his eyes, but the officer complied nonetheless.
Iwaizumi gently lowered the weapon without so much as taking his gaze away from the two. He kicked it aside then stood back up, hands held out in a surrender pose.

What now? Now there were two at his mercy. Oikawa suppressed a frustrated choke. God, why did Hajime come? He should have never answered the call. This wasn't how it was meant to be. This wouldn't have happened if he'd been more careful. What if he targeted Hajime this time? Oikawa wouldn't be able to do anything restrained like this.

His heart was palpating in chest hurt and panic filled his gut. He couldn’t even breath properly, any movement causing the already deeply-fixed blade to cut further in to his skin. This was all his fault. Oikawa squeezed his eyes shut. Please don't hurt Hajime. Anyone but Hajime.

“Tooru.”

His eyes snapped open and he peered up, careful not to move his head.

Iwaizumi was watching him, still stuck in the same position afar. He looked rigid but Oikawa could see he was trying his best to look calm.

“It’s okay,” he called softly. “You’re going to be okay, Tooru.”

Oikawa blinked. He felt his eyes water suddenly and sucked his lips in. It was funny how only a few hours ago they had fought. He felt stupid for even being mad. “I’m sorry,” he whimpered, brows drawn together tightly as he tried his best to hold back the tears. “I’m sorry, Iwa-chan.”

Iwaizumi watched for a brief moment. Then smiled. It took Oikawa back to when it was just the two of them sitting at the bar and Iwaizumi had finally dropped his guard around him. It was such a rare smile. The sight took his breath away.

“I’m sorry too,” Iwaizumi replied calmly. “It’s okay, don’t cry. You’re going to be just fine,” He took a slow step forward.

Oikawa’s breath hitched as the knife dug in deeper. Iwaizumi froze. He stared above Oikawa’s head, most likely looking at Thief. The soft look had been wiped off, and his eyes had sharpened significantly. Iwaizumi glanced back down to meet Oikawa’s eyes. His expression softened again. “It’s okay, Tooru. Deep breaths. Take deep breaths for me. There we go.”

He was watching Oikawa in such a way it made him want to just wring the stupid ropes off and rush over to him. Damn it, he was going to start crying again. Oikawa watched Iwaizumi aswell, chest heaving slightly as he tried to focus on his inhale and exhale.

Iwaizumi nodded encouragingly. “You’re doing great. Well done,” He kept his eyes on him and only him. It felt like there was nothing between them.

“Tooru,” he murmured. “Do you recall when we first met? It was around two in the morning and you came in to the station by yourself. Officer Kuroo and Bokuto helped you out. You remember?”

His lip twitched in to a small smile when he saw Oikawa’s face scrunched slightly from the memory. “You had come asking for help,” His gaze dropped for a brief moment before it returned. “I remember.”

“That night you didn’t want to go home alone. You said you were afraid of something happening. And so I ordered the two to escort you home. Do you remember what I told you then?”

Oikawa couldn’t remember. That night felt like ten years ago. His mind strained but nothing came in
mind. Iwaizumi didn’t seem to mind, huffing lightly in amusement at Oikawa’s disappointed expression.

“I said your safety was my concern,” he explained. “And it still is.”

Iwaizumi bowed slightly, peering up at Oikawa. “Tooru, I promise to get you home safe and sound,” he was speaking softly again in the way it made Oikawa’s heart wobble. “You trust me don’t you?”

Oikawa let out a soft exhale. He smiled deeply, for the first time in awhile. “You know I do.”

Iwaizumi flashed a lopsided smile showing a small glimpse of teeth. “Good.”

He straightened himself, now to regard Thief. “What’s your proposal then?” he commanded in a deep voice.

Thief shifted slightly, the pressure of the blade now lessened. “I demand a ransom,” he called easily. “You give me 800,000 yen and I let him go.”

He paused before adding “and this doesn’t get shared to the higher ups. I want at least 6 hours too.”

“800,000 yen and I’ll leave this place and never come back. In return, I ask you won’t follow me or, well. I can always come back and finish him off” he jerked a chin toward Oikawa. Thief grinned widely, flashing a full set of teeth. “We got ourselves a deal or no?”

Iwaizumi stared at him for a long period. His brows were furrowed in concentration and he looked like he was chewing the inside of his cheek. He watched the other with a grave expression.

Then burst out laughing.

Thief and Oikawa blinked dumbly at the other. Iwaizumi was laughing hard, brows scrunched like he’d heard the most ridiculous thing in the world.


Iwaizumi was reduced down to chuckles and he shook his head as he smiled in amusement. “Christ, I haven’t laughed that hard in years. Thank you.”

Thief stared blankly then he ruffled up. “You think I’m joking? Think I won’t do it? I’ll do it!” He snarled, pressing the knife in to Oikawa’s neck again. “Don’t mess with me!”

Iwaizumi nodded with his eyes closed. “I know. I wasn’t trying to mock you. I was just laughing at myself.”

Okay, now even Oikawa was lost. Thief raised an eyebrow as he squinted over in suspicion. “Just laughing at yourself? And pray do tell, why would you be laughing at yourself?”

Iwaizumi glanced over at Oikawa, eyes meeting for a brief moment before looking at the culprit. “Because,” he smiled.

“Wh-“ Thief managed before his body stuttered madly. He let out a shocked, gutted noise as his body shook about. The knife in his hand jolted, slicing a small gash across Oikawa’s neck.

Oikawa barely had time to react before his vision tilted abruptly. He let out a grunt as the chair was thrown on to its side. His head smashed roughly against the ground, it left him completely dazed. He blinked sluggishly as his vision became blurred. The ropes dug deeply in to his wrists and ankles and
the pain was so sharp he gasped in pain. He looked up to find a flurry of movements, the faint outline of other figures and he identified them almost immediately.

Officer Kuroo had leapt back in one swift motion, landing lightly on his feet. He had a small device in his hand and from the faint buzzing noise, Oikawa had come to realise it was a stun gun. He swung it about before tossing it aside and rolled his shoulders back.

Thief appeared to have recovered quickly, though his movements still slightly sluggish. “What the hell? Who the hell are you supposed to be?”

Kuroo ran a hand through his unruly hair, mouth curled in a wide grin. He placed himself in front of Oikawa, shielding him. “Good evening, I’m Officer Kuroo, though more commonly known as K-cat,” He dipped forward in a mock bow. “I shall be your escort this evening, alongside with the assistance of my homie, B-dawgs.”

There was a sudden flash of white and the Thief spun around sharply. Officer Bokuto side-stepped in, immediately in the other’s space. His left hand lunged out, grabbing a rough hold of Thief’s wrist and he twisted sharply. His right hand came up, reaching for the handle of the knife.

Thief yanked his arm back and twisted swiftly. He tilted his body back and lifted his leg for a swift kick. Bokuto let go immediately, instead grabbing a hold of his foot.

Thief flipped the knife around, it now facing Bokuto and swiped at the other.

There was a glint of silver and Officer Bokuto backed off immediately with a sharp hiss. A droplet or two of crimson splattered on the ground as he shook his right arm. It had been nicked, a short but deep cut slashed across his forearm.

Bokuto hardly spared it another glance, wide golden eyes focused as he charged back in at another attempt to disarm. Thief looked much less confident now, swinging the knife at the officer wildly. “Get back!” he snarled, panic rising in his voice. “Get b-“ he choked as he was slammed to the ground from behind.

Officer Kuroo was swift, reaching back and a pair of handcuffs swinging from his right thumb. He twisted the man’s arms back and within a few brief seconds was followed by a click of metal.

“What?!” Thief yelped, squirming around. He still had the knife in his grasp and he slashed the air in a feeble manner. “You didn’t tell me he was a cop!” he squeaked in outrage.

There was a sudden burning pain which shot through his wrist as he let out a loud howl.

Officer Iwaizumi stood over him, a thoughtful expression plastered on his face. His feet was grounded hard against the man’s wrist, twisting it in a painful manner. It hardly moved as the other writhed and floundered in agony. “Ooh, that looks uncomfortable,” Iwaizumi hummed in mock sympathy.

“Well, no kidding! You’re going to break my ar-gh!” The man screamed harder as the officer’s foot dug in deeper. His arm was trembling slightly as though on the verge of snapping in half. The sight made Oikawa nauseous.

Iwaizumi leaned in, face closed in front of the culprit. He was no longer teasing, his eyes sharpened in to one of the most ferocious glares Oikawa had ever seen.

“You got some nerve,” Iwaizumi murmured, voice was deep and gravelly. “Cutting one of my officers.”
He pressed down and the man writhed about.

“Hajime, stop.”

Iwaizumi glanced over to find Kuroo watching him with his sharp, lazy eyes. “It’s not worth it,” he called.

The officer stared down at the man who had been reduced to a whimpering mess and sighed. He lifted his boot a few centimetres then kicked the knife out of his hand. “Unbelievable.”

He turned to face the other two officer, an irritated look on his face. “Are you seriously telling me I’ve been chasing this guy for the past three months? I’m embarrassed.”

Officer Kuroo let out a small snort. “Hey, it could’ve been worse. What if he actually was a criminal mastermind? Like the ones in them action movies.”

“Speaking of movies, we should all go out on next Thursday and watch that new release film. The one with the super fast cars,” Bokuto’s voice rang. “Wazzy, you better come. Don’t even bother trying to deny your undying love for the cinema either.”

Oikawa blinked sluggishly as there was a light tug behind him and the pain on his wrists lessened significantly. He stared up as Bokuto’s face popped in to view. “Wake up Sleeping Beaut- holy moly dude,” He let out a loud hoot of laughter and turned to yell over his shoulder. “Look at the shiner on his right eye! Look, K-cat! Quick get the camera. We need to update his surprise selfie.”

Oikawa’s head hurt too much too speak. He simply scrunched his nose in disdain.

“Bokuto move aside, I’ll do it. You’re bleeding all over the place.”

“Oh,” the officer peered down at his arm to find a messy smear of red. “Oh, woops. Okay, okay, switch places.”

“Kuroo, hurry and get him wrapped up.”

Oikawa lay there feeling completely worn out. He couldn’t really feel his wrists and ankles anymore, the cut circulation having just formed a numb pain. A shadow hung over his face and he craned his neck to blink up at the other.

Iwaizumi wasn’t looking at him, his gaze lowered as he focused on untying the ropes. Oikawa took in the familiar sight of the dipped lashed and strong jaw. He felt like he wanted to cry again and he didn’t know why.

As though on cue, Iwaizumi glanced up meeting his gaze. His eyes widened a fraction as he leaned in carefully. “Does it hurt a lot? I’d prop you back up but the weight shift is going to make it worse on your ankles. I’m sorry.”

Oikawa huffed in weak laughter. “Seems like nothing compared to what you gave the other guy.” His voice came out hoarse and soft.

Iwaizumi watched him. Then smiled. “Special treatment.”

There was a sudden tug in Oikawa’s chest as pangs of sorrow rippled through. He tightened his lips together. There were a million things he wanted to tell him, but didn’t know how to say.

“Thank you,” he whispered. He felt his sight grow cloudy and voice turn thick. “Thank you for
coming.”

There was a slight tweak which flashed over Iwaizumi’s face but it disappeared soon after. He smiled instead. “It’s okay. Rest. You’re safe.”

Oikawa nodded, shutting his eyes closed. Sleep came almost immediately.

∞

Red, Blue, Red, Blue, Red, Blue

The neon lights burned his eyes but he didn’t look away. He’d been trapped within the office for so long, he’d never realised how long it had been since he’d gone on a real police adventure. Perhaps sometime soon. He’d ask Kuroo to drive, of course. Afterall, he was the better driver out of the two.

Bokuto hummed softly in consideration. He was escorted from the building by his partner, only after he’d demanded to at least be piggybacked on the way out. Kuroo was surprisingly sturdy and still quite speedy despite the extra weight and they were whizzed out of the sight in no time. Bokuto stared blankly at the police car lights, perched at the ledge of the ambulance. Kuroo had gone with Yaku to secure the target in the car and from here Bokuto could make out the wild flop of hair. Bokuto wanted to join them. His legs swung to and fro as he sat, waiting patiently for the nurse to finishing binding his arm.

“For someone who’s going to have to get stitches, you’re awfully cheery,” she noted, glancing over at him.

Bokuto’s legs froze mid-air. “Wait, what? Stitches?” He turned and jutted his lower lip out in a sad pout. “I hate stitches! They get so itchy and take so long to heal. Can’t you just, I don’t know, stick a band aid over it?”

The nurse shot him an incredulous look. “A band aid?” She shook her head. “If only things were as easy as placing a band aid over.”

Bokuto flashed a cheeky grin and placed his index finger over his lips. “Don’t worry, I won’t snitch on you! Just stick a band aid over it and I’ll be good to go-“

“Bokuto-san!”

Bokuto peered over his shoulder and lit up immediately. His heart thrummed with delight and he refrained from hopping off the counter and rushing over. “Akaashi! You made it out!” He flashed a wide grin. “Told you we’d me-“

He was cut short, a sudden sharp explosion of pain struck across his cheek. His head snapped to the left and the nurse let out a frightened yelp. Bokuto blinked dumbly, a hand held over his throbbing face.

Akaashi looked pissed, brows furrowed in as he frowned deeply at him. “You are one of the most reckless officers I’ve ever encountered in my entire life!”

Bokuto stared, wide-eyed. “Um, that’s kinda a big statement you’re declar-“
“No, definitely the most reckless! You call yourself a policeman! What kind of officer rushes in to a hostage situation with no backup weapons or any strategic approach? If you had a decent tactical plan I’d at least understand but to rush in without any knowledge or preparation? That is the most foolish thing I’ve ever heard!”

“I had Kur-“

“Are you honestly pulling that card on me right now?” Akaashi shot him an aggravated look, the sight so bizarre on such a pretty place. “Even your partner brought a weapon. What was your excuse, huh? Why didn’t you bring anything? What if the man had a gun with him, Bokuto-san? You going to fight a gun with what, your fists?”

Bokuto hadn’t been lectured like this since he was twelve. He hung his head, shoulders hunched meekly as he peeped up at the other. “I’m sorry,” he said, still not quite sure what he was apologising for. His mind was overwhelmed at the sight of Akaashi, and his mind screamed at him not to dare smile.

The nurse was eyeing the two, before she ahh-ed. She shot him a knowing look and swiftly wrapped his arm. “No strenuous lifting,” she warned before excusing herself with a pleased smile.

Bokuto blinked over at her then dropped his gaze to the floor. He could still Akaashi’s accusing look drilling in his face and he felt himself beginning to sweat under the strain.

There was a heavy sigh before he felt a brush against his better arm. He sat upright, nerves alight as Akaashi leaned against him for support.

“How’s your arm?”

Bokuto blinked at him, taken aback by the random question. “Huh? Oh. It’s good. All better,” he flashed a wide grin. “Kinda feel like a superhero with this on,” he lifted his arm and jerked it around in a robot motion.

“Don’t move it around so much,” Akaashi chided, placing a tentative hand over his. “You’re re-open the wound.”

Bokuto glanced over to retort with a joke but he stopped. Akaashi’s gaze was set on his bandaged arm, both his arms holding it to keep it still. His brows were etched together with worry and Bokuto finally understood why he’s been so upset. Akaashi felt guilty.

“Hey,” Bokuto called. He flashed a reassuring smile when Akaashi blinked up at him. “It’s not your fault. I did it to myself. If it means keeping you safe then I’d do it all over again,” He held a grave expression, watching Akashi. Then burst in to a friendly smile. “I don’t regret it. And neither should you.”

He flinched at the sudden movement and for a second he thought Akaashi was going to slap him again for his reckless comment. His breath hitched when he felt Akaashi’s arms wrap over his. Akaashi leaned in, resting his chin on Bokuto’s left shoulder as he gave him the tightest hug he’d ever had. “I’m sorry,” he murmured softly, so softly Bokuto would’ve missed it if he wasn’t so close to his ear. “I didn’t mean what I said before. You’re the most dedicated person I’ve ever met. I’m sorry I didn’t realise until now.”

Then he squeezed even harder, pressing his face in to the crook of the officer’s neck. “Don’t you dare do that to me again,” he scolded. “Or I’ll never forgive you again.”

“Okay,” Bokuto squeaked. His heart thumped in his chest, a fanfare played in his mind screaming...
and cheering him on. “It’s okay, all okay. You’re forgiven. More than forgiven. I forgive you a million ti-“

There was a light press of cold lips to his cheek and he froze. Akaashi leaned back against the back of the ambulance looking the other way. His face was tinged with a faint pink and it was so adorable Bokuto couldn’t help but blurt out “are you my boyfriend now?”

Akaashi whipped his head around to face him, his expression completely stunned. Bokuto felt his insides coil and churn and he couldn’t control his mouth. “I mean, if you want to be boyfriend. I’d like to be your boyfriend. Not that you should feel inclined to say we’re dating because I feel that way! If we are even dating to begin with. Are we dating? Is there a difference between dating a person and being their boyfriend? I don’t really know myself but I would like to do both. With you! I mean, if tha-“ his ramble was cut off short when Akaashi placed a hand over his mouth. He wore a pleased smile and his eyes shone with amusement.

“Baby steps, Bokuto-san.”

Officer Bokuto nodded fervently. “Right, yes! Baby steps. Too easy! So can I call you my boyfriend or?“

∞

The air was surprisingly not as cold as he thought it would be. He let out a soft exhale, glancing down at the puff of breath which tumbled from his lips.

The ambulance had arrived not long ago and he watched as the medical staff draped a blanket over the man who’s been escorted out with Yaku. So that was Akaashi. Daichi hummed in consideration. He was the complete opposite of Bokuto with his solemn expression and politeness with the nurses. He watched as he inclined his head deeply, lips moving as he spoke to one of the nurses. His lips twitched in to a gentle smile and from here Daichi could make out the flustered expression of the woman. The officer huffed in amusement. Yes, this man was the complete opposite of Bokuto. The idea of the two even interacting seemed odd, out of place even.

Daichi glanced over at the weathered warehouses and crossed his arms. It was not only a matter of time until they caught the culprit. About time too. Daichi allowed himself another smile. Perhaps now Iwaizumi could finally get some rest.

He peered over back toward the other man to find him with Bokuto by his side.

And for a split moment, Daichi was taken aback at the sight.

There was a tweak in between his brows from the way they were furrowed deep with worry. Akaashi was no longer emitting the calmness he carried before, eyes not looking away from the block at the far right. He looked outraged and from the sulking hunch of Bokuto’s shoulders it was clear he was getting his ass handed to him. Daichi cringed at the sight. It did not look pretty.

Until they kissed.

A brief, short moment come and gone within a second and Daichi stood there completely surprised. Bokuto appeared equally as shocked from his comical look with eyes as wide as dinner plates. He burst in to a delighted grin, lips moving as he mustve said something ridiculous from the way the
other turned a deep shade of red.

Ahh. Daichi smiled. Bokuto always did have a keen eye.

The officer leaned back, resting against his vehicle. He wondered what Suga was up to. Perhaps he should give him a text.

The slight nudge interrupted his thought and he glanced over to find Kuroo also watching his friend with a lazy smile. "Looks like the baby bird is finally leaving the nest." He wiped a fake tear, shooting Daichi a sad expression. "Guess it's just you and me now."

"Just you, actually." Daichi corrected but smiled nonetheless. There was distant patter and the two glanced over to find Bokuto teetering his way toward them. He wore the most ridiculous, sloppy grin, eyes shining as he shashayed over.

Kuroo let out a low whistle. “Show me a piece of that strut.” He let out an amused bark of laughter as the other officer paused to strike a dramatic pose. “Stop that or you’re going to win me over too.”

Bokuto let out a pleased chirp. He leaned over, draping his stronger arm over Daichi’s shoulder. “K-Cat, I’m on cloud nine right now. I just want to scream at the top of my lungs.”

Officer Daichi snorted, shaking his head. He wore an amused smile. “I guess I was proven wrong. Congratulations on the relationship.”

“You know, I never thought I’d ever hear you say the words ‘I was wrong’ in one sentence. This is the greatest day of my life.”

“Seems like a rather boring life then.”

Kuroo flashed a toothy grin. “Says the most domesticated dad in the world.” He nudged the officer lightly and pointed his chin to the right. “Speaking of domesticated, here comes your husband, Bokuto.”

His friend had whipped his head over so fast, an eager look on his face.

Akaashi approached the three with a stern expression. He nodded towards the police car situated a few metres away from the group. “Is he in there?”

Officer Daichi nodded politely at the photographer. “Yes but do not fret. He’s hand-cuffed to the seat so there’s no way he’s going to escape this t-”

“Could I have a moment with him?”

The officer blinked in surprise before glancing at the others. He crossed his arms. “Well, under normal circumstances that’s not allowed...”

Officer Kuroo shrugged. “I’ll give you three minutes; police discretion. Don’t ruffle him too much,” he joked. Akaashi nodded curtly before marching off to the car.

Officer Daichi hummed as he eyed the figure walking away. “I suppose I can see why you like him, Bokuto. He’s attractive, though in a monotonous kinda way.”

Bokuto snapped his head towards Daichi with an offended expression. “Back off will you? I found him first. I’ll tell Suga on you.” Kuroo snorted with laughter but was interrupted by a scream.

The three jolted in surprise and stared wide-eyed at the police car in the distance. It was difficult to
tell what was going on due to the darkness but it certainly didn’t sound pleasant. The screams seemed to last for an awful long time before it turned in to loud pleas of help.

“What the hell,” Daichi murmured, eyes wide in shock.

The three flinched as another wave of pained shrieks filled the night.

Kuroo faced the other two, expression full of worry. “Maybe three minutes was too long. We should probably stop hi-“

The muffled cry was suddenly cut off abruptly and there was a brief moment of silence. Akaashi returned looking as carefree as ever

More relaxed, mellow even

and the three officers eyed him with slight discomfort and a tinge of fear. The photographer coughed once before giving an affirmative nod and returning to the ambulance to fetch his blanket.

Officer Daichi leaned in slightly towards the other two. “Was he.. I could’ve sworn he was smiling..” he whispered.

Kuroo stared deadpanned, expression grave. “You know, I’m proud to say there are very few things that frighten me but I’m also not ashamed to admit I may have wet myself alittle when he looked at me. For a second there I thought he was going to come after us next.”

Officer Bokuto spun around to face them, expression filled with delight. “Bro, my boyfriend is so badass.”

Chapter End Notes

Oikawa's guide about Akaashi: (ch 4)
1. He likes competency
2. Be respectful of his profession
3. He has a dry sense of humour
4. Do NOT piss him off

Thank you for reading!
I still have about 3 more chapters to go to finish this all off and you are all so lovely for sticking through this entire time (ノω`。)

If you have any questions/comments let me know!
tumblr: http://leurauxe.tumblr.com
Oh my god.. I did it. I FINALLY did it. A new chapter has been uploaded
I'm sorry for the huge wait - I really did want to post this sooner but the chapter ended up being SO long I've had to split it in half
I'll be updating the next chapter within the week so you'll be able to enjoy it without waiting so long this time (゜ﾟ 子弟)
But finally, here is chapter 15

If there’s one thing in this world Kuroo can pride himself in, it’s being a good bro.

It’s a life skill; an artistry which requires years of dedication and practice to master. And Kuroo knows it like the back of his palm.

He could even dedicate an entire book about it. Hell, he should write an entire book about it. ‘The Ultimate Book for Bromosexuals’ it would be called. Probably end up a no. 1 bestseller too.

Because being a good bro is, by no means, an easy, forward task. The fundamental themes and mechanisms of being a good bro carry with it strict morals and ethics such as the way one goes about establishing and maintaining a healthy bond with their fellow bros, and how one should sacrifice their own state in order to assist their bro in need.

It’s all a very intricate network of relations, really.

Point being, you can’t simply become a ‘good bro’ overnight. It’s an entire language, each with its own complexities and systems. It’s some serious shit. But it’s okay, there’s no need to panic. Because when it comes to Kuroo, he’s got it all pat down.

“Woah there buddy, you don’t look so good. You doin’ alright? Tell me what’s wrong.”

“I-I.. I don’t think I can do this.”

“Hey, hey. It’s alright dude, just relax. It’ll be over before you even know it.”

“But I’m.. I’m kinda scared..”

“I know. I feel you. Here, you can hold my hand if you really want.”

“R-really? I don’t know.. you said the same thing that time we went on the triple twister ride at Disneyland, and you couldn’t feel your hand for two hours after. You remember that, don’t you?”

“Buddy, I felt my bones pop at least six times during that ride; it wasn’t exactly something I could forget. Seriously, you got a mean grip. But since I’m feelin’ generous tonight, s’all good. You have permission to squeeze these phalanges all you want.”
Kuroo was met with a pair of large and, quite frankly, beautifully golden eyes. Bokuto peered up at him, lips scrunched in an effort to stop himself from crying. He let out a small snivel, wiped his eyes then clamped his rough hand over Kuroo’s.

“Bro, you’re the best.” He blubbered.

Man, it’s times like this Kuroo’s heart swells and his skin starts to tingle. It’s kinda like an adrenaline rush. It flows through your body and the next moment you’re on cloud nine.

If there were such things as Bro Gods, they would probably be looking down at him with proud tears in their eyes, applauding him for his great virtue.

Not that that's the reason why he does this. It just feels awesome to know you’re needed. Kuroo flashed a toothy grin. “S’all good, B-Daw-“

“Bokuto-san, what’s wrong? Why are you crying? Does your arm hurt?”

Kuroo blinked as a gentle nudge pushed him aside and Akaashi popped in to view. His brows were slightly knitted in a terse expression as he examined Bokuto’s bandaged-up arm. “You’re not aching too badly, are you? The nurse said the pain killers were mild so they wouldn’t last for long. You poor thing.”

He placed a petite hand over Bokuto’s forehead to check his temperature, smoothing back a stray hair as he did so.

It was like seeing a child on Christmas Day - Bokuto lit up immediately, all sunshine smiles and girlish giggles, his previous worries dissipated all at once. “A-kaashi! No, no, don’t you worry your pretty, little head about me. I’m doing completely fine-“

“He’s going to the hospital to get proper stitches done.” Kuroo interrupted. He shot Akaashi a wide grin. “B-Dawgs is abit of a baby when it comes to needles near his skin so he’s having a small freak out. It’s all good, I got it-“

“Oh, Bokuto. There’s no need to cry over something like that.” Akaashi chided. “Here.”
He reached in, pulling out a dainty handkerchief from an inner pocket of his jacket.

Kuroo took a step back, allowing Akaashi space to step in. His hand was pried off from Bokuto’s, though Akaashi didn’t seem to notice, far too busy dabbing away at the other’s tears.

“Wow dude, I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone who packs spare hankies in their coat. What else you got in there, lip balm?” Kuroo teased - Only to receive a blank stare from the other.

Akaashi watched him with apathetic eyes. Even with his hair slightly disheveled and forming bags under his eyes, he looked far too cool and poised for Kuroo’s comfort. He resumed patting away at Bokuto’s chin where most of the tears had collected and the officer let out a sheepish cough.

Well, that was awkward.

Bokuto, on the other hand, looked more than delighted to be at the center of his attention. “Akaashi! You don’t have to do that!” he squealed, the giddiness in his voice hardly refrained. He closed his eyes, leaning in to his touch. “You’re so caring! You’re the best.”

Kuroo reeled his head back, double chin and all. What did he just say? Akaashi was the best? It was like a straight-up slap to his face. “Woah, woah, hold up. You just told me I was the best, B-Dawgs.” He mocked in an exaggerated gasp.
Bokuto opened his eyes, nodding eagerly. “Well you are. But Akaashi is also the best too!” Before he could elaborate, they were interrupted by another.

“Are you alright, Bokuto?”

“Wazzy!” Bokuto sat up, arms raised in a small cheer. “Here’s the main man! The star of the show! The quarterback of our football team!”

Iwaizumi looked thoroughly drained but he forced a smile. “Hardly a quarterback. But good job, you two. Really made me proud tonight.”

“Oh, stop it. You’re making me blush.” Kuroo waved him off with a lazy grin. “Where’s the Peacock?”

“He’s been taken first to the hospital. Passed out almost immediately, but the medical staff confirmed he’s in a stable condition so that’s a relief.”

“Ooft, that guy’s like a bad omen, attracting trouble wherever he goes. What sucky luck.” Kuroo nodded over at Bokuto. “He needs to go to the hospital aswell to get some stitchwork done on his arm.”

“Is the cut very deep?” The wrinkle between Iwaizumi’s brows deepened. “Yaku and I will be escorting the target back to more secure grounds. We can meet you two there later. Bokuto, take the ambulance to the hospital. Kuroo, keep an eye on him too. Don’t touch anything in the ambulance. I don’t want a repeat of what happened last time.”

Kuroo nodded. “Eesh, that was bad. I mean, I can’t say I can promise you anything but I’ll try.” He took a step forward, arms reached out to pull himself in to the side bench of the ambulance.

“How about I go with Bokuto instead?”

Kuroo glanced over to his left, hands hovering over the metal handlebar. “Eh?”

Akaashi stood beside Bokuto, a tentative hand placed on the other’s shoulder. He tilted his head lightly to the left. “If that’s alright with you.”

Iwaizumi blinked. Then nodded, carrying a weary smile on his face as though Akaashi was the savior of all his problems. “Well it would be a safer decision for me if you did. I’d really appreciate it, thanks.”

Kuroo watched, lazy eyes assessing the scene before him. “I could come too if you want. Keep him company on the ride there.”

Akaashi shook his head before he even finished his sentence. “No, that’s alright. Besides, you’ve brought your car over. It would be best if you could drive separately instead.”

“Akaashi’s right,” Kuroo peered over to find Daichi shooting the photographer a look of approval. “Three’s going to be a crowd in the ambulance. Kuroo, you should just drive in your own car.”

What is this, anti-Kuroo club? The officer frowned, then looked over at Bokuto. “Well, B-Dawgs?” he prompted, lips tugging in to a smile. “You sure you’re gonna be able to survive without m-“

“Yeah, actually that’s a good idea. Akaashi stay! Please. For support. Because, y’know, he’s my boyfriend and everything so,” Bokuto added, pointedly looking at everyone’s expressions with a delighted grin. He pouted when he found Iwaizumi rolling his eyes.
“Well, I guess that’s that then,” Daichi nodded at Akaashi. “Thank you, by the way. God knows I
needed someone to finally tame one of these two kooks.”

Akaashi shrugged, glancing over at Bokuto. “It’s the least I could do.”

“Well, that settles that then,” Iwaizumi sighed. “I’m going to have to make a short phonecall to
Ushijima first. See you all in a short bit.” He trotted off, calling over his shoulder. “Daichi, keep me
updated.”

“Well, that settles that then,” Iwaizumi sighed. “I’m going to have to make a short phonecall to
Ushijima first. See you all in a short bit.” He trotted off, calling over his shoulder. “Daichi, keep me
updated.”

“Will do.”

The group began to disperse and Kuroo was left standing alone, mind still blank but also thoroughly
confused.

“Well, isn’t that a dilemma.”

He blinked up to find Daichi grinning over at him. “What do you mean?

The officer shrugged. “Nothing, just wondering what’s going to happen now that there’s another
addition to the dynamic duo.”

Strangely for once, Kuroo had nothing to say.

Daichi’s smile began to dissipate and he reached up to squeeze his shoulder. “I’m just joking, relax.
You did well today, good job.” He swung a playful punch at his chest and trotted past.

“I’ll meet you at the hospital, Kuroo.”

“Yeah, thanks Dadchi. See you later.” He murmured noncommittedly.

Another addition to the duo. Well. He’d never considered it in that way before. A strange feeling
stirred within his gut and Kuroo frowned.

That wasn’t covered in his Book of Bromosexuals.

∞

“Hey, Bokuto. It’s me, Kuroo. Again. I just got to the hospital so if you could give me a call back
and let me know which room you’re in, I’d appreciate that. Thanks. It’s Kuroo, by the way. K-Cat.
In case you forgot. Okay, talk to you soon.”

Kuroo snapped his phone shut, squeezing it briefly. He rubbed his eyes and sighed deeply.

It wasn’t like Bokuto ever answered his phone anyway. Majority of the time, it was lost, forgotten
elsewhere (usually still in his back pocket). Or if he did manage to get his message, he was probably
taking his time typing a ridiculously long text filled with excessive emojis and ridiculously long
acronyms.Kuroo snorted at the thought.

Well, technically, he could still call Daichi instead, but he didn’t want to give the other the
satisfaction. His words from earlier still rang in his ear.

Whatever, he didn’t care. Right now he just felt exhausted. He could easily just lie on a lounge couch
nearby and fall asleep right now.
Kuroo scratched the back of his head, eyes shifting left to right. The hospital was deserted, not even a single nurse walking by. He’d passed the reception earlier but didn’t bother asking for directions. She didn’t exactly look to be in the right state of mind to be working, but it was probably the fact that it was 3am. The sympathies of having to work midnight shifts were something Kuroo could most definitely relate to.

The officer rolled his head back, rocking it side to side. “Well,” he said aloud. “I guess a late night stroll isn’t so bad.”

He’ll find them eventually, or they’ll give him a call. No biggie.

He swung his arms casually, hands meeting in a soft clap as he cruised down the cream-white corridors. His shoes padded against the terrazzo floors and he hummed to a soft tune.

There was the subtle hint of disinfectants lingering in the air and he grimaced lightly. He never understood why no one ever complained about the smell of hospitals. It wouldn’t hurt to throw a few air fresheners around or something to kill off that toxic scent.

Then again, this place was huge – it would take at least a thousand to mask that awful smell.

Not to mention there’s no staff who seem to work here either. Kuroo jutted his lower lip in thought.

Where was everyone? What if, excluding the receptionist, he was the only one in this hospital? If something were to happen to him, no one would even be around to notice.

Kuroo paused, hesitating slightly in his step.

Damn it, why is it always when it’s dark and you’re alone that your brain thinks it’s a good idea to start throwing random, scary thoughts in to your mind?

He shook his head. No. Nope, nope, nope.

He sure as hell wasn’t going to be scared-

What was that?

Kuroo spun around, eyes darting about. The corridor was empty, the sterile slab of whiteness making his eyes sting slightly. He let out a nervous chuckle and rubbed the back of his neck.

Maybe he should find the others afterall. Kuroo quickened his pace, head bowed down as he concentrated on the ground ahead.

It was oddly quiet though. Like, eerily so. Almost like he were placed in a horror movie.

Kuroo blinked at the thought. Actually, yeah, it kinda did feel like he were in an abandoned hospital - most definitely horror movie material.

These kinds of films always start with a group, until one falls astray and then the rest follow, each isolated and lost within unknown grounds. A killer would target the group, because I mean, come on. Every horror movie needs a killer. They’ll come up with individualised ways of disposing the victims, one by one. The side characters are always the first to go though, considering the fact that they’re usually the ones tottling about with a ridiculously oblivious mind. It would be an easy, instant
Wait a second.

Kuroo stopped in his track. He glanced over his shoulder, the steady heartbeat throbbing in his ear.

Where had he come from? Did he take a left, then a left? Or was it a right?

He paused, mind ticking away before-

Kuroo inhaled sharply, before he covered his own mouth with his hand. “Oh my god.” He whispered under his breath.

_He_ was the side character.

Wandering around defenseless, with no sense of direction - He was practically a murder waiting to happen.

_’I knew it.’_ He inwardly cursed. _’It’s always the hot ones that are first to go.’_

There was that sound again.

Kuroo jumped on the spot, heartbeat now racing. What _was_ that? It almost sounded like..<scampering?_ But from who? Where was it coming from? All he could hear was his jolty heartbeat and soft breaths.

_'Come on, Tetsurou.’_ Kuroo berated himself. _’This isn’t some horror movie, get a grip.’_

The soft patter grew to the more prominent sound of footsteps and Kuroo immediately panicked. Okay, scratch that. This was real. Oh god, he was living a real-life horror experience. Who is it? Why would anyone be wandering around the hallways of a hospital at 3am? That in itself was suspicious enough.

The sound of footsteps suddenly sped up, now a light trot. “Oh _crap,_” Kuroo hissed. He spun around, shifting on the spot. _Where to hide, where to hide?!_ Why were hospitals always so _bare?!_ There was no way anyone could survive in a place like this.

He stumbled forward, skidding to a halt, then running back. The corridor was hollowed out, if not for a lonesome pot plant which stood, slightly withered, to his right. That would have to do.

He bumbled over, doing his best not to fall because frankly, the number of characters that are caught because they trip over their own feet is just embarrassing. He threw himself behind the mottled plant, tucking his knees in together as he struggled to soften his breathing.

His senses were alight, and he watched with wide eyes down the end of the hallway, listening, waiting.

In all sense though, it was probably just a nurse or another staff member. Kuroo’s mind whirled in thought, throwing speculations here and there. Even if it were a nurse, why skulk around at a time like this..<i>if not to look to _victims_?_</i>

“Oh damn,” Kuroo whispered to himself. A killer nurse on the loose. It would be so cliché, it could possibly be brilliant. Someone who sneaks in between rooms to finish off her patients, moving
around at early hours of the night when there were less distractions and witnesses.

Actually, that sounds like a pretty good movie plot. He’s going to have to share that with Bokuto later-

Kuroo’s breath stuttered, heart caught up in his throat. There stood the silhouette of a person in the far end of the hallway.

*Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god, oh my g-*

They waited for a brief moment, before they skulked over, closer toward him.

*No, no, don’t, nope, no, nO-*

Wait. Kuroo stared, dumbfounded at the sight before. Was that…? He leaned in, face still hidden amongst the leaves to get a closer look.

His lips parted in disbelief. Oh my god. That was no killer. That was-

“You!” Kuroo leapt out from behind the potted plant. He pointed over at the other. “What are you doing here?!”

∞

Kenma isn’t the type to overreact or exaggerate his motions. He prefers to stay calm and collected, reserved and introverted.

But when you get jumped at by a manic-looking man with unkempt hair, who points over at you with a crazed look in his eyes, it’s hard to contain oneself.

Kenma let out a choked squeak, stumbling back like a clumsy kitten. He juggled with his phone which bounced from between his hands before he finally caught it.

“Oh crud, my bad, my bad. I didn’t mean to scare you.”

The officer was already going at him, steadying him to his feet and brushing off the invisible dust from Kenma’s shoulders like he had no regard for personal space.

“I’m fine, I’m- please stop touching me.” Kenma managed, heart still racing from his phone’s near-death experience. “I’ve had enough experiences with the police tonight.”

Kuroo held his hands up in defence. “Sorry, sorry. I didn’t mean to- sorry.” He leaned over him, casting a shadow across his face.

“What are you doing here?” he asked again, staring expectantly. “You remember me, right? We met at your office, awhile back.” He took a step forward, but still hiding behind the perishing plant.

Kenma took a step back, tucking his mobile in to his pocket for good measures. He didn’t know who was more shocked by the other’s appearance, but he certainly was still stunned.
The officer was watching him, and up this close, Kenma could see his eyes were tinged with redness. He loomed over him, hands subconsciously stroking the leaves of the plant.

God, he certainly was frightening looking. And tall.

Kageyama was right, this officer had a mean look on him. He still had the unnerving stare and Kenma couldn’t help but question:

“Why were you lurking behind a pot plant?”

“Huh? Lurking?” Kuroo scrunched his nose in slight distaste. His glanced down, then let go of the plant immediately.

“Well, I wouldn’t say lurking persay, but rather staying guarded.” His eyes shifted left to right before they peered down at him seriously. “You can never be too careful, y’know? There’s a lot of shifty people around, even in hospitals.”

Kenma stared. “Yes, I can imagine so.”

“What are you doing here?”

He hesitated slightly, contemplating whether he should tell him or not. “I’m.. running away.”

“Running away? From who?” Kuroo sucked in a sharp breath. “Don’t tell me. You’re a side character too?”

“A what?”

“Nothing, nothing. It was just a little thing I- nevermind.” He grew serious, shooting the other a stern gaze. “But why are you running away? Is someone bothering you?”

“He dragged me over here from the station. All I wanted to do was report the information then go home. But here I am, at-“ Kenma checked his phone with a huff. “3:14am, tired, wanting to go home but I can’t because I’m completely lost in this empty hospital which I’ve been roaming around for at least fifteen minutes with on and off wifi- are you laughing at me?” He looked up at the other in slight irritation.

“Hmm? No, no. Of course not.” Kuroo sucked his lips in, not quite able to suppress his grin. “It’s just kinda strange meeting you in a place like this, of all times too. You didn’t talk nearly as much the first time we met too.”

Kenma shut his mouth immediately, feeling his cheeks grow warm. “It’s.. been a long day.” He finished with a fed-up look.

“Amen, brother. The things I’d for a good sleep right now.” Kuroo glanced up to check his surroundings. Then leaned in close to the other. “Don’t worry,” he whispered. “I’m kinda lost too. My friend is meant to be getting stitches and I’m here for moral support but I’ve kinda lost my way. We should stick together though. It’ll be much easier than working as a one man band, trust me.”

Kenma blinked owlishly. It almost looked like he wanted to refuse, but he eventually nodded. “Alright.”

He glanced up, and Kuroo was met with golden, honey drenched eyes framed by delicate lashes. Man, not gonna lie, he’s dreamed about these eyes. They look like they’re photoshopped for god sakes, like he’s looking directly in to a freakin’ pair of stars. Nothing like the dull coal pebbles Kuroo was so ungraciously blessed with.
The pair of eyes watched him for a brief moment then darted.

“Please stop looking at me,” Kenma mustered, shoulders hunched meekly. Kuroo burst in to an excited grin but looked away regardless.

The two dawdled down the corridors, neither speaking. It didn’t even matter which direction they went considering they honestly had no clue where the hell they were. They ventured up and down the hallways, occasionally having to backtrack whenever they hit a dead end. They were probably even walking in the same loop. But honestly, Kuroo didn’t even care. Not when he was so conscious of how close they were, walking side-by-side.

He glanced over at the other for the umpteenth time. Kenma was occupied on his phone, tapping on the keys at breakneck speed. Man, he made it look like it look so easy too.
The officer chewed his inside cheek, mind racing for things to say.

“So..” he began. “How's work? You're a website designer, was it?”

“Technical media producer. And work is the usual.”

The officer waited for the other to ask him back but was met with more silence.

“Rad. That’s uh, rad.” He nodded to himself. But inwardly shriveling with humiliation. ‘Rad?’ Since when did he ever say ‘rad’? God, how old was he?

“You're name is Kuroo, right?”

The officer paused, blinking over at the other in surprise. He grinned. “Woah, now. You’re not secretly stalking me, are you? How did you-“

“Your letters. Kageyama said it was you.” Kenma paused, fingers hovering over the keys. He looked contemplative for a brief moment, then glanced up, looking directly at him.

Suddenly Kuroo was hit with a wave of jittery nerves. He smiled widely, running a hand through his unruly hair. “Okay, you got me. I wrote them.”

Kenma stared blankly and he fought the urge to squirm. He coughed. “So.. what.. uh, what did you think?”

“They.. were interesting. But.. you weren’t.. serious about those, were you?”

Kuroo stopped in his tracks. He faced the other, looking thoroughly astounded. “Serious?” he repeated. “Of course I was being dead serious! I wouldn’t have written it if I didn’t think so. Why? Did it offend you?”

Kenma pouted lightly in contemplation and the officer suppressed the urge to poke the soft lips. “Well… no. I didn’t think they were something you’d do, that’s all.”

He paused, as though rethinking his response. His shoulders hunched in a mousy manner. “But you should probably stop sending those. You sent the ladies in the office in a frenzy. Especially Yachi. She looks like she’s about to burst in to tears everytime she hears the elevator doors open. She’s waiting for the day you walk through them, I suppose.”
Kuroo blinked in surprise. He puffed his chest out, feeling awfully pleased. “I didn’t know they would circulate around the office like that. I didn’t expect it to stir so much trouble. Sorry you had to deal with all that,” he flashed Kenma an apologetic smile.

The other stopped, and frowned in slight confusion. “It’s okay, I guess,” he replied slowly. “But you should really apologise to Ya-“ Kenma let out a sudden yelp as he was lifted right off the ground, shooting at least a good metre and half up and almost scraping his head against the ceiling.

“Kenma, there you are! I was looking all over for you!”

“What on earth-“ Kuroo twisted his head to find Lev holding the other up, his hands tucked in the crooks of Kenma’s armpits. “What the- Lev, what the hell are you doing here?”

“Oh, Kuroo!” Lev beamed, practically radiating with delight. “So this is where the party is at!” He held Kenma suspended up in the air, seemingly oblivious of the way the other protested and tried to wriggle out of his grip. “Hey, check this out. This remind you of anything?”

“Lev, put him down!”

“It’s Lion King. You know, at the start of the movie when they hold the cub and- don’t worry, that was a tough one anyway.” Lev plopped Kenma back on the ground, vivid-green eyes peering over Kuroo’s shoulder. “Where’s everyone else?”

“What are you doing here?” Kuroo demanded. “Why aren’t you at the station?”

“Yaku said he was here with the office gang! And I felt so lonely by myself.” Lev wilted like a flower being sprung back up again. “So I wanted to join you guys!”

“So, what, you just left the office unoccupied? And what are you going to do when Dadchi or Wazzy catch you here? You know they’re going to lecture you till your ears bleed.”

“Ah, yes I knew you’d say that. Which is why he is going to be my saving grace.”

Kuroo stared at Kenma who looked considerably shaken. He squinted back up at Lev. “What are you talking about?”

“He came in to the station earlier claiming his friend reported Peac- Oikawa’s kidnapping. He even helped identify his location.” Lev gushed, eyes twinkling with a smugness. “Kenma kept me company after Daichi ran off. We bonded together, and now we’re practically best buddies.”

“No, we’re not.”

“Yes we-“

“Wait, you?” Kuroo repeated, still in disbelief. “You were the one who find Oikawa’s location? How?”

Kenma shrugged, headed tilted down to refocus on his mobile. “I tapped his mobile location. It sends out a direct signal which allows me to pinpoint the rough whereabouts of its location. A colleague called up, worried about Oikawa so I thought I could help.” His voice died down, as though he was self-conscious.

Kuroo felt his stomach flip. Cute and a genius. “I didn’t know you could do that with your mobile.”

“Anyone can do it. Well, actually, you can’t. Not with that phone,” Kenma’s lip twitched as he
stared pointedly at brick-shaped outline in Kuroo’s left pocket.

Kuroo let out a snort and chuckled in amusement. He pointed at the other. “Snarky. You’re real snarky. I like that.”

“How about my phone? Will it work on mine?” Lev thrust his mobile in Kenma’s face. “Is it like an app? If I search for Yaku’s number, will it show up like a GPS?”

“Jees Lev, give the poor guy some space, will ya? You got like, zero chill tonight.”

“It’s okay. I suppose we’ll need him to get out of here?” Kenma looked over at Lev, then to Kuroo. “I mean, three minds are better than two. We could travel as a team.”

Kuroo watched him for several moments, then turned to the other officer. “Hey Lev, I met Yaku abit earlier. Like, five minutes ago.”

Lev’s eyes lit up, and he brushed his fringe to the side. “Where? Where is he? He said he’d message me when he got here.”

“Probably forgot. He did look pretty knackered. But he went that way.” Kuroo pointed down the left corridor. “You literally just have to follow this hallway, then go right.”

“Oh, okay.” Lev stretched his long arms, shooting the other a pleased grin. “Maybe I’ll go surprise him.”

“Oh yeah, I’m sure he’s going to love it.” Kuroo grinned. He leaned down, slapping Lev’s behind. “Come on then spring bean, chop, chop! Don’t want to keep him waiting, now do we?”

“You’re right, you’re right. I can tell he is going to freak out!”

“Oh yeah, I don’t doubt that. We’ll wait here and you go get him, alright? Now, off you go.”

“Sure thing. Don’t go anywhere! I’ll be right back guys.”

Lev offered a salute, before he bounded down the corridor with the occasional “down then right, down then right, down…” eventually echoing in to a subdued silence.

Kuroo leaned back, arms crossed and a proud smile plastered across his face. From the corner of his eye he could see Kenma watching him carefully. “Say what you want, but seeing him run off like that makes me kinda understand what it feels like to be a father.”

“You sent him off the wrong direction, didn’t you?”

“Don’t act like you wouldn’t have either. I wonder how long it’ll take for him to catch up. One time he needed to go pee, so as a joke we sent him off to the girls bathrooms instead. We didn’t see him for at least two hours. He has absolute zero sense of direction; trust me, I did us a favour.”

“You’re sort of horrible.”

Kuroo grinned down at Kenma, unabashed. “Yeah, I am.”

He leaned over, bumping his shoulders against the other. “Sorry about earlier though. I’d gush about how Lev isn’t usually like that but we both know that’d be a lie.”

Kenma shrugged. “It’s okay. I figured it was an officer thing.”

Kuroo cocked his head to the side. “Oh? And what’s that meant to mean?”
“I’ve encountered a few strange people these past few weeks,” Kenma glanced up at him, and Kuroo could’ve sworn there was a mischievous glint in those golden, feline eyes. “And they all happened to sport the same uniform as yourself.”

“Absolute coincidence.” Kuroo rebutted, a smile tugging on his lips. “I’m not like them if that’s what you’re insinuating.”

“You write letters. I didn’t know they still existed in the twenty-first century.”

“Okay, so I’m an old soul, sue me. In fact, as a means of apology,” Kuroo mock-bowed with rolling hand gestures. “Please allow thyself to bestow thou with tokens of appreciation for handling the Lev beast with such nobility.”

“Sorry?”

“Let me treat you.”

Before Kenma could protest, Kuroo slung an arm over his shoulder, dragging him along down the opposite end of the hospital hallway.

∞

“And finally, here, ladies and gentlemen, we have Kuroo’s most famous contraption! It is a high-tech machine, multifunction keys and features with a sleek design—”

“Are you honestly telling me you led me around for twenty minutes to look for a vending machine? Clearly Lev isn’t the only one with a terrible sense of bearings.”

“Shh,” Kuroo hushed the other with an index finger closed over his lips. He wore an amused expression. “You’re ruining the grand opening of the almighty Kuroo 2000.” He analysed the rows of confectionaries. “Which one do you want?”

“It’s fine, you really don’t have to—”

“I want to,” Kuroo answered immediately. ”Besides, a little sugar will help wake you up.” He considered the other from over his shoulder. “C’mon, let me pamper you with these—” he gestured up and down the rows. “gourmet, special-edition collections.”

Kenma couldn’t help it. He cracked a small smile. “E3, please.”

“Ahh, interesting choice! One E3 coming right up!” Kuroo slotted in a few silver coins from his pocket, watching as the snack edged closer to the edge and dropped with a low thump!

“Here.”

Kenma accepted the apple candies with a soft thanks. “Are you getting something?”

“Nahh, I’m not really in the mood for anything. Wait, here let me get that for you.” Kuroo pinched the corner of the bag and tore a strip down the edge. He handed it back.

“You sure like to take care of people.”

“It’s what I do best.” Kuroo grinned widely. “So, what do you want to do now?”
Kenma paused, lips pinched slightly as he sucked on the candy. He looked slightly confused. “Are you staying.. with me?”

“Well.. yeah? Unless you don’t want me to.” Kuroo shrugged. “Not like I got anything else to do anyway.”

“What about your friend?”

Kuroo paused at that. “Nah, it’s fine. He doesn’t need me anyway.” He leaned against the vending machine.

Kenma stared at him, not for long but long enough to make the officer uncomfortable. He looked down at the packet of candies in his hand, then back up. “What makes you say that?” he asked.

“Well, I mean, he’s with his boyfriend right now.” Kuroo paused. “Huh. Boyfriend. Bokuto has a boyfriend.. Sounds kinda strange saying it aloud.”

He inspected the rows of chocolates. There were a fair range of chocolates here, some he hadn’t even heard of. Not that he’d buy them – he wasn’t really a fan of chocolate, anyway.

“Does that bother you?”

“Hm?” It took a moment for Kuroo to backtrack in their conversation. “Oh, no. Of course not. I’m happy for my bro.” Kuroo’s eyes darted through the bright coloured packets of confectionaries. “I mean, we’re still best friends so.”

“It means you’ll have less time to hang out with him.”

Kuroo stopped. He turned to the other, smiling widely. “Actually, you know what? I think I will grab something to eat. What do you reckon’s a good one?”

Kenma studied him, golden eyes assessing his face before looking back at the vending machine. He pointed at the top left. “That one is nice.”

“You sure like your apple candies.”

“They’re sour too.”

“Hmm,” Kuroo rubbed his chin in contemplation. “I’m more of a savoury over sweet kinda guy so.”

“You don’t have to pick tha-“

“Alright, I’ll get it.” The officer rummaged through his back pocket for spare coins. He flashed the other a smile as he popped the coins in. “I trust your judgment.”

Neither spoke as the tinkling sounds of coins and the heavy rattling of the vending machine filled their silence. Kuroo stuck his hand in the dispenser, catching the bag before it hit the inside. “Boo yah. Did you see that? That takes skills.”

“I’m sure it does.” Kenma looked reluctant, a tentative look in his eyes. He tucked the bag of candies in his pocket, making sure they didn’t fall out.

Kuroo beamed before he examined the front label of the candy wrapper. ‘SOUR MOUTH’. He hadn’t even opened it yet but he already kinda regretted it.

“I have a friend.”
Kuroo glanced up over at the other.

Kenma wasn't looking at him, far too occupied unwrapping his next lolly. "For the sake of this conversation, I'll call him..." He paused, lower lip jutted out in what Kuroo had to consider a very cute pout. "Sun. I'll call him Sun."

"Sun is.. a nice guy. Which is why he's got so many friends. He's friendly, very boisterous, the kind of person who can easily mingle in to a crowd."

"However.." Kenma paused, his delicate lashes quivering lightly from Kuroo's angle. "Despite his.. popularity, he still comes to hang with me. He likes to tell me what's happening in the office. It's usually irrelevant but it's nice."

"Even though he's got other friends he still makes time for me."

Kenma looked over at him, with a knowing look in his eyes. It wasn’t sympathetic by any means, nor consoling. He wasn’t reaching over, but the weight in his eyes kept the other paralysed in his spot. He simply regarded him with an air of.. understanding.

Kuroo opened his mouth, then closed it. He dropped his head, shaking it as he chuckled. "Wow." He peered up, lips curled in a soft smile. "You're good. You got me real good."

Kenma snorted softly. He rummaged his pocket for another candy. "I didn’t get you anything."

There was a brief moment of silence which hung between the two. Though, this time it carried a lighter mood - a sense of ease.

"Kenma."

"Hm?" Kuroo glanced over at the other. "What was that?"

His friend was avoiding his gaze, eyes darting around as though he couldn’t decide what to focus on. "My, uh, name. It's my name. Kenma. Incase you were wondering."

Kuroo blinked. "Oh."

Then there was that rush of warmth which grew in his chest and for some peculiar reason, he found himself pleasantly giddy. His lips tugged in to an amused smile. "Nice to finally know your name, Kenma."

This had to be the most bizarre encounter he’d ever experienced. Kuroo tore his wrapped open and took a bite of the candy. Kenma was right, it was sour but it didn't take long before it melted off in to a caramelised apple-y sweetness.

Hm. Not bad. Kuroo rolled the sweet treat over with his tongue, savouring the sugary flavours.

Kenma had resumed tapping away on his phone. The laminated light made his eyes glow and Kuroo observed the way he blinked hard like his eyes were tired.

It was strange - Almost like a weird, growing addiction, simply observing the other. He didn’t know what it was. It felt like his eyes were instinctively drifting back over to him every few seconds.

Kuroo straightened himself, leaning off the vending machine. He took a step in and bowed over until they were face to face. Kenma paused, thumb pressed over the screen and he looked up in question. If he was still bothered by the lack of personal space, he definitely did well hiding it.

"Hey, Kenma." Kuroo called nonchalantly.
"What?"
"Those letters I sent. I wasn't joking about those."

Kenma stared blankly. "Kuroo, that's not very n-

"Kuroo, there you are."
The officer glanced, staring with raised brows at the sight of Akaashi hurrying over toward him. He looked thoroughly worn out with his bedraggled hair and droopy eyes.

"Where have you been? I’ve been looking everywhere for you. What took you so lon- Kenma?"
Akaashi paused mid-way, blinking over at him in surprise.

"Hello." Kenma bowed his head at an awkward angle and it was only then Kuroo realised he was still hovering right in front of the other’s face. He relented a fraction, but the subtlety did not go amiss.

Akaashi’s eyes had sharpened significantly, darting back and forth, from Kenma to Kuroo still towering over him. “I’m sorry. Am I.. interrupting something?” he asked with a suspicious undertone.

“Nope, not at all.” Kuroo pulled off and scratched the back of his head. “Just chillin’ like a villain.” He grinned widely at the other, though he couldn’t help but feel slightly awkward.

“Ahuh.” Akaashi eyeballed him, carefully. “Like a villain.”

“Where is Oikawa?” Kenma suddenly questioned, carrying a slight lisp from the lolly in his mouth.

“He’s here in the hospital. He’s doing fine though,” Akaashi quickly added after noticing Kenma’s alarmed face. “He’d been through a rough tumble but he’s okay. Officer Iwaizumi is taking care of him.”

Kuroo snickered lightly. “I always pinned him as a hopeless romantic. Totally called it.” He shut up when Akaashi shot him a strange look.

The photographer arched an eyebrow. “And how.. do you two know each other?”

“Oh, Kenma and I go way back,” Kuroo waved him off. “We share a deep history. A connection.”

Akaashi frowned. He glanced over at Kenma unwrapping another sweet.

“He bought me this,” Kenma explained.

“Ah.” Akaashi tilted his head to the side as he eyed Kuroo up and down. “I see.”

“You feeling peckish too? Join the club.”

“No, it’s not for me. It’s for Bokuto,” Akaashi sighed. He rummaged through his jacket for spare coins. “He’s apparently craving chocolates, at this time of night. He’s so odd.”

“Chocolate?”

“He keeps repeating how he needs Kit Kats,” Akaashi’s brows furrowed slightly. “Just to clarify, is
this a normal thing he asks for? He’s still slightly wired up about the stitches so I’m hoping this’ll calm him down.”
The photographer moved to place a silver coin in the slot when he was stopped. Akaashi glanced over in question.

Kuroo held his hand back, though he had a distant look in his eyes. “No, not Kit Kat,” Kuroo said lowly. “He doesn’t need Kit Kats, Akaashi.”

He ran a hand through his hair, sharp eyes hardened with unwavering intent. “No. He needs K-Cat.”

Akaashi stared. “I don’t understand.”

“Put that quarter back in your pocket; you won’t be needing it. This is the job for a bro. A true bro.”

Kuroo’s eyes glinted. “A *bromosexual.*”

Akaashi shot Kenma a helpless look and Kenma shrugged back. "It's an officer thing," he justified.
He felt a gentle brush of fingers, coursing through his hair.. before he was yanked in to a rough headlock.

Kuroo held him close, dragging him with him as he marched down the hallway. “You know what? Just for that comment, you're going to have to come join me now.”

“Mmf.. *mmrph!*”

“Oh, woops. Sorry, I tend to underestimate the size of these guns.”

Kenma sucked in a huge breath the moment he was released. “Do you normally try to suffocate the people you meet?”

Kuroo let out an amused snort. He flashed the other a teasing grin. “Just you.”
And with that, he wrapped one arm across his back ushering him forward. “C’mon then, chop chop. My homie’s *life* is at stake here. We need to hurry. Akaashi, you lead the way.” He added, peering over him shoulder to shoot the other a teasing grin. “Can’t have the newest member of the posse lagging behind. Let’s go!”

Kenma half-heartedly squirmed against Kuroo's grip. "I just want to go home."

"I'll give you the rest of my candy bar if you stay by my side."

"That's hardly a compensation."

The arm around his waist tightened for a brief second. "I'm glad you could see eye to eye."

Kenma grumbled, but begrudgingly allowed himself to be hauled around as Akaashi led the way.

It had only later occurred to Kenma that it was within that moment, he'd made a new friend.

Chapter End Notes
A big thank you to all you wonderful readers and to those who have commented here and/or left lots of encouraging messages on my tumblr
I really hope you enjoyed this even though there wasn't much humour in this chapter
The next chapter will be up shortly! ٩(๑^•^๑)۶
tumblr: http://leurauxe.tumblr.com
If asked, Kenma would have to say video games are what keeps him going.

It's almost like a thrill, a renewed excitement each time he clicks a new game in to his console and the light flashes on his screen. There is nothing he fancies more than to crawl in to his nest of blankets after a long day of work, and play some video games till at least 5am.

In fact, he was eager to finish off his Haikyuu Quest game tonight – he’d even saved the final level so he could enjoy it properly. He left his console on his bedside table, charged and ready to go the moment he came home and immediately switched in to his pajamas. It was going to be awesome.

Walking down the hospital corridors at 3am with a colleague and a bizarre, newly-acquainted officer was not how he’d imagined he’d spend his night.

"Kuroo, I'm tired."

"We're almost there, right Akaashi? We're literally just going to stop by, help my friend get through his traumatic experience of stitches, then I'll drop you off home."

"Or I can just catch a cab. It'll be faster and easier for me too."

"Ah, yes you're right. However, will I charge you for the ride home? No. Will I try and take you through the longest route in order to mooch off some extra bucks? Never. Will I have better taste in car music to liven up the ride? Absolutely. I mean, if you compare the facts, it kinda seems like a no brainer to me."

Kenma huffed in indignation and defeat. Guess he was going to have to save the game for another night.

“We’re here.” Akaashi affirmed, sounding just as tired and fed-up with the entire ordeal.

Kenma peered up at the door which showed a bold [305]. The last thing he wanted to do tonight was greet a group of strangers who were probably equally as odd as the officer beside him.

“Maybe you should go in first,” he suggested in a low murmur. “I’ll wait out he-eeek!” The light squeeze on his side made him jump, and he glared over at the other.
Kuroo cracked a smile. “Oh come on, don’t be like that. You got me here. You’ll be fine.”
He was already reaching for the door knob. “They’re a nice bunch. You’re going to love them-“

They both jumped at the high-pitched scream which came from inside.

Akaashi let out a sigh. “I hope you can calm him down because he’s been a rollercoaster of emotions since he’s gotten here.”

Kuroo waved him off. “No, no, that’s just him in general. He’s a total nutcase, I love it.”
He turned to Kenma once more, a playful grin on his face. “Just stick close to me and you’ll be fine.”

Kenma fought back a sulk. He just wanted to go home.

Before he could make another excuse, Kuroo slammed the door, flinging his arm out in an overly dramatic gesture. “Voilà! Never fear, Kuroo is- woah-hoho. Come on now fellas, where was my invitation?”

Kenma peered in, confronted by the sight of two officers trying to pin another down on to the hospital bed. Whilst the former looked thoroughly exhausted, the latter looked as sprightly as ever, his shocking white-grey hair a complete mess as he writhed about.

“K-Cat!” the man wailed, golden eyes growing watery. “Where have you been?! I was left outnumbered!”

Kuroo shuffled his way in, nudging Kenma forward as he did so. “Sorry it took so long buddy, I was hiding from a killer nurse. Long story. Tell you later. Don’t cry, I’m here now, aren’t I?”

“I can’t do this anymore! I don’t want to get stitches.”

“You need to bro. Don’t worry, it’ll be over in like, twenty minutes.”

“Twenty minutes?! They told me it would take ten! I can’t do twenty! I can’t!” Officer Bokuto began to struggle again, voice rising with panic.

“Kuroo, you’re meant to calm him, not send him in a frenzy! Yaku, grab his arms, I’ll hold down his legs- Damn it Bokuto, stay still!”

“I’m just being honest. Daichi, you’re the dad here, you control him.”

“I am not the da- ow! Stop kicking!” Officer Daichi did his best to keep him down, each hand struggling to pin down the bucking legs. “If you don’t keep still you’re in serious trouble Bokuto Koutarou-“

“Uh oh!” Kuroo jumped to the side, cowering behind Kenma. “Watch out! D-drizzle has already jumped to full name basis. Keep it up and he’s going to ground you for a week.”

“Do not call me D-drizzle-“

“K-Cat, help me! I’m scared!” Bokuto sobbed. His body was still wriggling under the strain. “I think- I think I might have even done a ‘number one’, I can’t tell-”

“Wh- eurgh!” Officer Daichi leapt off, fervently wiping his hands on his trousers. “Why wouldn’t you say that earlier, Bokuto?!?”

Kuroo squinted, examining the front of his friend’s trousers. “Hmm, nope you’re good.”
“Oh, that’s.. that’s good.. well.. not good considering I still have to get the stitches done. I don’t think I can go through with it, bro. They’re going to sew my flesh together! Oh god, just thinking about it-“

“It’s alright B-dawgs, just calm down first. Lie back and control your breathing. In then out. That’s it.”

Bokuto’s chest heaved as he panted in a ragged breath. “Okay, I’m breathing, I’m breathing.” His head flopped to one side, cheek mashed against the pillow. Golden eyes darted about before they made direct contact with Kenma.

Kenma flinched. He took an uncertain step back, skin crawling from the intensity of the other’s unnerving stare.

Bokuto’s eyes flickered above his head. “Who’s that, K-Cat? He a nurse?”

Kuroo frowned at that. “What? No. He’s Kenma. You know, the letter guy.”


“That’s for punching me in the face earlier,” Yaku smoothed back his hair, shooting him a filthy look.

“This is Kenma.” Akaashi interrupted. “He found Oikawa’s location.” He glanced over at Kenma briefly, then flicked back over toward the other. “He called the station. Saved Oikawa’s life.”

“Oh,” Bokuto panted. He grinned over at him, still nursing his sore arm. “So you’re the hero! You saved Peacock’s life!”

Kenma felt his face flush with uncomfortable warmth. “I’m.. not a hero.”

He felt a pair of warm hands clasp over his shoulders. “He’s so modest it’s adorable. And you need to learn to take credit. Hell yeah, you’re a hero! You saved someone. And a life is a life.” Kuroo paused in contemplation. “Even if that life belongs to a certain pompous man-diva.”

“Don’t say that.”

“Don’t even deny it, Akaashi. You know it’s true.”

“Even so-“

“I don’t know,” Daichi interrupted hastily before the conversation got any nastier. "I don't know if anyone’s said it already but thank you." It was clear he played the responsible role from the way he offered Kenma a reassuring smile and courteous bow. “Without you we wouldn’t have found Mr. Oikawa as quickly as we did, and who knows what could’ve happened.”

Kenma felt himself grow red and he slowly nodded. He was never good at receiving compliments.

Officer Daichi appeared unfazed by his awkward response. He jutted his lower lip in contemplation. “You know, with technical skills like that, we could use your help at the station.” He shot his hands up and flashed a reassuring smile at Kenma. “Only if you’re interested, of course. Just throwing an offer your way, that’s all. You have a think about it and if you are curious or interested then, well, you know where to contact. I’m sure you’ll make a great addition to the family though.”
Kenma couldn’t help but stare. Kuroo was right – this officer definitely gave off the ‘dad’ vibes.

Daichi rubbed at the back of his neck, shooting him a sheepish smile. “No pressure! Just, it would be nice to have another normal person in the office to balance out the two knuckle hea-“

Daichi’s joke was cut off short when a hand flew in from Kenma’s left, and smacked him right over the ear. The impact must’ve been deadly as the sound rang throughout the entire room.

Kenma yelped in surprise as the officer’s head snapped to the side and barely caught himself from falling over in time. Behind him, Kuroo let out a delighted bark of laughter, even leaning in to point at the stunned man.

“So there you are, you knuckle head. Why don’t you ever check your phone?”

Kenma stared wide-eyed at the stranger who stomped past him and stood face-to-face with the officer. He had his hands on his hips to match the displeased look on his face.

The man must’ve been a doctor, or at least a higher-up medical staff with his white coat worn over the pale, pea-green uniform. He huffed soundly and ran a hand through his hair. It was a choppy nest of a delicate grey and Kenma found himself staring in utter bewilderment. Despite his mature appearance, he couldn’t possibly be any older than he was from his youthful face, and large, childlike eyes accentuated by the beauty mark on his right.

The doctor tutted in disapproval. “You’re lucky I’m working a late shift and I’m tired or I would’ve done a lot more than one smack.”

Officer Daichi pouted as he nursed his sore ear. “Suga, that hurt. I only sent you the message about 20 minutes ago. You usually tolerate at least two hours before it resorts to hitting.”

The doctor snorted, looking as unimpressed as ever. He crossed his arms and did his best to look as cross as possible, though, it didn’t look too particularly threatening. “You sent a message saying ‘on my way to the hospital if you’re working’ with absolutely no further explanation. Not to mention you didn’t answer my calls or texts after. I thought you hurt yourself again! You had me worried you idiot!”

He huffed as he smacked Daichi’s hand away from his ear. “And quit whining. I didn’t hit you that hard.”

Daichi melted a faint shade of pink as he bowed his head meekly. “Sorry. I should’ve mentioned it was another patient,” he mumbled. “Or, well, another officer.”

He reached up and gingerly prodded his ear. “It still hurts though,” he grumbled.

Suga hmph-ed. “Oh, please. It’s not even bruised or anything.”

Though, his expression softened when he leaned over and gently cusped Daichi’s ear with his own hand. “But you’re forgiven, you big baby.”

He looked up at the others, mouth tugging in to a smile so radiant, it was as though he were glowing from the core. “And good morning, fellas! Hope it hasn’t been too awful of a night for you all to end up here.”

“Oh, trust me. The night’s only just getting started.” Yaku muttered, rubbing the back of his neck.

This only seemed to delight the other and he let out a tinkling laugh. “Wonderful! At least I’ll have some company for the last three hours of my shift. Oh! Which reminds me, I saw Lev wandering the corridors a little earlier. I think he was looking for you but he told me not to tell you.”
“What?” Yaku paused. The wrinkle between his brow deepened significantly. “What do you mean you saw Lev? What is he doing here?”

“He told me it was a surprise.” Suga flashed a sorry smile. “Last time I saw him, he was in the east wing corridor.”

“The east? Oh my god, that’s literally the opposite side. I even told him not to come- ugh,” Yaku pinched the bridge of his nose, exhaling deeply. “Alright, I’ll go get him. Hurry and stitch this fool up.”

“I’m sure he won’t be too hard to find. There’s only so many hiding spots large enough to fit a man of his stature.” The doctor patted his shoulder with a soft chuckle. “Don’t be so rough on him. He’s just a kitten.”

He smiled sweetly, and up this close Kenma could even make out the soft dimples which formed on each cheek.

He didn’t expect him to catch his gaze, turning over to face him directly.

“Oh, well that’s a new face!” Suga exclaimed with raised brows. “Who are you? A patient?”

His eyes twinkled with genuine curiosity, and the sudden attention made the back of Kenma’s neck break out in to a sweat.

This doctor was so photogenic it was unnerving. Kenma found himself unable to speak, caught so off-guard and feeling overwhelmingly flustered. “I- uh..”

He jumped at the sudden brush on his right.

“Well, hello Nurse Joy,” Officer Kuroo drawled as he draped himself over the other, placing his arm nonchalantly around his shoulder.

The doctor rolled his eyes. “You’d think by now he’d fix that awful hair of his,” he retorted teasingly.

Officer Daichi snickered and Kuroo leaned back chuckling. “Ooft, mamacita!” he cried out, fanning himself mockingly. “Still as feisty as ever.”

Kenma blinked at the group in confusion, clearly not understanding the inside joke.

Officer Bokuto grinned over at him, waving his arm around. “Kuroo once tried to make a move on Suga when they first met. It didn’t work out but it was hilarious watching him try,” he explained. He lit up when Akaashi reached over to hold his arm down, lecturing in a soft voice to ‘stop moving around’.

Suga snorted. “Not that he had a chance to begin with,” he shot back. “I was too busy taping up this poor fool,” the male nurse pointed at Officer Daichi. “He came in with a broken arm, fractured ribs and a dozen cuts and bruises. Not to mention he almost lost a tooth.”

Kenma winced at the painful list but Daichi waved it off with a pleased look on his face. “It was worth it,” he announced.

Suga chuckled, his eyes shaped like perfect crescents the way he beamed at Daichi.

“Not that I even care anymore.”

Kenma glanced away from the couple to find Kuroo staring blatantly right at him. He blinked slowly in confusion. The messy-haired officer motioned between himself and Suga. “We’re not a thing
anymore so,” He placed his arm over Kenma’s shoulder again. “I’m not in to Suga.”

Suga leaned forward. “Not that we were even a thing to begin with,” he offered and Kuroo nodded. He continued to stare at Kenma, thrumming his fingers thoughtfully on the other’s shoulder, a half-smile on his face. Kenma glanced around feeling completely lost and caught Suga’s eye. The doctor simply shrugged his shoulders and flashed him a knowing smile.

“Now! Back to business! Let’s get Bokuto all fixed up now, shall we?” He reached in to his pockets, pulling out a pair of gloves. “Where’s Hajime? I mean, I know the guy loves working but I’d have thought he’d be here to make sure this coo coo bird was okay.”

“Ahh, well,” Daichi scratched the back of his head, looking slightly embarrassed. “There’s another patient who came in with us to the ward. He’s keeping him company.”

Suga raised his brows. “Oh? That’s.. interesting. But I suppose that’s Iwaizumi for you. Never off duty- and where do you think you’re going, Bokuto?” The doctor smiled ever so sweetly at the other.

Bokuto paused, before he sat back on the edge of the bed. He was sweating profusely, eyes darting back and forth. “It’s just, I just feel much better. Like, way better now. I don’t think I’ll need-”

“You will need the stitches, Bokuto.” Suga interrupted in a soft, soothing tone. “Very much so.”

The officer hummed, peering down at his wrapped arm for a brief moment. “I don’t know, man. I kinda.. I think I like the way it is right now. I could get used to it as it is. Kinda like two flappy doors.” He let out a nervous chuckle, though his eyes were wide and pleading.

“I see…” Doctor Suga frowned in concentration, clipboard held under his arm as he rubbed his chin. “Well, if you say so.”

“.Why are you closing the door?”

“Hm? Oh, it’s just hospital regulations. Gotta keep them shut because… of the ventilation. Don’t you worry your little head about it, Bokuto.” Suga flashed an unnervingly charming smile.

“I-I don’t like it. Could we open it alittle bit? Just a little-“

“Bokuto-san, please just sit still. It’ll be over before you know it.”

“My arm isn’t sore anymore! I don’t need them.”

Akaashi furrowed his brows, a stern look on his face. “Regardless of such, you’ll need those stitches one way or another, whether you like it or not.”

“I don’t need them!”

“You definitely do,” Daichi intersected in a firm voice.

“Not you too!” Bokuto whined. He looked over at his best friend, desperation filled in his eyes.

“K-Cat…?” he asked in an uncharacteristically quiet voice.

Kuroo grimaced, having to look away. “Damn it, don’t do this to me. You know I’m a sucker for your big owl eyes. But.. Akaashi’s right. You should listen to him. He’s your boyfriend, afterall.” He paused when he caught Kenma watching him. The other looked away immediately but he could’ve sworn he was smiling at him. Kuroo’s heart swelled as he gave himself a mental pat on the
back.

"Wait, hold up, hold up." Doctor Suga looked utterly bewildered. He pointed over at Akaashi. "You're telling me that Bokuto is.. dating him?"

"Well.. yeah, I am." Bokuto frowned, tilting his head to the right. "Why do you look so surprised?"

Suga blinked in astonishment. He looked over at Akaashi expectantly.

He grew a light pink. "We're going slow." he defended quickly.

Bokuto let out a loud hah! "Yeah right," he chortled. "We kissed and we haven't even gone a date yet!"

"Oh my god, Bokuto," Daichi muttered as he pinched the bride of his nose.

Akashi grew several shades redder, sinking to hide his face.

"Nice," Kuroo reached over giving his friend a fist bump.

"Well," Doctor Suga interrupted quickly. "If you are together, then don't you want to impress your partner, Bokuto? Show him how brave you are."

"What, I am brave." Bokuto shot back immediately. "I'm not scared or anything. I just- it doesn't hurt anymore, alright? If I wanted to I can do this, piece of cake."

"Then sit still and let Suga fix you up," Daichi instructed. He sat himself on the vacant bed to the left, shoulders slumped, rubbing his weary eyes. "Let's all just finish this then go home."

"Okay, okay, I got this. Just.. You know," Bokuto scrunched his eyes shut and held his bandaged arm out. "Make it quick. Please."

"Of course. It'll be over before you know it," Suga assured, voice all soothing and soft again. "Just going to give you a little local anesthetic before we start, okay? Just going to feel a tiny pinch and it'll be smooth sailing from then on."

"Okay, sounds easy.." Bokuto nodded slowly. His mouth stretched in to an uncertain smile, his eyes still slightly worried. "Just a small pin- what was that?" He jerked his arm back.

"That was my hand. I'm just going to unwrap the bandages."

"O-oh. Right. Ahahah, you got me there, doctor. I was wh-!"

"Just peeling off the gauze."

"Right, right. I knew that, I was just testing-" Bokuto flinched hard. "Oh my g- sorry. Sorry. I just- god. It's hard to keep still when you just know the pain is going to come."

"Yes, well it's a defence mechanism called 'self-preservation', Bokuto. We need it, especially you, since it stops us from doing very stupid things."

"Yes, well it ain't doing me any favours right no-OW!" He screamed.

"I've only just wiped your arm." Suga shot him an exasperated huff. "Come on, Bokuto. I've had kids with broken arms who've reacted less violently."
Bokuto snapped his head over to shoot the other a dignified look. “I am bleeding. I haven’t done science since high school but I’m pretty sure you need blood to live. They ain’t losing their blood, so I’m pretty sure my situation is much worse than theirs!” Bokuto was growing shrill, golden eyes darting all over the place.

“When I was in high school, there was this boy in my grade.” Kenma suddenly voiced out, peaking everyone’s attention. They all paused and peered over at him, Bokuto included.

“He was a reckless guy, always injured himself. One time, he fell down the stairs but he didn’t bleed. No cuts, no scrapes, so no one really fussed about it. A few hours later he was taken to the hospital - Turned out he had torn a muscle in his stomach, causing internal bleeding and a small clot to develop.”

Kenma eyed Bokuto from the other side of the room. “It would be a shame,” he murmured in a low voice. “If you weren’t treated properly and ended up with a more troublesome injury, wouldn’t it?”

Kuroo stared down at the other. “Holy shit, dude. You sure like to take the rough approach, don’t you?”

Bokuto’s eyes were the size of dinner plates, looking slightly traumatised. He looked like he was on the verge of tears.

Akaashi sighed. “Bokuto-san.” He perched himself on the bed beside the other and watched him intently.

Bokuto looked at him in question, jolting at the sudden brush against his hand. Akaashi placed his hand over his, rubbing his thumb idly over his rough knuckles.

“Bokuto,” he repeated in a low murmur. “Just relax. Keep your eyes on me, okay? You can do that, can’t you?”

Bokuto looked thoroughly confused, though he couldn’t quite mask his giddy smile. “I, uh, well, sure I guess. I mean, you don’t have to, um, tell me twice.”

Akaashi raised a brow, his lip quirked up in a half-hearted smile. “How is it that the same officer who charged at an armed criminal head-on is so antsy about getting fixed up by the doctors?”

“I’m not scared, I swear! I just don’t like sharp things near my skin. That’s the same as everyone else though.”

“Of course. You’re right, Bokuto.”

There was a slight rustle from behind and the officer turned to peer over his shoulder. Akaashi quickly leaned in, clasping a hand on each side of his cheeks to hold him in place.

“No, don’t look at Suga. Look at me.”

“O-oh, okay. You mean, at your face?”

“At me.” Akaashi’s voice grew soft, coaxing. “You can do that, can’t you, Bokuto?”

Bokuto swallowed soundly. “I, yeah. Yes. I can. I, uh, yes. I can do that. I think I can go through with this if I just look at you-”

He paused, frowning. Then leaned in close toward the other. “Huh. That’s funny.”
“What is, Bokuto-san?”

“Your eyes are green. I always thought they were a dark brown, but they’re not. They’re kinda like a swamp-ish colour. They’re very pretty.”

Akaashi blinked, slightly dumbfounded. He glanced over at the others before he looked back. “Thank you.” He smiled shyly.

Bokuto reeled his head back in surprise. He shook his head. “Actually, no. I can’t look at you anymore,” he choked. “You’re so pretty, you make me want to throw up. This is making me more nervous than the stitches itself. Can you just- just don’t look at me.”

“Oh. Sorry.”

“No, no, don’t apologise! It’s not your fault! You can’t help the way you were born, I completely understand. Some people are just born with beautifully symmetrical faces and - oh my god! That thing is huge!” Bokuto practically leapt on to his feet, in hysterics.

Suga glanced up, unperturbed. “Bokuto, you weren’t supposed to look.”

“What the heck are you holding?! It’s like some kind of Medieval torture device!”

“Oh, come on now. It’s just a little needle to numb you up.”

“Little?! Your fingers can barely wrap around it!”

“Well, in defense I have been told to have small fingers so,” Suga twiddled his fingers in a dainty wave.

Bokuto looked like he was about to make a mad dash for it if not for the sudden tug on his arm.

Akaashi pulled him back down, forcing him to look at him. "Relax, Bokuto. I told you, it'll be okay. Just relax. Good." He smoothed back the officer's hair, a softer smile playing on his lips. "There you go. You're doing great. Doing so great, Koutarou."

It was like an immediate light switch. The officer stilled almost at once, back straightened like a pole. He stared back at the other in a wide-eyed daze.

"What? What is it?"

“You.. You called me by my first name,” Bokuto croaked. “You’ve never done that before. I didn’t even know you knew my first name.”

Akaashi’s brows rose a notch. “Well, yes I do. You gave me your card, didn’t you?”

“My.. c-card?”

“Your business card.” Akaashi paused then added “the one with the robot drawn on the back.”

“The robot..? I don’t-” Bokuto inhaled sharply. “Oh my god.. Oh.. O-oh my god!” He whipped his head over to Kuroo who looked equally as thrilled with an open-mouthed smile. Everyone else in the room stared, confused as the two screeched and slapped poorly aimed high-fives multiple times.

“Robot card!” Bokuto squealed in ecstatic delight. “It worked! The robot card actually worked!”
“See, I told you!” Kuroo crowed back. “That thing was full of good luck charm!”

“Okay, I got this! I got this!” Bokuto declared, eyes set with determination. He rolled his head back then stuck his arm out. “I’m ready! Do it Suga!” he screamed. “Hit me with your best shot!”

“Been trying to for the past twenty minutes,” Suga sighed. He flicked at the needle methodically before pinching Bokuto’s skin together. “You ready?”

“More than I’ll ever be.”

“Fantastic, here we go.” He leaned in, ready to inject the anaesthetic when-

The door swung open and a head peeked in. Lev’s expression lit up immediately at the sight of them all. “Wow, there sure is a party happenin’ up in here- !”
He squawked, stumbling in from the rough shove behind.

“Ugh, sorry it took so long,” Yaku rubbed the side of his face, shooting them a disgruntled look. “Someone decided to get distracted and wake all the kids in the children’s ward.”

“I didn’t do it on purpose! I thought they were just pretending to be asleep. How was I supposed to know babies sleep with their eyes half-open!”

Daichi snorted and crossed his arms. “Well, you didn’t miss out on much. Bokuto’s literally only just about to get his stitches done by Suga.”

“Ah,” Yaku nodded over at Bokuto. “Hang in there, champ.”

The officer flashed a thumbs up. “No problo, it’s only stitches. Takes like, what, twenty minutes? Pfft. Super easy.”

“Bokuto is getting stitches? Sick!” Lev bounded through to have a peek over Suga’s shoulder. “No fair, the fun stuff always happens when I’m not there- oh eugh! Gross!”
He grimaced, scrunching his nose at the sight. “Oh my god, that’s just- is it meant to look like that? So disgusting. Not to mention how painf- ouch! Yaku, that hurt.”

“Shut up, Lev.”

“Okay, yeah, no. No, no, nope, no. I can’t do this.” Bokuto began to fidget, eyes focused on the open door ahead.

“Okay, that’s it. Hold him down.” Suga ordered, looking over at Daichi and Yaku. “I need him on his back with his left arm outstretched-“ he paused when a light buzz filled the room. “One sec, work mobile.”
The doctor rummaged through his pockets before he pulled out a thick, black phone. His eyes skimmed across the lighted screen, nose slightly scrunched in concentration.

He let out a sigh. “Okay, I need to postpone this. Got an alert from the nurse station.”
He pointed over at Bokuto with a stern look on his face. “You got away this time, but trust me when I say I will get you.”

“What is it?” Kuroo asked, lazy eyes watching him.

“Emergency in 372,” Suga replied, tucking the clipboard under the crook of his arm. “Machine’s showing abnormal heart rate. Patient might be having an episode of tachycardia. I’ll need to check up on them incase it elevates to something serious.”
“Wait.. room 372?”

Everyone paused, glancing over at Officer Daichi. He sat up, eyes wide with surprise.

“But that’s Oikawa’s room.”

∞

This was the second time in less than 24 hours he’d woken up with an ear-splitting headache, and frankly, Oikawa would literally kill for some painkillers right now.

He exhaled through his nose, eyes still shut tight. There was the lingering sting across his eyelids from the lack of sleep and he swallowed hard. His throat was so dry, one of the many wonderful aftermaths of a night of heavy drinking. His tongue tasted slightly furry and he grimaced.

There was an unpleasant scent lingering in the air and Oikawa’s stomach churned in protest. It was a distinctive smell, one which he would never get used to - no doubt he was in a hospital.

He pried one eye open and glanced around.

The first thing he noticed was the whiteness of everything. White walls, white ceilings, white bed, white floors, white everything. He blinked blearily, allowing his eyes to adjust to the harsh brightness.

He was lying in one of the beds, smothered by thick-padded, coarse blankets so heavy it felt like he was being pressed in to the mattress. Oikawa squirmed under all the weight when he felt the sudden sensation.

Wait.

‘Don’t tell me..’ Oikawa gave another experimental wriggle, then shuddered.

Yep, no underwear.

The hospital gown was thin, barely even doing its purpose of covering his behind. Oikawa scrunched his nose and stuck his tongue out in disgust. This day just kept getting better and better.

He peered down to find a heavy patch taped on to his wrist. A slender tube peeked out and his eyes followed it to an IV drip. Maybe he could just yank the chord off and sneak his way out.

There was a slight shift in the corner of his eye and he froze. Oikawa glanced over.

Officer Iwaizumi sat by the bed, apparently asleep. He’d dragged the chair over from the far wall, right toward the edge of his mattress. His shoulders were hunched, head bowed so deeply it was definitely going to ache when he woke up. Even asleep, his brows were knitted together and the corners of his mouth drooped downwards.

God, he was cute.

Oikawa bit the inside of his cheek, watching the officer for a few quiet moments.

This man saved his life.
It felt funny saying it in his head.

He glanced around to find it was just the two alone in the room. Where was everyone left? Did they go home?

Oikawa swallowed again, then gingerly rubbed his neck. Okay, he was going to have to go look for a nurse or at least a vending machine. His throat was as dry as the Arizona desert. He shifted carefully, wriggling his way to the opposite side of the bed and slid his feet out. At least he wasn’t wearing any shoes – the less noise the better. His head was pounding and even the softest of sounds seemed amplified.

“Oikawa?”

He froze, peered over his shoulder.

Iwaizumi was rubbing his eyes, in a slight daze. “When did you wake up?” he croaked, voice gravelly with asleep and oh god, Oikawa was not going to get that sound out of his head now.

He slipped his legs back under the blanket and faced him properly. “Just got up now. It’s so stuffy, I was going to go get some fresh air.”

“Oh.” Iwaizumi stood, hovering over the other. “Here, did you want some help?”

Oikawa shook his head immediately. “No, nope. Don’t- nope. I’m good, I’m good. It’s alright.” He’d rather suffocate to death than have Iwaizumi see him in this potato sack of a hospital gown. “I’m okay, I swear.”

Iwaizumi tilted his head to the side, frowning lightly. “Okay.” He finally answered, not sounding too convinced. He sat back, hand closed over his mouth to stifle a yawn. “How are you feeling?”

“Like I’ve been dragged along the road then left out to dry,” Oikawa answered truthfully. He flashed a grin when the officer’s browed furrowed with worry. “I’m kidding. Just kinda thirsty.”

“Right.” Iwaizumi dropped down for a brief second, before he sat back up holding a half-empty water bottle. “Drink this. I’m not diseased, promise.”

Oikawa smiled at that. “I would’ve drunk it anyway.”

“Smart arse.”

“No shame.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes, but scooted closer to pass the bottle.

Their fingers brushed lightly as Oikawa accepted the drink. Neither commented on it and Oikawa let it pass.

Iwaizumi watched him briefly, then leaned in again.

“Wait, let me get the lid for you. Pass it over.”

“No, it’s fine-“

“I’ll do it for you, just hand it to me.”

Oikawa pulled the bottle close to his chest. He shot the other a haughty look. “Iwa-chan, I’m thirsty,
not disabled. I’m more than capable of doing things on my own, sheesh.”
He grinned over at the officer who’d tensed. “What?” teased lightly, before he too paused.
He’d only just realised he’d used the nickname Iwaizumi hated.
“Oh,” Oikawa said. He forced an apologetic smile. “Sorry.”
Iwaizumi’s lips tightened briefly, eyes shifting all over his face. “Oikawa...” he said lowly.
“No, no, that was my bad. Sorry, I didn’t- just, sorry.” Oikawa placed the bottle in his lap. He wasn’t that thirsty anymore. “Sorry.”
“Don’t apologise. Why are you even apologising?”
“Sorry.”
“Stop it,” Iwaizumi’s tone grew harsh, and Oikawa fought the urge to cower.
The silence hung over them like a smoggy blanket, almost unbearable for Oikawa.
The memory of their bad encounter was clear in his mind and that was literally the last thing he needed right now. ‘Please say something’ he inwardly pleaded.
Finally, Iwaizumi sighed. He reached in, wrapping his hand over the other’s. Oikawa flinched, but he didn’t seem to care.
Iwaizumi pried his fingers off the bottle, unscrewed it and placed it back in his lap. “From my memory, I recall someone telling me to learn to accept help once in a while,” he murmured softly. He sat back, arms crossed as he stared evenly at him.
Oikawa blinked. He stared down at the bottle.
He huffed in amusement. “Smart arse.”
For the first time, Iwaizumi smiled back. “No shame.”
Oikawa held the bottle to his lips, taking heavy gulps. He could feel the other watching him carefully from his left but he paid no mind. He finished the entire bottle.
“I didn’t mean it.”
Oikawa glanced over at the other, wiping his lips with the back of his hand. “Hm?”
The officer didn’t meet his eye. He bit his lip, then shook his head. “I said I didn’t mean it. About what I said last time.”
Oikawa’s insides knotted tighter. “Oh?” He smiled.
“You’re not weird. At all. Maybe a little, but..” Iwaizumi glanced up, meeting his gaze. Those beautifully, almond-shaped eyes illuminated under the artificial light. “There’s nothing wrong with a little weird.”
Oikawa’s heart fluttered. “Oh.”
He nodded, only this time he felt his lips curl up on their own. “Thank you,” he murmured.
There was an awkward pause where Oikawa struggled to come up with something witty to say. He coughed. “So.. Where’s everyone else?” he asked instead.

“Somewhere. Probably with Bokuto. He needed to get patched up.”

Oikawa glanced up. “Is it serious?”

“No, not too serious.”

“That’s good.”

“Mm.”

God, was the room always this stuffy? It didn’t help that Iwaizumi kept staring at him like he was expecting something from him.

“So,” Oikawa drawled. He tilted his head to regard Iwaizumi, a light smile playing on his lips. “The case is over, right? Done and dusted?”

“Done and dusted,” Iwaizumi repeated, nodding.

“Must be a huge load off your shoulders. You can finally get some rest.”

“Yep, cept I’m here instead, taking care of some guy with an alien fetish.”

“Rude!” Oikawa scolded with dancing eyes. The policeman chuckled then suddenly leaned in right close. Oikawa could feel the light puffs of breath against his cheek, and he inhaled sharply.

The room was suddenly quiet, so deathly quiet, neither moving nor saying anything. For a split moment, Oikawa even feared the other might be able to hear the stammering drums going off within his chest.

Iwaizumi watched him intently. “Oikawa,” he spoke in that low, gravelly voice again.

“W-what?”

“I’ve been thinking.”

".. Okay? About what?"

"That night.. what you said.” He didn’t even bat an eyelid. “Did you mean it?"

Oikawa’s heart skipped a beat. He forced a smile. “What do you mean?”

“You know what I mean.”

Oikawa’s stomach coiled making him feel nauseous. Oikawa opened his mouth, then closed it. He shook his head, chuckling to himself. His heart clenched. “Hajime, come on. Don’t make me say it again.” Oikawa teased, but his voice came out weak, pleading.

Iwaizumi’s lips tightened for a brief moment. Eyes flickered down. “Then..” he murmured. He sounded distant, shy almost. He glanced back up. “Do you still mean it?” he asked ever so softly.

Oikawa couldn’t breathe. His heart raced, his lungs felt so cramped in his chest. “I...what?” He laughed, inwardly cringing at how strained it sounded. What else could he do? His tongue felt so thick in his mouth, he could barely get words out.
“I need to know. Even if it’s just one word. Please.”

Oikawa was painfully aware of just how close they were. The room felt far too small for the two of them.

He swallowed hard. “Um…”

One word. Just one word. Say it.

From the corner of his eye, he noticed Iwaizumi’s fingers inching closer on to the bed but he didn’t dare look down at them.

Say it. SAY IT!

His mind screamed, shrill with desperation and deafening in his head.

Iwaizumi was watching, waiting.

Oikawa felt a sudden hot, prickly sensation forming at the back of his eyes and he let out another helpless chuckle. It came out all strangled. “Um, I-“

It was brief. A soft press of lips against his, but it came with a hurricane of emotions which almost swept him away. Oikawa let out a muffled sob. He reached for the other, hands trembling as he struggled to hold on to him.

Iwaizumi held him close, a rough hand cradling the back of his head. “Shh, it’s okay.” He said softly, lightly scratching the nape of his neck with his calloused thumb. “It’s okay.”

It was embarrassing, the way he held on so desperately, head pressed in to the crook of Iwaizumi’s neck. But he supposed it was okay since Iwaizumi held him just as hard. A switch in the back of Oikawa’s head clicked itself on and the tears began to gush down. He choked and sobbed in heavy, gutted breaths. “I-I didn't mean to hit you then," he wailed. "I'm sorry. I didn't- I'm not that kind of person. I'm sorry."

“Me too.”

Oikawa cried his little heart out, holding on so tightly his fingers trembled. Iwaizumi simply waited patiently, rubbing his back until the sobs melted in to soft hiccups.

“I’m sorry, this isn't like me, I swear. God, this is just- this is so lame of me. I’m sorry, I don’t even know why I’m crying,” Oikawa whimpered, wiping his eyes. He shook his head. “I don’t know why, I just don’t.”

He pried himself off and let out a shuddery breath, shaking his head. “I’m not hallucinating right now, am I? Don’t tell me this is another dream?”

Iwaizumi frowned. “Another dream?”

“You once saved me from a burning car and carried me bridal style. It was all very dramatic.”
“Oh. I see.”

Oikawa sniffed loudly, the wet sound filling the entire room. He wiped his nose with the back of his hand, whimpering slightly as he did. His skin was all blotchy, hair a straggly bird’s nest, not to mention the heavy bags which hung under his swollen, bloodshot eyes.

Iwaizumi stared, then let out a snort, not bothering to suppress the equally gross sound. “You’re kinda hideous.”

“Shut up! I’ve been through hell and back the past few weeks; It’s a miracle I even look this good.”

Iwaizumi smiled. He tugged the other in to a rough hug. “I suppose.”

He wiped the tears with the sleeve of his shirt and leaned in for another kiss.

Perhaps it was the lack of sleep, or the scare of the kidnap, but Iwaizumi couldn’t help but think how right Oikawa was. Even like this he still did look good.

There was a gentle tug on his arm and he cut off the kiss. The chair screeched lightly as he crawled up on to the bed with Oikawa. Iwaizumi laid down beside the other, heart racing but in the best kinda way. Oikawa was tugging at his arm again, and Iwaizumi complied, both of them now lying on their sides, breaths mingling. It was a slightly tight squeeze and the bed creaked slightly under the extra weight. Not that he even concerned with Oikawa smiling so shyly at him. Up this close Iwaizumi noted how unusually long his eyelashes were.

When Oikawa leaned in, he met him halfway, lips already parted. It took him back to when he was a teenager, all awkward and yet so damn eager to settle with someone. The jittery nerves returned, tingling his skin like an electric current. The occasional wet sounds of their kiss made his ears burn with embarrassment but he couldn’t stop. He heard the slightly rustle and creak of the bed as Oikawa scooted in closer, now almost chest to chest.

There was a brief brush against his abdomen and Iwaizumi broke the kiss immediately.

“What? What’s wrong?” Oikawa panted. He was clutching on to Iwaizumi’s shirt like he’d run away if he let go. “Did I do something wrong?”

“No, no, it’s not that.” Iwaizumi answered immediately. He leaned back, inhaling deeply to allow his heart so slow down again. He sat back on the balls of his heels. “Oikawa.”

Iwaizumi bit the inside of his cheek, placing a fist on each thigh. His thoughts were racing.

Oikawa paused, watching him carefully. He held the officer’s forearm, rubbing his thumb in an idle circle. “What? What is it?”

“It’s.. been a long time. That’s all.”

Oikawa stared before letting out a nervous laugh. “Well, I won’t not going to judge you on your performance skills-“

“No, that’s not it,” Iwaizumi ran a hand through his hair, unsure of how to phrase his words. “That’s not…”

“What’s wrong? You don’t have to be shy with me. Unless..” Oikawa inhaled sharply, eyes growing wide.

“Oh no. Don’t tell me- ” He placed a hand over his mouth. “You’re impotent.”
“What- no! Not that!” Iwaizumi snapped, face burning up. “It’s just..” He turned, facing Oikawa directly.

The reporter blinked up at him, the large toffee eyes shifting slightly as though he couldn’t decide which eye to focus on. His mouth was forced in to an awkward, tight smile. He looked hopeful, pleading almost and Iwaizumi felt Oikawa’s grip on his arm tighten.

He shook his head. “You’re just so perfect.”

Oikawa’s mouth opened in surprise. “I am?”

“Yeah.”

“Then.. what are you worried about?”

“This,” Iwaizumi replied immediately. He opened his mouth before hesitating. “I’m just.. I don’t want to mess this up.”

“Iwa-chan,” Oikawa breathed softly. He was blinking rapidly, the ends of his shiny eyes crinkled as he smiled widely. “You’re so stupid.”

“Shut up,” he retorted, frowning down at the other. “I just don’t.. My past relationships never last very long so I don’t want to ruin this.”

Oikawa seemed to be in deep thought, brows knit together in concentration. He nodded. “Okay, I get it.

He leaned up to rest on his elbows as he eyed the other. “Get it all off your chest. What’s your secret, Iwa-chan? What is it that’s made all your ex-lovers run away from your fine piece of ass? Is it a doll collection? Are you one of them people who are in to murderabilia?”

Iwaizumi scrunched his nose. “Murdera-what? No.”

“You’re kinky and you get a little too freaky in bed.”

“Not kinky.”

“You have friends with benefits.” Oikawa paused with an afterthought. “And they’re Bokuto and Kuroo.”

“Iwaizumi grimaced. He opened his mouth, then closed it. Then shook his head.

“I.. I have trouble balancing relationships and work. And I’ve been criticised before for.. not prioritising my partner. It’s just- “ He paused, thinking. A few moments passed then he held his hands out in a helpless gesture “Work is important. To me. I help others which means I can’t be with you all the time, or even a lot of the time. It’s just how it is.”

He was watching Oikawa carefully with the same sharp, calculating look from that fated night Oikawa had first met him in the station a month ago. “What I’m saying is I can’t promise you much.”

Oikawa stared, expression blank. Several moments passed in silence as the two regarded each other seriously. Oikawa was the first to break the silence – He let out a deep sigh. He sat up, reaching over to grapple Iwaizumi’s work tie. He yanked it roughly, causing Iwaizumi to let out a startled yelp as
he landed awkwardly on the bed beside him. The officer turned on to his back to glare up at the other.

Any complaints in Iwaizumi’s mouth died down when Oikawa kicked the blankets aside and straddle him roughly. He was shaking his head.

“Well, thank God for that,” Oikawa stared down at Iwaizumi with a serious expression. “I honestly thought you were going to tell me you couldn’t get it up.”

This guy was ridiculous. Iwaizumi shook his head, though not quite able to suppress his smile. “You’re odd. So odd.”

“Hmm, I think I recall someone saying that being a good thing though, Iwa-chan.”

“Not always.”

“Well, I’m glad you confessed,” Oikawa nodded firmly. “Because frankly, I have no idea how the hell this relationship thing works either.”

“That’s reassuring.”

Oikawa smiled. “But we can work it out together.”

He began to run his fingertips up and down his arm and Iwaizumi’s mind went blank. His heart was still racing but in the best kinda way.

Oikawa’s eyes were drooped in a half-lid gaze, his stare burning a hole in his face. The tip of his tongue peeked out, running along his top lip before it slipped back in. “Hey, Iwa-chan,” Oikawa murmured with a teasing undertone. “Guess what?”

Iwaizumi’s eyes darted to the door, then back over at the other. He felt warmth building up on his cheeks. His fingers flittered up and down Oikawa’s thighs, playing gently with the trim of the hospital gown. “What?”

Oikawa leaned in, perching himself on top on Iwaizumi thighs. Placing his lips very carefully over Iwaizumi’s right ear, he whispered. “I’m not wearing any underwear.”

The fingers which had been riding up froze and Oikawa’s burst out in to a fit of laughter at Iwaizumi’s expression. Cute. He was so cute.

The fingers hesitated before lifting again, riding up the gown another fraction. Oikawa’s teasing grin faltered, mouth slightly ajar as he watched Iwaizumi. His heart skittered frantically in his chest as he felt the thin material shift over his thighs. “Iwa-chan..?”

“Just so we get this clear, I’m not doing it on a hospital bed. No matter what you say.”

Oikawa let out a strangled laughter. “What do you mean? I don’t understand. What aren’t we doing, Iwa-chan?” he teased, tightening his grip on the other’s hand. His heart hammered when the other leaned in ever so closely and spoke in that deep, rumbly voice.

“You know exactly what I mean.”

Oikawa leaned back slightly, eyes raised to the ceiling as he pouted his lips. “Hmm, nope? Not a clue. You know what, I think it’s from the head damage. You’ll just have to explain t-” He let out a delighted, muffled yelp as Iwaizumi sat up and yanked him down by the back of the neck.
The kiss was surprisingly soft and gentle. The kind which made Oikawa’s fingers flutter and eyelids flutter shut. Iwaizumi reached over, latching on to his hips to keep him in place. Oikawa’s heart pounded and he felt dizzy. He leaned back and Iwaizumi followed, chasing his lips and ‘was that a hint of tongue?’

Oikawa felt his face grow warm and he tilted his head lightly, giving the other more access. Iwaizumi surged up, kiss now growing less sweet and more bitey. He reached up to grapple at the gown, grabbing a fistful and pulling down. Now pressed chest to chest, Oikawa couldn’t help the soft mewl which tumbled out between each kiss.

Iwaizumi released his grip and reached in to Oikawa’s hair, fingers running through the strands. He pried Oikawa’s mouth open wider, his tongue hot and slick and pressing in harder. Oikawa felt light, his heart was now on the verge of exploding and it was fantastic. He ran his hands up and down Iwaizumi’s chest, smiling when the other hummed in approval. He began to venture down slowly, carefully, resting at his belt. He let out another soft groan when the doors barged open with what had to be a marching band’s worth of officers, co-workers and a worried doctor.

The response was almost instant.

Bokuto let out a loud scream, covering his eyes as Kuroo ogled open-mouthed at the pair, turning away as he gagged. Iwaizumi paused before tugging Oikawa down over him to cover his bright, red face.

Akaashi had suddenly found something interesting on the floor and Kenma made a quick excuse to the bathroom. Even Daichi looked away, arms crossed with a pained expression on his face. The only one who appeared unaffected was the doctor who let out an amused chuckle, waving the two off. “Oh, don’t worry. Not the first time that’s happened before.”

Oikawa felt his stomach vibrate lightly as Iwaizumi let out an embarrassed groan.

“Oh my god, I’m blind,” Kuroo was walking in circles, covering his eyes with both hands. “I’ve literally gone blind. Oh and FYI?!” He pointed accusingly at Oikawa. “The only moon which should be seen is the one at night. Pull down your dress dude.”

“It’s not a dress,” Oikawa retorted, hastily covering his bare bottom with the gown. Despite his red face, he couldn’t help the rising giddiness growing from within. “You’re just jealous of how great it looks-“

“What? What is it?” The door smashed open even further as Lev loomed in from behind the group and blinked at the sight.

“Whaaaaaaaat,” he called out rather stupidly. He grinned at his senior officer’s back and called “Wow. Keepin’ things classy, Wazzy. I like it.”

“Please get out.” Iwaizumi’s muffled voice grumbled.

“Why?! Why would you do this to us?!” Bokuto howled, hands still pressed over his eyes. “I don’t think I’ve ever been so distur-OUCH!”

“The best way to inject an unwilling patient is by distracting them first.” Suga waved the needle around with a triumphant smile. “Works most effectively with children.”

“Oh!” the doctor clapped his hands. “That’s all there is to see here folks! The show’s over so time for us to go back and finally fix up this big goofball.” He paused, peering over at Oikawa and Iwaizumi. “And Hajime, whatever you do, please refrain yourself alittle. The poor guy’s heart rate
was all over the place and the last thing we need is another heart attack patient.”

“Suga, oh god.” Iwaizumi shriveled up even further into the bed and the doctor let out a delighted laugh.

“Man, I love my job.”

∞

It took a good, excruciatingly long ten minutes before the entire mob was ushered out, leaving the two alone again.

“Iwa-chan, they’re all gone.”

“No.”

“No really, I promise. I don’t hear them either.”

“I can’t believe this has happened to me. Me. Of all people. I should just quit my job.”

“There, there,” Oikawa simpered. He wrapped his arms over the officer, who had curled up in to a small ball of misery. “Let Tooru take care of you.”

He swirled the tip of his finger in a circular motion over Iwaizumi’s thick arm. “I know what will make you feel better.”

He jumped when Iwaizumi sprung up immediately, all red-faced and looking utterly harassed. “Are you serious? You better not be suggesting what I think you’re suggesting. I can’t believe what you’re actually even considering it after what just happened!”

“But it’s okay!” Oikawa whispered, eyes wide with earnest. “The doctor said he’d already explained the situation to the other nurses. No one is going to barge in again.”

“Oh my god.” Officer Iwaizumi crumbled down again with embarrassment. “This is so bad.”

Oikawa grabbed his arm hastily. “No, not bad. Not bad at all. It’s good. Let’s keep going.”

“We are not going to do anything.”

“Don’t be like that!”

No response.

“.Hajime. Ha-ji-me. Hajime!”

Iwaizumi was as responsive as old meat. Oikawa frowned He poked at the officer’s arm. “Hey, Iwa-chan.”

“Don’t call me that.”

“What am I meant to call you? Boyfriend?” he teased.
There was a light pause then Oikawa let out a startled noise as he was thrown on to his back and Iwaizumi was right in his face.

They stared at one another before Iwaizumi pressed a gentle, chaste kiss on his lips and dropped his head on Oikawa’s lap once more. Oikawa reached out, carding his fingers through Iwaizumi’s hair and staring up at the ceiling with a stupid grin on his face. They remained in comfortable silence before Oikawa asked again.

“So how are we going to explain this to ‘them’? Do you reckon it’s going to be like explaining the birds and bees to kids?” He glanced down to find Iwaizumi peeking up at him from behind his arm.

“We are not going to explain anything to anyone. And no, it’s not going to be like the birds and bees because everyone is an adult so let’s just shut up about it now.”

Oikawa hummed as he stared at the ceiling again. “I don’t know, Kuroo’s face did turn awfully pale and did you hear Bokuto’s scream? I’m pretty sure he hit notes at least six octaves higher than what’s considered normal.

Iwaizumi stared at Oikawa. “Kuroo and Bokuto are not our kids.”

Oikawa shuddered. ”Thank god, right? I think I would’ve strangled them the moment they could talk.”

They jumped at the loud smack against the door and a muffled ‘hey!’

“You better get out of here before I come out there and kick all your asses!” Iwaizumi barked as Oikawa dropped his head on the other’s shoulder, shaking with laughter.

Chapter End Notes

There are now only TWO chapters to go!!
Oh man, I'm so pumped to get this over and done with tbh but also kinda sad it's coming to an end
Hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I did writing it (´・●・`・。)

Tumblr: http://leurauxe.tumblr.com/
Miscommunications

Chapter Notes

I'm a billion years late to the party but I finally made it
Thank you everyone who kept to this work as well as sending encouraging messages -
please forgive this highly unmotivated bug (¯\_(ツ)_/¯)
Hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Contrary to popular belief, Haiba Lev was not all that oblivious.

Sure he was simple minded and frequently scolded for his childish behaviour, but that was not to
cloud his judgement as an officer. His senses are sharp, keen. And quite often, he is the first to notice
when something goes awry.

“How many times do I have to tell you, no feet on the desk.”
“I don’t have my feet on the desk! I have my shoes on the desk.”
“Your feet are in those shoes. Now get them off.”

“Well, shucks. I don’t recall any written regulation *explicitly* stating that no feet must venture within
the premises of a tabletop—”

“It’s the most basic of social etiquettes, you pompous cat! Now get them off!”

Kuroo let out an exasperated groan, heaving his long legs down. “I can’t have my feet down for
long, I’m going to *die*.”

Officer Daichi sent him a disdainful look. “I’m sure you can keep your feet on the ground like the
rest of us humans. If you happen to erupt in a sudden spontaneous fit and drop dead in the next ten
minutes, I’ll take full responsibility.”

Kuroo scrunched his nose in disagreement. “Good to know you’d risk my life in order to prove a
point.”

Lev sat quietly listening, his eyes flickering left and right at the back and forth arguing. The loud
groan on his left indicated Bokuto had also just about had it with entire ordeal.

“Hey, hey, hey! No fighting in the office!” The officer swivelled his chair around, clambering on to
his knees as he frowned the two. “I understand it’s been a long day, we’re all tired and just want to
go home—”

“Bokuto, your shift literally started ten minutes ago.”

“I *said*, we’re all tired and just want to go home. *However*, this is a working environment! And we
should all behave accordingly!”
“You’re just saying that because Akaashi likes diligent workers.”

Bokuto almost fell off his chair, spluttering in shock. “Wh- Okay, fine! That’s true! So, what? Is it so wrong to want to impress your boyfriend?”

Kuroo shook his head. “No, not wrong. I think it’s commendable of you. But!” He pointed at the other. “Not helping my case so declined.”

He grinned at the sight of his friend jumping up from his chair and causing a downright ruckus, an indignant expression on his face.

His eyes suddenly flickered over to meet Lev’s, catching him slightly off-guard. Kuroo jerked his chin at him.

“What about you, Lev?” He prompted. "Are you team Winner or team Whiner?"

Lev stared, his wide, cattish eyes scrutinising the other for a long time. The officer tilted his head in curiosity. “Why the new shoes?” he suddenly asked.

Kuroo blinked owlishly. “Huh?”

“You shoes,” Lev pointed. “Your other ones were fine so why are you wearing new ones?”

The officer stared at him for a brief moment, then pointed at him. “See, this is why Lev is my favourite. He knows what’s up.”

Kuroo stuck his leg forward and lifted his trousers a fraction to flash the brand new pointed shoes. “What are your thoughts, my golden child? They look fancy, right? Make me sharp?”

“You don’t need shoes to make you look sharp, your eyes are pointed enough.”

“Ouch, hella rough Dadchi. Please be gentle with me, my ego is a delicate thing.”

“I suppose they do make you look sharp. They kinda remind me of witch shoes,” Lev added.

Kuroo lit up, delighted by the comment. “Thanks, buddy! I thought they looked snazzy too. Though they’re killing me right now. Ugh, definitely experiencing the downfall of new shoes. I can already feel new blisters growing on top of the already existing ones.”

Officer Bokuto perked up at that. “If you want, we could take turns swapping shoes.”

“As wonderful and tempting as that sounds, I think I’ll pass. Besides, I’m sure they’ll fix themselves up after a few more wears,” Kuroo shook his head wistfully. “It is as they say: beauty is pain.”

Daichi rolled his eyes as Lev ooh-ed and scooted in closer. “They’re worth it though. Kuroo-san, you look extra cool! But why the sudden change?”

“Another excellent question, ten bonus points for you. Well, you see, today is an important day. Very important day.” Kuroo raised his brows and pointed a finger to the ceiling. He even put on his narrator voice to build suspense. “For it shall mark a vital date in the history of.. well, me. Becaussssse today I’m- drum roll, please. No? Okay. Today I am going.. to ask Kenma out! Tada!”

He flung his arms out, standing motionless for a moment, then dropped them. “Wasn’t exactly the response I was aiming for, but thanks guys. I can really see you’ve put the effect in, much appreciated.”

The three officers stared, wide-eyed and mouths gaped. Daichi pinched the bridge of his nose with an exasperated sigh. Lev blinked several times, left eye squinting in confusion. “Wait, did you say Kenma..?” he asked. “You’re asking.. Kenma out?”
“Yeah, I thought it was time, y’know?” Kuroo grinned, leaning back for a stretch. He tugged his shirt down to cover his stomach. “I feel like we connect easily.”

Lev glanced over at Bokuto, then back at the other. His brows twitched lightly. “But.. what about blondie?”

Kuroo’s smile died down. “Blondie?”

“Yeah, blondie!” Lev frowned. “I thought you were serious about the letters!”

“Lev, what are you on about? Of course I was serious about the letters? Now I’m moving on! I gonna ask Kenma out next. Maybe on a date, somewhere nice? Pull out a few of the Killer Kuroo moves to spruce up the relationship,” Kuroo wiggled his brows before letting out a nervous laugh. “If he agrees, of course.”

“But K-Cat! Aren’t you moving on too quickly?” Bokuto bounced back down on his seat, thoroughly bewildered. “I mean, I don’t want to sound mean but it kinda feels like you’ve suddenly just thrown yourself on to Kenma.”

Kuroo jerked his head back sharply. “Wait, you too? What are you saying, B-Dawgs?”

“I’m saying, I know what it’s like to be rejected,” Bokuto frowned his disapproval. “You should really consider your decision instead of making a hasty one. Do you really like Kenma though?”

“What? What the heck are you guys on about? I like Kenma!” Kuroo looked defensive, no longer smiling. “I get it, I know it hasn’t been long.. but come on, I thought you guys would support me on this.”

“Okay, okay, let’s just all relax now,” Daichi interjected, the sudden tension in the office making him nervous. “Kuroo, it’s your decision what you choose to do so long as you’re not hurting others.”

Kuroo glanced between him and the other two. He sat back down, shoulders hunched. “Alright,” he muttered solemnly. He tucked his shoes under the desk and sulked in his seat.

Lev shared looks with Officer Bokuto who looked equally as confused and upset. He quietly sank back in to his seat, shooting occasional peeks at his friend. Lev’s gaze slid over to meet Daichi’s who shrugged in response.

Lev hesitated, before he coughed soundly. “So, Kenma huh?” he asked. He peered up at the ceiling, frowning hard as he ruminated. He nodded affirmatively. “I guess I can see that.”

Kuroo’s eyes flickered over to meet his briefly then looked away. Though, he smiled to let him know he wasn’t too upset. “Thanks, golden child.”

He leaned back and let out an exaggerated yawn. “Well, I’m almost done for today so you fellas enjoy your night in. I’ll think of you guys as I do.. non-police stuff.”

Daichi grimaced lightly. “I hope that wasn’t a code word of something vulgar.”

“Wh- of course not! God, get your mind out of the gutter, dad.”

“I just can’t tell with you. You know, I’m honestly still surprised why you’ve ended up here of all professions. I would’ve thought you’d go for something abit more eccentric.”

“How eccentric are you talking here? Like bird-cage juggling tightrope performer or daredevil extraordinaire?”
“Your first suggestion was suspiciously too specific. Have you been thinking about it?”

Kuroo opened his mouth but was interrupted by a rattle of doorknob. They turned around just in time to see the back door fling open and senior officer Iwaizumi come stumbling in after. He looked anxious, looping the strap of his bag over one shoulder, shrugging his jacket on over his other frantically.

“Crap, I’m late,” he muttered to himself. “I lost track of time.”
He fumbled with his clothes and let out a frustrated growl when realising his bag was caught under the jacket. “God damn it, not now.”

Daichi peered up from his paperwork. “Going already? You know, this may be the first time you’re actually leaving on time.”

“I would stay but I have a work commitment,” he ran a hand through his hair in a small attempt to smooth it back. “Everyone knows the drill; Daichi’s in charge, don’t pester him too much. Call me if you need anything.”

“Will do.”

“Good,” Iwaizumi slung his bag over his shoulder properly this time and paused to let out a tired sigh. He felt a pair of eyes follow his movement and he glanced over.

Lev blinked owlishly up at him then immediately straightened his back slightly and beamed.
Iwaizumi raised a brow before he huffed in faint amusement. He leaned in and bumped his shoulder playfully. “Don’t bother Daichi too much, alright Lev?”


Iwaizumi chuckled, shaking his head. “Good. See you guys tomorrow.”
And with that, he rushed for the exit.

Lev’s mood lightened significantly and he watched him go. Then he caught the sudden whiff. He blinked, mind processing the unfamiliar scent.

“Hey, what’s that smell?”

The officer stumbled lightly over his feet, skipping a few steps before he spun around abruptly. “What?” he spluttered. He looked utterly bewildered.

“That smell. It’s like some kind of cologne,” Lev lifted his nose for another sniff. “Did you put something on, Iwaizumi? It’s super musky. Are you going on a date or something?”

The office met with a rare moment of silence, then erupted in chaotic noise.

“Work commitment, huh?” Kuroo taunted, a sly jeer on his face as Bokuto screeched in shock.

“What kind of work commitment includes smelling like a club on a Friday night?”

“N-now, hold up! Hold up!” Iwaizumi barked, face a crimson red. “Who said anything about a date?! It’s just a new cologne, I-I ran out of my old one! Christ, you’re all so desperate in here!”

“Oh, I’m sorry. We just couldn’t help but jump to conclusions since, you know, the hospital incident. Remember that, Wazzy? Remember how you literally almost gave a man cardiac arrest because you jumped him.”
“Stop! Shut up! Everyone shut up before I give you all cardiac arrest!”

“Woah, woah, listen, you’re a good-lookin’ guy but keep that treatment reserved for Oikawa-”

“I said shut up!” Iwaizumi snapped. He rubbed his face, letting out a mortified groan. “Let’s just, p- please. Can we stop bringing that up already? That was two weeks ago.”

“Still fresh in my mind-“

Iwaizumi pointed immediately. “Extended shift. Now working till 7pm.”

“What! No!” Kuroo sat up immediately, rubbing his hands together, pleading. “Not tonight, I finish my shift in twenty minutes! I had plans tonight. I was going to meet Kenma and-“

“All the more reason to keep you here,” Iwaizumi’s expression turned sour. “You guys need to stop constantly barging in to their office. They have their own professions too, you know. You can’t just saunter in when you please.”

“But it’s okay since you can just use your charm and sweet talk Oikawa in to letting us stay-”

“Extended shift to 7:30pm.”

“No!” Kuroo howled, throwing his arms up in the air. “Come on, Wazzy! I really can’t afford to stay behind! I’ve been preparing this all week!”

He leaned back in his chair and lifted a leg, struggling slightly. “Look! I even wore new shoes! Look at them! They’re pointy! Please Iwaizumi, I can’t stay till 7:30-“

Iwaizumi shook his head. “You should get those traffic reports done while you’re here. The ones due from last week.”

“No, please. Seriously. I can’t do this, I’m meant to go pick up something by 6 and I can’t-“

“I’ll take his shift.”

Kuroo stopped. He looked over at the other, eyes grew wide with disbelief. “B.. B-Dawgs,” he whispered.

Bokuto met his eyes, brows furrowed in a stern manner. He nodded once, jerkily. “I may not agree with your decision.. but.. whatever it is, I’ll support you. I’m with you all the way,” he declared affirmatively. He grinned suddenly, giving him a cheeky look. “K-Cat.”

Kuroo opened his mouth, then closed his eyes tightly and shook his head. “Damn it!” he growled. “How did I get so blessed to meet such a dope-ass bro like you?!”

He bolt up from his chair, almost knocking it back completely and swung his arms out. “Argh, come here, you old sap!”

Officer Daichi grimaced at the sight of the two embracing and blabbering apologies. “And that’s probably as long as their arguments will ever get.”

“And that is my cue to get the hell out of this rom com hell hole,” Iwaizumi muttered looking just as fed up.

“Yeah, you should go now,” Daichi agreed. He met eyes with Iwaizumi, mouth curling in to a sly smile. “Don’t want to keep Oikawa waiting.”

“Oh come on, not you too.”
“Not saying it’s a bad thing. I’m happy for you, Iwaizumi,” the officer grinned, folding his arms. “It’s about time you enjoyed yourself.”

“Extended shift.”

“That’s harsh. I thought I was your favourite.”

“I don’t hold favourites,” Iwaizumi raised an unamused brow. “I will beat you all down if I must. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have my work commitment to attend to.”

The senior officer turned and marched before the other could get another word in. Though, he paused before leaving.

Iwaizumi peered over his shoulder at Lev. “Oi,” he called. “I take back what I said. Give Daichi as much hell as you want. No consequences.”

Lev burst in to a wide grin and saluted. “Will do, captain.”

∞

Day 23.

It’s been exactly five days since the last letter has arrived, and yet the words still haunt my mind. I’m floating through a fog. When it will clear up I have no idea.

What does he want from me? I ask myself this as I gaze in to the mirror each morning and night. Sometimes the question shifts itself to what have you done, and in such instances, I simply want to hide. Hide away from the guilt, the fear, the glaring fact which eats away at my insides: I have no clue.

I live in fear of the unknown and with each waking moment, driven further in to the abyss of dark madness-

“Hey, what are you writing?”

Yachi let out a shriek, caught off-guard by the breathy whisper near her ear. Her head jerked to let her eye peer over her shoulder and she slammed her journal shut. “Nothing! I’m- it’s nothing!” she squeaked. “I was just, it’s for an a-article.”

“Ouh!” Hinata’s eyes lit up with curiosity and he leaned in closer. “What kind of article? Can I see?”

“No! I- I mean, it’s.. it’s still in working progress,” she managed, cheeks burning. “Sorry.”

“Oh. Okay, that’s cool,” the young boy rocked back and forth on his heels. The flickering glint of his gold earring winked at each movement. “If you want a second opinion you can always ask me!”

Yachi felt herself calm down from the sudden hype and she sent him a grateful smile. “Thanks,” she
chirped, though interrupted by another voice.

“Quit forcing yourself on the other reporters, Hinata. You’re making them feel awkward.”

The smile on his face evaporated in an instant and he scowled at the intruder. “More like you making them feel awkward. Quit following me around, Kageyama!”

Kageyama raised a brow, unperturbed. “Me follow you? As if. I’m just here to do my job. And you should be the last of all people to complain about stalking others,” he grinned unpleasantly, rattling his phone. “Stalking app? Really? You’re so obsessed with me.”

Hinata’s eyes widened and his face erupted in a flush red. “W-what?! Am not! I was just checking up on you since you were all mopey and sad!” Hinata defended in a flustered stammer. “Sorry for wanting to look out for my friend, jees.”

Kageyama’s cockiness disappeared and he looked taken back. He coughed, clearing his throat, awkward fingers fiddling with his collar. “I know that. I was just… I was joking.” He glanced over his shoulder to check if anyone was watching. “Thanks,” he muttered under his breath.

Hinata blinked owlishly at the sudden switch of personality and he sent Yachi a sidelong glance. His lips twitched as though to fight back a smile and they both looked away.

“So, uh, Kageyama, I heard you got front page of the papers again. Congratulations!” Yachi offered, sending him a wide smile. “I’m seeing a pattern here!”

“Oh. Um, thank you. Yeah. Thanks,” Kageyama’s eyes flickered to meet hers for a brief second then glanced away. “Speaking of patterns.. you still getting them letters?”

Yachi’s smile dropped immediately and Hinata let out a loud groan. “Oh my god, Kageyama why you gotta bring that up, huh? Don’t you have any common sense?”

“I-I was just trying to make conversation!” Kageyama snapped before sending her an alarmed look. “I’m sorry, I didn’t- I-I don’t know..”

“It’s okay..” Yachi forced a wobbly smile. “I-I’m sure he’s.. forgotten.”

“Really? That seems unlikel-”

“Oh my god, just shut your trap, Kageyama!”

“I’m just saying!”

Hinata whipped his head over at her. “I’m sure it’s all a big mistake. You didn’t do anything wrong. You’ll be fine.”

“I didn’t do anything.. at least I don’t think I did,” Yachi mumbled. “But.. what if I did? What if I did do something bad?”

“You didn’t! You wouldn’t.”

“But I don’t remember! How am I supposed to defend my case if I don’t even remember whether I committed a crime or not?”

“I’m pretty sure someone like you would remember if you have done something like that, Yachi.”
“But think about it. He said I stole something of his. Me! He delivered those letters to me! That’s not exactly something you can justify!”

Hinata raised his hands. “Okay, just calm down first. You’re going to knock something over.”

“We should all just calm down. There’s nothing to be worried about.”

“Easy for you to say Kageyama, you’re not being pursued by a scary man.”

“Yeah I am. Oikawa-san.”

“That doesn’t count!”

“Please stop fighting!” Yachi cried out. She nervously tucked a tuff of hair behind her ear. “It’s fine! I could.. I could just live undercover for abit until all this washes over.”

“I say you fight him.”

Yachi paused, then turned to regard the other a blank expression. She burst out in a loud snort. “Oh god, I-I’m sorry, I heard you wrong Kageyama,” she giggled lightly. “For a second there, I thought you said fight him.”

Kageyama frowned in light confusion. “I did. I reckon you should fight him.”

There was another lengthy pause. Hinata broke the silence, letting out a long exhale, and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Kageyama, sometimes I get the feeling that you don’t actually listen to the conversation and like to throw in random phrases just for the sake of it.”

The reporter flushed a warm pink, and punched him on the arm. “Shut up, will you? I’m being serious!”

“Oh what, so you think Yachi should fight a full grown man? A police officer at that!”

“Not physically! Just confront him.” Kageyama glanced over at her. “You should tell him to stop threatening you with all these messages.”

Yachi paled several shades. “Con.. confrontation..? I-I don’t know.. that sounds like the exact opposite of what I’d do.”

“Exactly! Now you have the element of surprise on your side. Tell him to stop stalking you. Tell him to stop messing with your life.”

“And my mental health.”

“Yeah, add that too. Tell him he’s stepping over policing boundaries and you can sue him if he continues.”

Hinata perked up, surprised. “Can you sue someone for that?”

“I don’t know but I would back off if I was told the same thing.”

“Hmm, that’s true..”

“I don’t know you guys.” Yachi squirmed, uncomfortable with the idea. “I mean, he is a police officer..”
“What other choice do you have? Go to prison?” Kageyama asked. He regarded her seriously. “Do you want to spend your life in prison, Yachi?”

“N-No! I don’t want to go to prison!”

“Then you need to tell him. Show him who’s boss.”

“Kageyama’s right! We all know it won’t stop unless you deal with the problem. Besides, we’ll be supporting you the whole way.”

“Really?” Yachi grew pink in the face and she nervously fidgeted with her hair. “You guys will help me, right?”

“Of course! Won’t we Kageyama?” Hinata jabbed the other on his side.

Though his friend did not respond, far too occupied with something in the distance. He squinted hard, brows furrowed as he stared. Then raised his brows. “Speak of the devil.”

“Devil?” Hinata made the dramatic gesture of looking around him. “The only devil here is- ouch! I didn’t even say anything!”

“Quit acting like you don’t know,” Kageyama snapped, pulling back his hand. “And I was talking about him.”

“Who is it?” Yachi stood on her tiptoes, having a small peek. “Who’s a devil?”

“No one’s a devil! I meant the officer. He’s here.”

Yachi grew cold. “What?!” She immediately ducked behind the office desk divider. “What do you mean he’s here?!”

Kageyama seemed unconcerned by the situation. He jerked his chin to the left. “Over there. I’m pretty sure that’s him. His hair is as big as his whole head.”

Hinata leapt up, latching onto his shoulders as he peeked over. “Where? Where is h- oh. Oh yeah, now I see what you mean by the hair.”

“Hinata, stop staring so openly!” Yachi hissed in a frightened whisper. She crouched herself under the desk, thoroughly harassed. “He’s going to come over!”

Hinata dropped down and shot her an excited look. “This is it, Yachi! Now’s your chance!”

“To what, run?!?”

“No! Now’s the opportunity to confront him and explain the situation! Tell him he’s made a mistake and you’ve done nothing wrong.”

“What?!” Yachi clung on to the table leg. “Hinata, he’s part of the police department! It’ll give him more reasons to charge me!”

“What? No he won’t, you’re overthinking things,” Hinata furrowed his brows. “Just be stern. You’ve got nothing to hide. Besides, if he is a cop, he should be fair and understanding, right?”

“I.. I guess..”

“Look at you! You’re hiding under a desk! Is this really how you want to live the rest of your life?
Go tell him off!"

Yachi gave it some thought, then crawled out, sheepishly patting down her pencil skirt. “I mean.. I g- guess I didn’t do anything wrong..”

“Exactly! If anything, he’s the one doing the harassing, don’t you reckon?” Hinata swung his arms, faking a few punches. “Tell him to leave you alone!”

“Y-yeah! I didn’t do anything wrong! Why should I have to hide under a table? He should be the one hiding!” Yachi practiced a few swipes herself, puffing her chest. “I’m not going to be intimidated by him anymore!”

She leaned up to peek over the office divider. “Where is he? I’m going to go right over and give him a piece of my mi…”

Her voice died off when she spotted him only a few mere metres shy from their hideout location.

He was huge, my god he was HUGE. He had to be at least twice her size. And even two Yachis couldn’t possibly take him on.

Kageyama was right though. His hair certainly made up for the few centimetres, all wild and spiked in several angles like some villain from the shows Yachi used to watch as a kid. He loomed over, his sharp, beady-eyes scanning around, not unlike the way a vulture circled for prey. A shadow hung over his frighteningly sharp eyes as he scratched at his mop of a hairdo.

“Oh my god,” Yachi whispered. “That’s no human, that’s a monster! Oh god, I can’t possibly talk to him!”

Hinata joined her to have another look. “You know, he doesn’t seem that bad. Maybe he just has a scary resting face like- ow!” He jumped back, nursing his head. “I was going to say you have a scary face but a nice smile! Jees, can I live?”

“Shut up,” Kageyama retorted, though his mouth twitched like he was trying his best not to look pleased.

Hinata scowled before he turned to Yachi. “I say you fight him, take him on. What’s the worst that could happen? I doubt he’d fly any punches at you especially in a crowded place like this.”

“You- you think so?” Yachi whispered. She pressed her index fingers together nervously. “I suppose he wouldn’t..”

“Of course!” The photographer shot her a big thumbs up. “You can do it, Yachi!”

Hinata always had a way of boosting people’s morale and she felt fearless.

“Okay,” Yachi nodded affirmatively. She closed his eyes and let out a shaky exhale. “I’m.. I’m going to tell him the truth. I’m going to tell him that I didn’t steal anything and he’s clearly gotten the wrong idea because I am not to be messed with!” she declared with a triumphant smile.

“There we go!”

“There I go!” Yachi cried confidently. She turned-

Only to find the officer staring right at her. Her stomach dropped.

“Oh my god!” She dropped immediately, scrambling on the floor. “Oh my g- oh god! Oh god, Oh
She clamped her hands over her mouth, muffling her shrill scream. “H-he saw me! He definitely saw me! I need to go. I need to get out of here, out of this city, maybe even out of this country!”

“No, you need to get up there and go!” Hinata pulled her by the arm. “It's now or never!”

“I can't!” Yachi cried. “I can't, I can't, I can't!”

“You can, you can, you can!” Hinata cheered. “You can do this!”

“He's terrifying!”

“I'll join you then.”

Yachi froze, blinking wide-eyed. “... eh?”

Kageyama nodded. “I'll go. You can do it if there's two of us, right? Or three, Hinata you come too.”

“Yeah, that's smart thinking, Kags! Three against one, outnumber the enemy.”

Yachi gave it another thought, then nodded with uncertainty. “I guess that would make me feel alot better..”

Kageyama sent Hinata a sidelong glance and nodded. “You walk ahead. We'll be right behind you.”

“Sure? You guys aren't going to just ditch me or anything, right?”

“We won't! Trust us,” Hinata gave her an encouraging push.

Yachi let out a nervous chuckle and took a few steps. She glanced over to find the two right behind her. She tested a few more steps, then checked over her shoulder several times to see if they were still following. Hinata smiled encouragingly. “Go on, Yachi! We got your back.”

Yachi nodded and forced a pained smile. “Y-yeah..”

She edged her way closer, ensuring the officer couldn't see her approaching. Like Hinata had said earlier, element of surprise was crucial in such situations. She would catch him off-guard, quickly get everything off her chest then flee for her life. Perfect.

The officer grew larger and larger as she inched closer and closer until finally she stood only a metre apart, body shaking and knees buckling. God, what a skyscraper. Wonder what the view up there's like...  
She shook her head. *No, not now, Yachi.* She had to get this over and done with first, with Hinata and Kageyama at her side. “Thanks by the way, guys,” she whispered, just loudly enough for them to hear. She smiled over her shoulder. “I really appreciate having you guys...”

Her smile died down immediately. “... Guys...?” She spun around several times. “G-guys..?!?”

“Go Yachi!”

She jerked her chin up.. to find them watching from behind another office desk. “Hinata! Kageyama!” she hissed, panic levels skyrocketing. “Come back!”

“You can do this! We're right here if you need us!” Hinata was flicking her a thumbs up, a wide grin on his face.
Yachi let out a soft pant of disbelief. Her forehead prickled with forming beads of sweat. *Hinata’s right. This is your battle you must face, her mind urged. Come on, Yachi. You can do this.*

With a jerky nod, she slowly turned to re-face the humanised version of Godzilla. He seemed to be distracted, face twisted in an awful scrunched up way as he scanned the office. He began to move again, walking in an odd direction. *He’s getting away! It was now or never. She inhaled through her nose, the exhale coming out shaky. “E-excuse me.. sir.”*

The officer didn’t seem to hear her – that or he was ignoring her. Yachi wiped her forehead quickly, sucking in a few short, shaky breaths, fighting the nausea. “I *said,*” she tried again. “Excuse me!” The remaining ounce of courage in her body screamed when the man halted mid-step.

His enormous head moved ever so slowly until she was met with one piercing eye. Officer Kuroo eyed her up and down, nose scrunched. “Oh?” he drawled.

Yachi swallowed hard. He had such a deep voice. The kind that suited threatening or swearing at innocent young girls who committed no crime. Her hands wouldn’t stop trembling and she clenched them tightly. “I-I’ve got.. a bone.. a b-bone to pick with you.. sir.. mister.. o-officer..” she stuttered.

She could barely look him in the eye (yes, single eye. His rockband heavy fringe masked the other). Her gaze wavered and she looked down, only to do a double glance. The officer loomed over her, one arm tucked suspiciously behind his back. She looked up at him alarmed, then back down. *What the heck is he hiding behind his back?! Handcuffs? Clobberer? Gun?!*

She inhaled sharply, suddenly choking on her own saliva. Yachi stumbled back, coughing and spluttering as she struggled to maintain herself.

“Woah there, you alright little one?” Officer Kuroo took a step in, casting a shadow over her face. “Want me to get your back?”

Yachi wheezed, lips clamped to muffle her frightened squeal. She shook her head madly, flailing her arms in a frantic wave.

Kuroo stared for a long time. Then snapped his fingers. “I got it.” He pointed at her. “Yachi, right?”

Yachi coughed madly, face growing red. “*H-how?!”* she spluttered. “*How do you k-know my name?!”*

“Hah! I knew it. I could tell from your expression,” Kuroo grinned widely, eyes shadowed. “Little, dear, Yachi. I heard you were expecting me.”

*Oh my god, he’s come prepared.* Yachi was going to die. She was going to die before her life even began. This was it. She jolted at the heavy bark of laughter.

“What’s wrong, girlie? You’re trembling like a Chihuahua in the snow!” The officer leaned in, a frightening leer painted on his lips.

Okay, forget confrontation. Begging for mercy was more her style anyway. Yachi just about ready to collapse on the floor and sob for forgiveness. She let out a whimpering blubber, just in time to witness Officer Kuroo going in for the kill.

Everything happened so suddenly. There was a sudden flurry of movement, a flash of red and Yachi’s bloodcurling scream which filled the office. Everyone stopped, jolting their attention to the dramatic scene. The rushed momentum of the office was stopped, time stilling within that heightened
moment. Deafening silence hung over them, everyone staring wide-eyed at the scene before them.

Kuroo collapsed on to his knees.

Yachi was the first to break the silence. “Oh,” she breathed, a hand held over her mouth as she stared mortified at the red mess on the floor.

Roses. A dozen roses scattered on the floor. Some had slipped out of the wrapping, a few stray petals dusting the bleakly grey carpet. The officer blinked down in complete surprise before looking up at her.

“Wha-” Yachi fumbled. “But.. what..”

Kuroo jutted his lower lip in a soft pout. “Aww, my surprise is ruined.”
He bent over, gently piling the slightly crumpled flowers together again. “I guess they still look okay.”

“Ohhh my god,” Yachi whispered. “Oh my god, oh my, oh god, oh m-

“Hey, you alright?” Kuroo stared up at her. His eyes flickered about in a discreet glance. “People are staring you know.”

“I’m- oh god!” she squeaked. “I’m so sorry! I didn’t- your roses!”
There was a sudden tightness in her throat, lodging her vocal chord and she felt the prickling sensation form behind her eyes.

Kuroo’s brows shot up and he held his hands out in alarm. “No, no, no, shh. Don’t cry. Oh god, stop. It’s okay, it’s okay!”
He mashed them together in a messy bunch. “See? All good- ouch! Thorn!”

Yachi stared, eyes still teary as the officer sucked on his finger. He shook his hand, grimacing. "Why would they leave them on instead of chopping them off? I suppose there are too many. Imagine having to clip every single one off each stem. Jees, I would kill to never have to do such a job.”

Yachi choked, guilt immediately replaced with full-blown fear and she let out a frightened sob. "P-please.. I'm so s-sorry.."

Kuroo blinked up at her several times. He opened his mouth, then closed it and shook his head. He hummed thoughtfully. “Okay,” he said more to himself. "Okay.”

She hiccuped a few times, wiping her runny nose with the back of her palm.

The officer watched as she tried to compose herself then sat up in a light squat.
He held up his ruffled boutique and scrutinised it from several angles. “Hmm,” he scrunched his nose, squinting at the bunch. He carefully plucked one out, examined the flower from head to toe, then gave a satisfied nod. “Yep, this one is good,” he declared. He held it out to the other. “Here.”

“… Huh?” Yachi blinked down at the flower, eyes wide and dewy from the fresh tears. She looked up to meet his gaze. “What.. what is this for?”

Kuroo hummed lightly and sent her a wide smile. “What do you mean what is it for? It’s a present for you!”

Yachi blinked owlishly. “P-present?”
“Kenma told me about it,” the officer scratched his nose, flashing her an apologetic smile. “Sorry darling girl, but I got my eyes for someone else.”

Yachi’s mind could not comprehend what was happening. “Huh?” she asked again dumbly.

“However, I commend your bravery and as a reward, you may have a piece of my heart,” Kuroo tapped the bud end on her hand. “Here, take it. Watch out for the thorns though.”

Yachi blinked in confusion. She took the rose, staring dumbly at the other.

“Man, B-Dawgs was right I still got it,” Kuroo stood up, patting down the front of his trousers. He waved, grinning awkwardly at other office workers who began to resume back to their work. “But as great as this is, the last thing I want to do is make a girl cry.”

Yachi felt a light nudge on her head and she peered up. Kuroo pat her head a few times then pulled back. He scratched the back of his head awkwardly. “Um, I’m sorry, I really am. But you know what, you’re still young and cute. There’s plenty of big fish in the sea,” His lazy eyes drifted over her shoulder, before returning to meet hers. They lit up, a sudden flicker of mischief dancing in his gaze. “Like that goldfish over there.”

Yachi peered behind her shoulder questioningly. Hinata was still watching intently, curious to see what was happening. He jumped at their stares and dropped down behind the office desk, his light tuffs of orange hair was still visible over the table surface.

Yachi looked back up at Kuroo, who wiggled his brows, a knowing smile on his lips. She felt her cheeks flush immediately at the insinuation. “Oh, no! N-no, no!” She shook her head madly.

“No? He’s a funny kid.”

“It’s not- no! He’s- he’s taken,” Yachi paused, contemplating. “By.. a flying fish.”

“Ahh,” Kuroo leaned back with a sad smile. “Well, there’s plenty more to choose from and a girl like you should find someone real easy.”

He frowned suddenly. “Speaking of finding someone, do you know where I could find Kenma? Guy wee-big, super techn-savvy?”

Yachi could barely comprehend what was happening. “Um, he usually is at his desk. Over there..?” she pointed at the far right of the office.

Kuroo lit up immediately. “Thank you, little missy!” He tugged consciously at his collar, letting out a small exhale. He grinned over at her and jerked his chin. “Hey, by the way, that lovely lady over there has been sending me the most frightening eye daggers. The one with the pretty face and beauty spot near her lip. Heads up just incase if you’re in to that. Now if you’ll excuse me,” before Yachi could respond, he tipped an imaginary fedora at her and spun on his heel.

∞

It had never occurred to him until now how little he knew about Kenma. He could probably count everything he knew off his fingers (not that he’d want to. That was just depressing). Hence why he was squeezed in a dense office, wondering whether he was about to make either the best or worst mistake of his life.
“Excuse me, sor- woops, sorry I’ll get out of your way,” Kuroo jumped back as a man balancing a dangerously wobbly stack of files pushed past him. *God, it’s like an entire city population squeezed in here.* He scratched the back of his head feeling rather fish out of water, no longer as confident as he was earlier. He glanced down at his ruffled roses and shook his head. *No, cmon you can do this,* his mind egged encouragingly. *You even got flowers. Don’t back out now-*

Kuroo let out a startled noise, stumbling slightly when he collided with another woman. “Oof, sorry, sorry. I’ll get out of- sorry.”

He scuttled aside to let others through. His eyes flickered around, scoping the room. Yachi had pointed out his desk was in the far right region. He scanned through, skimming over the sea of workers’ heads. He came to a sudden halt, immediately glued on to the sight of that all-too-familiar mop of hair. His heart skipped a beat and he consciously rubbed at his chest.

It's true he hasn't had the time to get to know the other completely, but wasn't that the whole process of a relationship? Learning about each other? Well, that's at least what he'd told himself to hide the blatant fact that what he was doing was probably going to backfire and yeah, maybe he didn't properly think this through.

He tugged at his collar, inwardly regretting not changing out of the uniform. *Should’ve at least changed the shirt.*

Kuroo let out a low exhale. “Okay, come on hot shot,” he murmured under his breath. “You got this in the bag.”

He edged over carefully, one step, two step, almost knocked in to another angry worker then hurried through. He stood close behind Kenma’s chair to avoid the paths of traffic, unsure of what to do next.

Kenma appeared occupied, busy typing up a long email. His nimble fingers seemed to fly over the keys at a speed Kuroo could most definitely *not* keep up with. He hesitated lightly, before reaching over at him. His fingers hovered over the other’s shoulder but he paused. The officer glanced around to find nearby workers staring at him with mixed expressions of curiosity and suspicion. He slowly pulled back and forced an awkward smile.

*Maybe you should come back next time,* his mind suggested. But he already boasted about it at work, he couldn’t just chicken out now. The butterflies in his stomach were at a complete frenzy. Kuroo inhaled through his nose, fingers twitching at his side. The bouquet of flowers felt like it weighed a tonne. He chewed at the corner of his lower lip and sucked in a deep breath. *No. No more games, no more riddles. No more. It’s time to be a man.*

He lifted the bouquet, hesitating. Then thrust it over the other’s shoulder.

Kenma didn’t notice it at first, far too occupied in his ‘work mind’. Though he soon glanced up, fingers still moving. He frowned, looking slightly confused as though he could sense something odd. He sent a sidelong glance, then did a double take.

“What the-” he let out a startled noise and immediately thwacked the flowers away. The force sent the bouquet flying from Kuroo’s grasp and it slapped on to the ground in a crumpled heap.

Kuroo stared blankly at the mess, then slowly back at him.


Kuroo shrugged, lips tugged in a pained smile. “It was.”
“Oh. Oh, sorry. It just- I saw it from the corner of my eyes and it was instinct,” he pulled off his headphones, letting them rest around his neck.

"No, no, it's alright. It's- wait, don't touch them! They have thorns."

Kenma pulled back and sent him an odd look. He looked around the office then back at him. “What are you doing here? Oikawa isn’t here, you know. He’s out for the rest of the day.”

“I wasn’t..” Kuroo faltered. “Where'd he go?” he asked instead.

Kenma’s expression soured almost immediately. “Out for dinner. Or as Oikawa put it, a ‘wonderful evening dining experience with my handsome man’. He wouldn’t stop talking about it all week.”

Kuroo gaped, mind processing the information. He let out a laugh of disbelief. “No way! So Lev was right! Damn, Wazzy has more moves that me!” His laugh slowly died down and he frowned. “Damn, Wazzy has more moves that me...”

“You're doing it again.”

Kuroo peered down in question. “Huh?”

Kenma raised a brow and shrugged. “You do this thing where you assume I know what you’re talking about. I really don’t.”

“Oh. Sorry,” Kuroo flashed him a sheepish smile. “I'll try to fix that.”

The officer let out a slightly nervous chuckle.

“Were they a gift from someone?” Kenma asked, glancing over at it with curiosity. He glanced up looking rather apologetic. “I'm sorry about them. I really didn’t mean it.”

“These?” Kuroo waved them around daintily. “No, no, they’re not from someone els- woops!” he almost dropped them and let out a heave of relief. Kuroo smiled, abashed, then thrusted the bunch at him. “They’re from me. To you.”

Kenma stared, mind processing as he looked at Kuroo in confusion. “For.. me?”

“Just for you. I admit, they've had better days but, you know.”

“Uh,” Kenma eyed the bundle of flowers, in front of him. Glancing around, he noticed others now openly staring and he hunched over with slight discomfort.

“Now, just to clarify I don’t just do this for anyone. I didn’t do this for Suga.” Kuroo added quickly, watching him for any further reaction.
I.. don’t really know what to say,” Kenma spoke lowly.

“You don’t have to say anything. Accepting these is good enough.” Kuroo grinned, ignoring the low murmurs of those around them.

“Oh, it’s just..” Kenma glanced around, before picking at the sleeve of his shirt. “I.. can’t take them. I get hay allergies quite easily. Not to mentioned Kaita doesn’t like flowers in our house either so..”

The smile on his lips died in an instant. “Oh.” Kuroo dropped the roses down to his side. “Oh wow, I didn’t know you were already- uh, wow. Okay, well this is awkward. Sorry.”

“… It’s okay.”

Well, that was humiliating. Kuroo laughed, inwardly cringing at how forced it sounded. “Well, uh, anyway…”

Kenma was sending him another odd look and it kinda made him want to dig a hole and curl up in it. He dropped his gaze and lightly kicked at the ground instead. “I should probably, uh, you know. Go.”

He nodded quickly. “Yep, so I’ll. see ya around or something.”

“.. of cats?”

He paused, blinking in surprise. “… Sorry..?”

Kenma crossed his arms. He tilted his head lightly to the right, regarding him lightly. “What do you think of cats?” he repeated.

Kuroo reeled his head back. “Umm.. I suppose they’re alright? They don’t call me K-Cat for no reason,” he teased but covered it up with a cough.

Kenma nodded slowly moreso to himself. “How.. about apple pies?”

“I.. like them enough.” The officer sent him a confused smile. “I’m sorry, are we playing a game of 20 questions or?”

Kenma didn’t answer, instead reaching for his mobile. “I’m not doing anything this Friday,” He explained. “I have a cat named Kaita who is affectionate but will scratch you if you don’t pay attention to him. There’s also about nine apple pies in the freezer which I can’t finish by myself. If you’re free, you’re welcome to come over and we can play some playstation or something.”

Kuroo stared, not quite believing what he’d heard. “Wait, seriously?”

“Only if you want to.”

The officer gaped, blinking several times. He furrowed his brows apologetically. “I’m sorry..” he said slowly. “I don’t think I’ll be able to come.. I’m actually more of an xbox kinda guy so- I’m kidding!”

he quickly added when Kenma shot him a sour look. “Yeah, of course I’d like to come! I um, yeah. Yeah! Sounds good.” His mouth curled in to a pleased smile.

“Cool.” Kenma tapped his mobile. “I’m kinda busy with work right now but I’ll get back to you. What’s your mobile number?” He typed swiftly as Kuroo managed to fumble it out. “Thanks, I’ll message you the details.”

Kenma nodded. “Yeah.”
He glanced around, golden eyes flickering left then right, then back up at him. And he smiled shyly. “Talk to you soon, Kuroo.”

His heart was going to explode. But Kuroo played it cool, shooting him a casual smile. “Will do, Kenma.”
He waved farewell, sauntering his way back through the hectic maze of desks. He glanced over his shoulder to check he was out of sight. Then did a quick Chaplin jump. “Yes!” He hissed, fist pumping. “Yes, yes, yes!”

He immediately composed himself, coughing lightly. The officer inhaled deeply and smoothed back his hair. Something caught his eye and glanced to his left.

Yachi stared at him from afar, eyes wide and bewildered, hands full of folders. Kuroo cocked a cheeky wink, letting out a gleeful chuckle at the sight of her red face and continued on through. “Yup,” he declared, swinging the bouquet of broken roses and tossing them in the nearby bin.

“I still got it.”
The past two months for Oikawa has been an absolute rollercoaster.

He felt like he’d lived more within that brief span of time, endured through twists and turns of events which, thinking back now, seemed almost fabricated even to himself. There were moments - some good, some bad, and some just downright shitty. But you know what? Just like the news it was now all in the past, and there really was no need to dwell on history more than necessary.

All Oikawa needed to reflect on now was how he is still here, alive, and happier than he’d ever been in a long time.

And at the end of the day, that’s all that really counts.

“TOBIO!” Oikawa screamed at the top of his lungs, veins popping out of his neck and forehead. Those three syllabus which fuelled his anger and resentment. He didn’t even care about hiding his grudge toward the fellow reporter. At this stage, it was very much apparent amongst the entire office so he might as well express it with pride.

There were the ambient sounds of the busy office outside his room, though his ears soon pricked at the distinct shuffling of shoes. He glowered at the door, waiting, until the door knob rattled and it clicked open.

Kageyama’s head popped in, eyes darting around. They flinched at sight of Oikawa already shooting him daggers. “Uh.. did you call-“

“Don’t just stand there gawking! Get in here!” Oikawa snapped. “And shut the door behind you!”

“O-okay,” the reporter hastily scurried in and closed the door. He took a few hesitant steps closer but kept a safe distance from the other. “Did you need something?”

Oikawa scoffed, then sent him a withering glare. “Oh, I think you’ve done enough.”

Kageyama blinked. “Um..” He glanced to the right then back. “I don’t think I understand.”

“You!” Oikawa snarled, pointing an accusing finger at him. “You’re one sly dog, you know that?”

“… You’ll need to elaborate a little further-”

“Elaborate? Elaborate?!” Oikawa lunged at his desk, causing Kageyama to jump. He yanked the charger cord from his laptop and flipped it around so the screen faced the other. “This!” he barked. “Explain this!”
Kageyama’s eyes widened at the bold news title slabbed right on the screen and immediately broke in to a sweat. He swallowed hard, then rubbed the back of his neck. “Uhh..”

Oikawa leaned over, craning his neck as he peered down at the screen. “City is at peace now as ‘Guess Monster’ terror comes to an end,” he read, voice rising. “Culprit is finally caught after a final showdown with the police.”

He glanced up, eyes flashing. “Hm?” he challenged, raising his perfectly-plucked eyebrows to severe heights. “Well then?”

Kageyama shuffled on the spot, now regretting having closed the door. Being stuck in the room with his senior was hands-down one of the most frightening experiences to live through. “I-In my defence, I didn’t interview Iwaizumi-san,” he answered hastily. “It was one of the other cops. K-Kuroo-san. The one with the.. you know,” he gestured at his head. “The hair.”

“I’m well aware which one Kuroo is. He is the absolute last person you should have interviewed for this entire mess of a situation!”

Kageyama’s face paled at the remark. “Why? Is he unreliable? Should I have asked someone else?” he questioned worriedly.

Oikawa scoffed loudly almost in disbelief. “What does it matter?! We got far bigger issues to deal with right now!”

He jabbed a finger at the lower right corner of the screen, eyes wide with fury. “Like this!”

The reporter followed the direction of the finger with his eyes and stared at the small picture on the screen. Kageyama peered up at the other. “Huh?”

“This! Are you blind?! This! This right here!” Oikawa screeched. He double clicked the image and zoomed in on it. “This picture! Who gave you the right to use this monstrosity?”

“K-Kuroo-san gave it to me. He said it would make the story more plausible-”

“Why are you taking the advice of a non-professional who doesn’t even work in a field remotely related to this media industry?”

Kageyama examined the picture, confused. “I just thought it would add to the article-”

“How dare you,” Oikawa jabbed at the screen. “Do you even know when this photo was taken? Two months ago!”

Kageyama gasped, realising his mistake. “Wait.. this wasn’t taken the night of the kidnap?”

He looked up at the other, concerned. “Then.. what happened to your face?”

“Okay, first of all, that is just plain rude. Learn some manners. Second, the cop caught me off-guard when he snapped this shot! I went through hell and back that night, okay? You would’ve looked infinitely worse.”

The reporter paused to re-examine the photo and he let out an anguished cry, disgusted at his own self. “Oh god, there’s a double chin! Why didn’t you photoshop out the double chin?!”

“But wouldn’t that make it unreliable-”

“I can’t believe this. First you try to steal Iwa-chan from me and now you’re tag-teaming with the officers to destroy my great asset. I have to give it to you, I underestimated you. I didn’t think you were this devious.”
“It’s just a photo, Oikawa-san. I’m sure no one is going to pay that much attention to it.”

Oikawa squinted at the other with one eye, the other wide with a raised brow. “Perhaps you’re not aware of the company which you work for. We are the number one news company. Which means thousands and thousands of people are relying on us for the update on news. Which means thousands and thousands will be reading this. Which means thousands and thousands will see this picture slabbed across the front! Does that make sense, Tobio-chan?”

Before the other could reply, he threw his head back and let out a woeful moan. “I’ve been through so much these past few months: attacked, twice, publically humiliated in front of my co-workers, mentally scarred by hooligan officers."

"I come back here, ready to get this traumatic experience past me, only to see this fat article title slabbed across the front of the site! Imagine my shock when I read through and find this hideous reminder of my past- are you smiling right now? You think this is funny?” Agitated, Oikawa scowled at the other.

Kageyama immediately dropped his smile and shook his head. “No, I don’t. It’s just.. I didn’t think you would.. um.. rmrm mm.”

“Speak louder when you’re answering me!”

“I said.. I didn’t think you’d ever.. read my works again.”

Oikawa’s expression flickered from anger to blank in a split second. “.. What?”

Kageyama looked uncomfortable, embarrassed almost. “Well.. because of last time..”

There was a moment of delicate silence, the weight of his words bringing back a rigid tension.

Oikawa had been meaning to apologise about their last encounter. As much as he despised the other, it was true he may have stepped over the line alittle. He didn’t forget the look on Kageyama’s face that day he’d thundered in the office, emotions stirred up like an uncontrollable storm. He wasn’t in his right state of mind and thinking about it now, Oikawa did regret how things turned out.

Kageyama was the first to break silence, clearing his throat. He peered up at him, cautiously. “Was it.. was the article okay?” he asked nervously.

Oikawa really did want to apologise. But it was a lot harder doing it in person, facing the other like this. Before he could think, his words blabbed out on their own. “It was tacky and I’ve read better.”

The hope in Kageyama’s gaze depleted like air squeezed out of a balloon and he dropped his head. “Oh. Okay.”

Oikawa braced himself, almost expecting the other to bombard him with endless questions like he always did: “You thought it was tacky? Why did you think so? What do you think I could improve on? What would you have written, Oikawa-san? Would it have been better if I wrote this? What do you think about it now? Could you teach me, Oikawa-san?”

But none of the questions came.

Instead, Kageyama stood from his chair and bowed deeply. “Thank you for your honesty.”

Oikawa stopped, blinking. “What?” He sat up properly. “Where are you going?”

“I should get back to my desk. I’ve got a report due by five so..” The younger reporter didn’t meet
his eyes. His fingers flittered at his side, unable to keep still. He tucked the chair in and began to leave. However, he hesitated in his tracks and turned around again, this time meeting his eyes.

“I know you’re probably wondering why I’m still here. Why I’m working here under the same roof as you,” Kageyama called to him, voice low and hushed. He held a strong gaze, unwavering which caught Oikawa slightly off-guard. It was as though he’d shed his meekness, revealing an intensity Oikawa had never encountered before.

“You’ve gone through a lot, endured many things, but so have I. And despite all of it, I want to do my best. I want to be the best. Which is why I want to work with the best.”

He looked Oikawa squarely in the eyes. “I know you don’t like me, nor do you want me here. But I have goals too. I want to be a top reporter like you.”

Oikawa didn’t reply, but sat watching him steadily.

Silence blanketed the room, neither making a move.

Finally, Kageyama bowed. “Apologies for wasting your time. I’m sorry about the picture too. I’ll make sure not to make the same mistake.” He turned and began to leave the room. “Have a good after—”

“You were too colloquial with your language.”

Kageyama paused, mid-movement. He blinked several times. “..Eh?”

Oikawa propped his elbow on the desk and rested his chin on his fist. “The article was too casual. It makes it sound far too personal than it should be,” he replied. “Try to maintain some formality in your writing. And avoid using so much emotive language too. Or at least scatter it out a little more throughout the article. If you dump it all at once, readers will get put off.”

He tapped on the screen, shooting him a dull stare. “Third paragraph was too much. You should’ve deleted it.”

He turned the laptop to his favour, eyes skimming through then he nodded. “Yeah, it would’ve sounded a lot smoother without it. But I suppose it’s decent. For a rookie, that is,” he added miffly.

Oikawa propped up his chin on his hand again for a long minute, gazing down at Kageyama’s face. He raised a brow. “What?” he asked. “You going to say something or just stand there staring like a mute?”

The half-hearted insult didn’t affect him in the slightest. Kageyama lit up, mouth curling in to a wide smile. Though he caught himself and squashed it down. He nodded jerkily. “Thank you very much, yes I’ll work on it. Thank you Oikawa-san.”

Oikawa sniffed, looking away. He waved his hand. “I would expect so. Now get out. I’ve got work to do.”

“I-I, yes! I will. Thank you again,” Kageyama bowed quickly. He stumbled, tripping over his own feet on his way out. “Thank you, have a good day!”

Oikawa examined the wall to his right, waiting till he heard the click of the door closing shut. Then he sniffed, no longer able to hide the small smile which begrudgingly forced itself on his lips. The reporter let out a deep sigh and leaned back for a stretch.

“God, I hate him so much.”
Was this a dream? If it was, he had to say this was the best he’d ever had.

Kageyama gently shut the door behind him eyes still wide with disbelief. The office was alive, workers hustling about with the endless wailing of phones piercing his ears. He didn’t react, staring out in a blank stare.

“Kageyama!”

He flinched lightly, broken out of his daze. The familiar mop of orange filled his vision as Hinata ran over and grabbed him. He looked frightened. “What happened?! Why was Oikawa calling you? What did he want? Was he being mean again?” Hinata ran him hands over the other, examining him for wounds.

“He praised my work,” Kageyama said faintly. He blinked several times. “Oikawa Tooru praised my work.”

Hinata’s mouth dropped. “What?! Really?”

The reporter nodded numbly. His mouth began to curl in to a wide smile. “I can’t believe this.. I must be dreaming- ow!” He yowled in surprised pain, then lunged out to attack the other. “That hurt, you dumbass!”

Hinata leapt back, dodging his swipes. “Because you said you were dreaming! It’s just a little pinch, quit being such a baby.”

“Yeah? Then let me pinch you back. See if you don’t react.”

“No way! I’m no stupid!”

“Don’t you know lying is bad?”

Hinata shot him a grumpy look. “Quit being such an ass.”

His expression soon melted in to awe and he leaned in again. His voice dropped down to a hush. “Wow,” he whispered. “I can’t believe Oikawa praised your work.”

Kageyama suddenly grew uncomfortable and he shrugged. “Yeah..”

“Yeah? That’s it? You should be screaming and shouting at the top of your lungs!”

“I am excited! I’m just.. it all seems surreal, that’s all.”

“Want me to pinch you again?”

“No!”

“Just making sure.” Hinata grinned widely. He elbowed him lightly. “Well, no surprise though. The article was amazing, Kageyama.”

The reporter glanced up, over at him. “Really?” he asked.
“Yeah! I read it about three times,” The cheekiness in Hinata’s smile melted away, leaving a curve to his mouth that felt entirely too genuine. “You’re a brilliant writer.”

Kageyama stared at him for a moment too long and he looked away. His heart began to race and he inwardly cursed himself for being such a softie to his praise. “Thanks.”

“No problem. Hey, does that mean you’re going to be a top reporter now? You’ve already gotten two headlines even though you’re still so new,” Hinata’s eyes glistened. “You’re going to be the next biggest thing! Everyone will want you to write for them. I wonder if you’ll even have time left for me too.”

Kageyama felt a wave of smugness roll over him and he crossed his arms, tipping his chin up. “Who knows? I’m going to be far too busy to be hanging out with a lower title like you,” he teased. He glanced over with a grin, but it faltered at the hurt expression of the other.

Hinata looked at the ground and nodded slowly. “I suppose that’s true.” He smiled up at him, eyes full of sincerity. “But that’s awesome, Kageyama. I’m so happy for you.”

Kageyama stared, chest suddenly growing tight. He didn’t know what to say.

Hinata’s gaze dropped and he looked away. The photographer nodded to himself and swung his arms back and forth. “Yeah.. a-ny-way, I better get to work. I’ll talk to you later.”

He began to walk away and Kageyama panicked. He grabbed for the other impulsively and in his haste, snatched his head.

“Woauuee!” Hinata let out a startled screech, immediately jerking about to free himself. “What are you doing?!”

“Sorr- wait, stop!” Kageyama snapped, frightened by the situation aswell. “Stop! Calm down!”

“How am I meant to calm down?! You’re crushing my skull!”

“Just stop freaking out! You’re going to draw attention!”

It was too late, nearby workers staring at the sight of the two men screaming, one wriggling about on the spot, and the other latched on to his scalp.

“Let go, let go, let go, let go!”

“Okay, okay fine!” Kageyama jerked his hands away, holding them up. “See, I stopped! Now would you please st- aurgh!” He let out a yelp as the photographer jumped right in his face and yanked his fringe roughly.

“Yeah, see! Hurts doesn’t it?” Hinata shot back, but he immediately jumped a safe distance from the other. “Don’t mess with me!”

“I wasn’t trying to mess with you!” Kageyama snapped, nursing his scalp. He wiped away the small beads of tears which had formed. “I just wanted to ask you something!”

“Ask me something?” Hinata looked completely baffled. “Then just ask me?! Instead of tearing my head apart!”

“I want you to be my partner.”

Hinata paused, outrage momentarily forgotten. He blinked. “What?”
“I want you to be my partner,” Kageyama repeated. He looked like he was going to elaborate but he just shrugged. “I like your work. I would like to work with you. Please.”

Hinata’s eyes grew wide. He checked over his shoulder then turned back to him. “Is that... You want to... with me?” he asked quietly.

Kageyama fidgeted on the spot. He felt strangely nervous. “If you want to.”

“Of course I want to!”

Kageyama jolted at the yell and stumbled back when the other pulled himself right in to his space, hands clenched over his sweater. Hinata’s eyes sheened like he was going to cry. His piercings dangled as he nodded frantically. “I want to! I really want to! I’ve wanted to! Yes!”

Kageyama blinked, before he felt his face erupt with heat. “Okay relax, you’re acting as though I proposed to you.”

Hinata paused before his expression grew serious. “Well, technically, you did ask to be my partner so-”

“Shut up!” Kageyama squeaked, voice high pitch and furious. “I-I’m not ready for that commitment yet!”

“Oh good, cause neither am I,” Hinata let out a relieved sigh. He glanced over at the other, eyes alive and smiling. “Do you really want me as your partner? I mean, you’ve made two headlines already. You could easily get someone more experienced and better than me.”

“I know.”

“Hey! You’re meant to say no!”

“But,” Kageyama interjected before Hinata could erupt in another tantrum. “I was an intern once too. I want to work someone who can experience all this with me together. Someone who started from the ground. If we work hard, we rise together and become the best. Maybe even grow greater than Oikawa.”

“That’s a bit of a stretch there.”

“Do you want to do this or not?”

“Yes, I do!” Hinata beamed widely. He began tapping the side of his camera the way he always did when he was pleased. “If you want, you can work with other photographers whilst I’m still an intern. I can always catch up by working with other reporters. It’ll enrich our expe-”

“No!”

Hinata paused, looking up in question. “No?”

“I said no,” Kageyama repeated. He towered over the other, glaring. “You agreed to be my partner. You can’t just go be with someone else. Why bother being in a partnership then? If you do that I’ll never work with you, ever.”

“O-Okay, okay, sorry! I was just suggesting!” Hinata squawked, eyes wide in alarm. “It wasn’t like I was going to betray you or anything! Don’t you want to broaden your experience?”

Kageyama’s eyes dropped in an assessing squint but he eventually nodded. “I’ll... consider it. Maybe.
Depends on who you work with.”

“Fine. Same goes for you!”

“.. Fine. No takebacks either.”

Hinata puffed up. “Same goes for you!” He frowned lightly, crossing his arms. “And I demand to be treated with respect. I am a professional and want to be treated as one.”

Kageyama snorted and crossed his arms. “Real professional looking like that,” he scorned, flicking at Hinata’s golden piercings.

“Hey!” Hinata clamped a hand over his ear and glared up at the other, defiance flaring in his eyes. “I’m just as professional as you! Fine! I can look the part too! Think I won’t do it?” He reached up for the first piercing when his hands were harshly slapped away. “Ouch!”

“I was kidding!” Kageyama snapped. “You can- you can keep them.”

Hinata stared at his friend who looked oddly angry and flustered at the same time, his face bright red. He felt his own cheeks grow warm and turned his head in embarrassment. “You want them or you don’t, make up your mind sheesh! You’re like my mother. God, you’re so weird.”

Kageyama huffed loudly. He glanced over at the other from the corner of his eye. “I’m going to wait for you. Once your internship is over and you’re offered a position we can start looking at collaborative works.”

“If they hire me.”

“Of course they will, I’ll make sure of it. I’ll include a recommendation if I need to.”

Hinata snapped his head up. “Yeah?” he whispered.

Kageyama reeled in his head in surprise. “Well, duh. You may suck a reporting but I suppose you’re decent at photography. But if it doesn’t work out then I guess you can work as my coffee boy- ow!”

“You take that back! If I don’t get this job, it’s because you jinxed it!”

“Don’t blame me for your poor behaviour! That’s all your doing?”

Hinata jumped back, a determined look in his eyes. “I’m going to catch up to you!” he declared.

Kageyama rubbed at his sore arm, scowling. “You better keep up then.”

Hinata glared up at him for a while, not saying anything. He then paused and peered over his shoulders again, eyeing his surroundings.

Kageyama glanced around questioningly. “What are you looking at?” he asked, but it was cut off with a startled squeak when the other lunged in and wrapped his arms around in a tight hug.

Hinata let go quickly, smiling up at him with shining eyes. He pointed at him. “You better wait for me, Kageyama.”

He turned around and immediately ran off in to the bustling office, his orange hair disappearing in the tall crowd.

Kageyama stared in utter shock. He stood there for a long period before he collapsed on to the ground, furiously blushing and mortified.
Kuroo had come to believe that there were some puzzles in life that simply could not be solved.

Mysteries always fascinated him. As a kid, he spent many of his after-school hours rushing home just in time to watch the ‘Unsolved Mysteries of the Universe’ documentaries which aired on cable television every noon. It was intriguing how there existed phenomena which even science could not explain.

Even now as a fully-grown adult, curiosity quelled deep within him. Kuroo leaned back against a counter in the coffee room, his fascination peaked. The scent of burnt coffee lingered in the air but he paid no more, far more interested in assessing the scene before him.

His dear best brofriend Bokuto deeply engrossed in what appeared to be a one-sided conversation with his boyfriend, Akaashi. The officer was talking at an alarming speed using wild, elaborate body gestures, and Akaashi didn’t seem to mind, far too amused by his silly act to care.

Both were far too occupied to notice Kuroo squinting over at them as he inhaled and exhaled through his nose in contemplation.

Bokuto had declared at the end of his shift he was off to visit Akaashi at work and offered Kuroo to join him. Of course, Kuroo couldn’t say no to that – he’d been keen on visiting a certain someone at the office and thus had eagerly tagged along.

Only to discover that today had in fact been Kenma’s day off.

Kuroo hunched his shoulders, lower lip jutted as he watched Bokuto greeted his boyfriend – or rather, startle him with a big bear hug and a blatant kiss on the cheek. He’d had no choice but to tag along with the two, trailing close behind, having to endure through multiple sessions of awkward PDA’s.

But as time passed, and the longer he observed the interaction between the two, one particular thought seemed to nag his mind.

Kuroo’s gaze shifted over toward Akaashi. The photographer listened intently to Bokuto’s words, nodding occasionally. At one comment, he raised a brow and shook his head, huffing in faint amusement. Kuroo frowned at the sight.

Now, the thing here is, Akaashi is not your ordinary person. For starters, he’s beautiful. Even Kuroo couldn’t deny it, Akaashi was definitely a good looker, practically a model. He seemed charming enough too, very well-mannered. Polite with an air of sophistication which made those around him look like an awkward mess. Not to mention he was a man with a fat salary and probably high taste. No matter how you look at it, Akaashi is an all-rounder ten out of ten.

So how was it that he ended up with someone like Bokuto?

Don’t get him wrong, Bo was a great guy, a really great guy and he deserves the world. But Akaashi? The two were practically at bipolar ends. It’s not that he say Akaashi was out of his league, but moreso that perhaps he was just alittle too.. perfect? Kuroo frowned at the thought.

“K-Cat, are you listening?”
He blinked, thoughts shattered to find Bokuto and Akaashi watching. “Hm? Oh yeah. I’m listening.”

Bokuto grinned, a childish smile sliding back in to place. “Sooo? What do you think?”

_Ah, crap._ Kuroo shrugged and sent him a lazy grin. “I’m thinking whatever you’re thinking.”

It seemed to be the right response. Bokuto lit up and he clasped a hand over his shoulder. “We should figure out a time and go together! I can’t wait!”

_Ah, crap again._ Kuroo glanced over at Akaashi, still smiling but confused. _What the heck did Bo say?_

Akaashi seemed to get the message. “It sounds like a nice plan. The _movies_ sounds like fun.”

_Ah, movies._ Kuroo nodded, going along with the flow. “Yeah going to be great, Bo.”

He paused, a sudden thought crossing his mind. _Wait.. aren’t movies sort of date-materialy? If Akaashi’s coming too, did that mean this was going to be a date? Was that mean he’d end up as the third wheel?_ Kuroo grimaced at the thought.

Bokuto carried enough excitement for the both of them, hopping from one foot to the other. “It’s going to be great! Just me, my boyfriend, and my best bro! I’m so psyched!”

He paused, before looking over at Kuroo. “Hey, if you want, we could invite Kenma too.”

Kuroo perked up at that, attention grabbed. “Kenma?”

“Yeah! The more, the merrier, right?” Bokuto glanced up in contemplation, then he smiled. “Like a double date!”

Kuroo’s heart did a little somersault at that. “Yeah, sure. I’ll invite him,” he replied, feeling significantly better now. He glanced over to find Akaashi watching.

He had a strange look on his face but it was gone in an instant. He smiled politely. “Sounds nice.”

He opened his mouth to say something else, but paused. Akaashi looked over at Bokuto, a sheepish look on his face. “Bokuto, I think I’ve left my folder back on my desk,” he apologised. “Could you please get it for me? It’s a navy blue folder with a white binder. I think I left it in my first draw.”

Bokuto bounced up, a keen shine in his eyes. “Sure, sure! Anything for my boo! I’ll be right back,” he hurried off, slipping lightly on the kitchen tiles in an eager rush.

Kuroo snorted at the sight and leaned back against the counter. He raised a brow at the other. “My boo?”

It was impressive how composed he looked, though Kuroo could didn’t miss the redness seeping in his cheeks. “He’s.. very affectionate to say in the least,” Akaashi replied, turning away to fiddle with a coffee machine. He glanced over. “I’m making a cup. Did you want one?”

“Oh yeah, he’s just a big cuddle monster that one,” Kuroo agreed. “And sure, thanks.”

He watched as the photographer pulled out two paper cups and began to pour a sachet of coffee beans in to the coffee grinder. “Fancy coffee too? You know how to do everything, don’t you?”

Akaashi turned, lips tugged in a polite smile. “Yes,” he replied. “I’m capable of many things.”

He lightly tapped the grinder to even out the level. “So. You and Kenma.”

Kuroo blinked owlishly, then grinned. “Me and Kenma,” he repeated. He liked the sound of that.
Akaashi nodded. He raised the container to his eye level, checking the beans. “Mm. What’s the situation with that?”

“Oh. Well. We’re.. you know,” Kuroo shrugged, playing it cool. Then let out a girlish giggle. “I don’t know, just- we’re cool. Very cool.” He wiggled his brows suggestively.

Akaashi sent him a sidelong glance, dark eyes unblinking. “Are you now?” He smiled lightly.

“Yeah, he’s a fun guy. Very witty too. He invited me to hang out at his last Thursday. No big deal, just two dudes chilling close together-”

Kuroo jumped at a sudden loud bang and snapped his head over.

Akaashi had his hand pressed over the lid of the grinder. He glanced over to meet his gaze. “Sorry, the machine gets stuck sometimes. Need to make sure it’s secured.”

“Oh,” Kuroo laughed. “No worries. Just make me jump, that’s all.”

Akaashi held his gaze for longer than necessary before refocusing on the machine. “So how long has this been going on for?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Not that long I suppose,” Kuroo paused to think. “More just a spontaneous move on my behalf, really.”

“Spontaneous?”

“Well, not spontaneous, but I did jumpstart this fiery passion, if you get what I mean,” The officer glanced over his shoulder then leaned in toward the other. “Hey,” Kuroo whispered. “I’m thinking of taking him out to dinner some time. Do you know what sort of food Kenma likes? Or dislikes?”

Akaashi clicked at several buttons then stepped back as the machine whirred in to action. “Isn’t that something you should be asking him, not me?”

“Well.. yeah. But I kind of want to surprise him. Help me score some brownie points, y’know?”

Akaashi didn’t reply for a while. He stared at the coffee machine, watching the dark liquid begin to drip out in to the coffee jug. The sudden drop of conversation brought an odd atmosphere in the coffee room. It sent Kuroo an uncomfortable twinge and he smiled awkwardly. The officer scratched the back of his head. “I mean, if you know anything. If you don’t that’s fine too…”

The photographer then turned to him, slowly but surely, his dark eyes staring with unshaken intensity. “Kenma likes it hot.”

Kuroo’s eyes grew comically wide, the size of dinner plates. He reeled his head back in shock. “E- excuse me-”

“Coffee,” Akaashi replied. “He likes his coffee extra hot.”

“Oh. O-Oh, right.” He huffed an embarrassed laugh. “You surprised me for a second there, Akaashi.”

Kuroo smiled over at the other, but faltered when it wasn’t returned.

Akaashi gazed over at him without a smile, nor any expression. Behind him, the coffee machine beeped to indicate the coffee was finished.

Kuroo glanced over at it, before looking back at him. “Um.. I think the coffee is d-”
“I drink my coffee black,” Akaashi interrupted. His dark eyes watched him, unwavering.

It was beyond unnerving. The officer felt the back of his neck begin to prickle uncomfortably and he tugged at his collar. “Uhh, cool. That’s nice.”

“Would you like to know why I like my coffee black?”

“.. W-why..?”

“Because,” Akaashi turned around and pulled out the coffee jug. He looked down as the black liquid sloshed side to side. “I like it straight. No sweetener or artificial creamer to mask its true flavour. If you add that sort of stuff, it ends up tasting fake.”

He glanced up, staring directly into his eyes. “I don’t like fake.”

Kuroo let out a nervous chuckle, eyes darting to the right. What’s taking Bokuto so long? “That’s cool I guess. I think that’s uh, y-yeah.” He rubbed the back of his neck which had already begun to sweat.

Akaashi reached over and grabbed a paper cup, holding it toward him. “Coffee isn’t the only exception.”

He began to the coffee with frightening calm, eyes not leaving his. “Do you understand what I am saying?”

Kuroo didn’t know what scared him more: the fact that he actually had no idea what Akaashi was on about, or the man’s accuracy with pouring that coffee. No seriously, he wasn’t even spilling a single drop without looking. How the hell is that possible?

The officer swallowed hard. “U-um, I’m just.. h-hey, what’s taking B-Dawgs so long with that file? Maybe I should help him-!” He jumped when the coffee jug was slammed back on the counter and Akaashi suddenly lunged right in to his personal space, so close, his body heat radiated on to Kuroo’s skin.

“Let me be frank with you. I don’t know what your relations are with Kenma, but please be aware that if I find out you have hurt him in any way..”

He leaned in close, voice low and deadly calm. “They will not find your body.”

Kuroo’s eyes widened, completely round with shock.

He stayed as still as possible as Akaashi reached over past his arm, grabbing something from behind. He pulled back and held it up in front of his eyes. “Biscuit?” Akaashi asked politely.

Kuroo gaped, not quite sure how to respond. He gave a jerky, awkward nod and slowly accepted it with shaky hands. “Um.. I-I, yes. Yes, please. Thanks.”

Akaashi stared for a long time as though assessing his reaction. Then smiled politely. “Not a problem, K-Cat.”

Before Kuroo could utter a response, Bokuto came crashing in, dishevelled and panting.

“Akaashi, I’m sorry! I couldn’t find the file anywhere!” He wailed, looking utterly distraught. “I looked in the draws, I checked your desks! I asked others to check if I was at the right desk but I just couldn’t find it, I’m sorry!”

Akaashi expression shifted instantly, melting into exasperated fondness. “It’s alright, Bokuto. Nothing to get upset about. I’m sure it’s around somewhere. Thank you for looking though.”

Bokuto wiped his forehead, still distressed, though he forced a smile. “I’m sorry,” he apologised
The photographer shook his head, a charming smile playing his lips. “Don’t worry, I probably put it elsewhere. I’m due back anyway so I’ll go have a look,” he said as he reached over to smooth down Bokuto’s tie. His eyes flickered up to meet the other’s. “I need to work. I’ll give you a call later?” Akaashi asked, sounding almost shy.

Bokuto looked like he was going to combust. He sucked his lips in, trembling from the effort before he burst out in a high-pitched giggle. He had a goofy grin on his face, highlighting a dimple that deepened on his left cheek. The officer nodded vigorously, face flushed a pleasant red. “Yes! I’ll wait! I’ll definitely answer. I’ll wait for you!”

Akaashi snorted lightly and gently pushed him away. “Your honesty is refreshing. I better get going now.”

Kuroo flinched when Akaashi leaned in, far too closely. The photographer held up a paper cup. “Your coffee, Kuroo.”

Kuroo eyed it warily and accepted it.

Akaashi bowed his head lightly. “Remember to give Kenma a call about the movies. It would be nice if he could join us.”

He turned to give Bokuto one final smile and began to make his way out the coffee room.

Kuroo stared numbly at the coffee in his hand. Suddenly, a thought struck and realisation dawned upon him. Kuroo’s eyes widened and he whipped his head over. “Hey Akaashi!” he called out.

Akaashi paused, looking at him questioningly. Bokuto blinked owlishly, looking back and forth at the two.

The officer opened his mouth, then closed it. “There was no file, was there?” he asked.

Akaashi stared for a long time. Then smiled. “I don’t know what you’re talking about, Kuroo.” He spun on his heel and strode out, coffee in one hand.

Beside him, Bokuto let out a long, loving sigh. “K-Cat, isn’t he perfect?”

Kuroo blinked several times. “Holy shit,” he murmured still in disbelief at what had just happened. He just discovered Akaashi’s flaw.

He was badshit crazy.

∞

Work was a huge component of Iwaizumi’s lifestyle.

Being an officer was time-consuming enough, but as a senior officer, it was just hectic. Even with the case finally closed, he was still as busy as ever.

“I appreciate the offer but I’m going to have to decline,” Iwaizumi repeatedly patiently for the umpteenth time today. He lightly massaged his temple, eyes shut as he waited for the rambling to
stop on the other line. “Yes, yes, that’s nice but I’m not taking any more interviews. Now, please do
not call the office lines unless there is an emergency, thank you.”

He quickly hung up before the other could squeeze in another offer and tossed the phone on the table
like it was tainted. Iwaizumi slunk back in his chair with a weary sigh. This was exactly why he
didn’t like reporters – once you accept an interview, the rest come swarming around like vultures.

It had been non-stop pestering since Kageyama had posted their interview article together, and now
with the recent update, the press were on his back practically 24/7. He’d even had to resort to
sneaking out the back after his shift, knowing full well there were still a few reporters lurking about
near their station.

“I don’t get it,” Kuroo complained earlier this morning when Iwaizumi rushed in to the office
wearing his jacket over his face to avoid possible photos. “How come Wazzy still gets the attention
when I was the one who was interviewed in the paper?”

“Because he’s the titled ‘hero’ of the whole ordeal,” Daichi replied easily. “He’s also the one in
charge of the case.”

“That’s ridiculous. It wouldn’t kill to send some paparazzi to me too! I’d be more than willing to
comply.”

“Maybe it’s because you don’t look so..” Daichi gestured over his face. “Welcoming. Friendly.
Policeman material.”

Kuroo scoffed indignantly. “How dare you mock thee. I’ll have you know Kenma thinks I have a
wonderful face!”

“Did he really say that?”

“It may be alittle paraphrased but the message was there.”

“Consider yourself lucky, Kuroo,” Iwaizumi rubbed his face, shooting him a spent look. “You do
not want reporters chasing you. Trust me, they’re a complete energy-drainer.”

Which was most definitely true. He was satisfied keeping up with just one.

Ring Ring Ring Ring

Iwaizumi jerked out of his train of thoughts to find himself back in his office. He dropped his gaze to
find the office phone going off again and he let out a sigh. “Go away,” he groaned as he sat up and
clicked the green dial button. “Hello, this is Iwaizumi Hajime speaking.”

“Iwa-chan! Hello!”

Iwaizumi straightened his back immediately, now wide awake. “Oikawa.”
He subconsciously began to straighten his tie. “Hi, yes. hey. Why’d you call through the office line?
You should’ve gone through my mobile.”

Oikawa huffed lightly on the other line. “I did but you didn’t answer! Iwa-chan, you really need to
keep your phone with you. You’re terrible at answering.”
“Right, right, sorry.” He nodded despite the other not being able to see him. “How are you?”

“Tired. I’m at work, on my lunch break. What about you?”

“Work, the usual,” Iwaizumi tapped at his desk. “Isn’t it abit late for lunch? What are you eating?”

“I was meant to have a break earlier but I got side-tracked. I had to finish a report due by five today and I wanted to get it over and done with.” There was a light hum. “And I don’t know what I want. I’m just going to grab something from the vending machine but there aren’t many options.”

Iwaizumi furrowed his brows. “You shouldn’t keep eating from those. They’re not good for you.”

“They’re quick and easy! I don’t have time to make food.”

“Come over to mine then. I’ll make you something,” Iwaizumi answered without really thinking about it. He paused, blinking to himself. “I mean, if you want-”

“Ooh! You can cook? I’d be more than happy to eat your meals!” Oikawa gushed in his ear. He sounded significantly happier now. “What can you make?”

“What’s your favourite food?”

The answer was almost immediate. “Milk bread.”

Iwaizumi grimaced lightly. “That’s horrid. I’ll make hot pot.”

There was an amused laugh. “That’s not cooking. You’re just throwing veggies in a light broth! Anyone can make that.”

“Do you want to eat it or not?”

“I’ll eat it. Thank you, Iwa-chanchan.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “You’re welcome. Just message me when you’re free and I’ll see when it matches with my schedule. I want to pay you back somehow for last dinner.”

“Oh please, that wasn’t a big deal,” Oikawa replied casually. There were soft beeps which Iwaizumi assumed was the other pressing at the vending machine. “Hey Iwa-chan?” his partner’s voice called in his ear.

“Hm?”

“Did you..” His voice suddenly grew quiet, sounding alittle hesitant. “Did you have fun last time?”

Iwaizumi blinked at the random question. Then erupted in a furious blush. “It was, uh, yes,” he coughed, nodding jerkily. “I did. It was good. Did you enjoy it?”

“I did. I wasn’t too sure what food you liked so I just picked a random place.”

“No, it was nice. I like all types of food. Unlike someone who seems to underappreciate the artistry of hot pot cooking.”

“I never said I didn’t like it! I can’t wait to eat Iwa-chan’s!”

“Ahuh, right,” Iwaizumi eyed the stack of unfinished reports on his desk. “Well, don’t get too excited cause I’ve got quite a lot on my plate so I don’t know when that’s going to happen.”
“Oh. Are you really busy?”

“Very. Got given another case the moment I finished this one.”

“Oh no, poor Iwa-chan!” Oikawa let out a sympathetic tut and Iwaizumi couldn’t help but feel a little pleased. “What is it? What are you working on?”

“Not too sure as of yet,” Iwaizumi sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “I don’t know if it’s a big case yet or just some false alarm.”

“Aww, it’s okay. Don’t get too stressed, okay?” There was a light rustle of paper. “Now tell Oikawa your concerns. What’s the case about?”

“Well,” Iwaizumi peered at his fan spiralling in lazy circles. “There was a report earlier which came in regards to a missing child. She’s about six years old, petite girl.”

“Mhm, missing girl, about six years old. What else?”

“Uhh.. well, she’s been missing for seven hours but technically we can’t warrant a search until it has been at least twenty four hours. But the mother is insisting we do something about it now.”

“Ooh, I see, I see,” Oikawa murmured distantly. “Missing for a few hours, mother is devastated and pleads for help from the police.”

“Yes,” Iwaizumi replied. “I don’t know about this one though, cause the girl went missing at school. But in that sort of situation, it is more likely she had- wait.”

The officer paused, listening. There was a faint scratching sound in his ear and he felt his eyes drop to a suspicious squint. Iwaizumi glared. “Are you writing this down?”

There was a long pause on the other line.

“… Well-”

“Oikawa!”

“I’m sorry! Your story just sounded so interesting, I wanted to investigate it further!”

“Yeah right! You just wanted another big story, didn’t you!”

“Come on, Iwa-chan! Tobio’s been doing so well lately it’s pissing me off! I need to kick him off the front headlines before he does any further collateral damage!”

“No! I told you, I’m not doing any more stories!”

Oikawa sulked on the other line. “Okay, fine! I can still destroy him without your help anyway.”

Iwaizumi scowled. “See, this is why I don’t like reporters. Always interfering with my work. And it doesn’t help that the press is hounding me over the whole Guess Monster case,” Iwaizumi spun in his chair. “I think I got thirty calls today alone. They sure are persistent.”

Oikawa reacted as though Iwaizumi had hit him, drawing in a sharp breath. “Who called? Who was it? Was it the Fukurodani Agency? I swear they’re always trying to steal our headlines! You didn’t accept any of their offers did you, Iwa-chan? Don’t tell me you did!”

“Relax, relax, I didn’t, sheesh,” Iwaizumi grumbled, rolling his eyes. “I don’t know which news agency it was. There were a few.”
“Oh good. Good, good. Iwa-chan, don’t go talking to those strangers, okay? They’re no good and they’ll only want you to spill the beans before they use your words against you.”

Iwaizumi raised an unamused brow. “Sounds familiar.”

“I was just kidding! I would never use you like that. I’m far too fond of you.”

Iwaizumi opened his mouth to shoot back a snarky comeback but found himself a little taken back. He smiled, sheepishly pleased. “Yeah, yeah. I should go now. You enjoy your break.”

“Okay, I’ll send you my schedule for the next week and give me a reply asap when you’re free. I can’t wait to eat Iwa-chan’s hot pot,” Oikawa spoke lightly, a fondness in his tone.

“Alright. Don’t overwork yourself.”

“You too. Have a good day. Restrain from shooting your bumble-headed officers.”

Iwaizumi snorted. “I’ll try not to,” he teased. “Or then again, I could just dump their bodies where no one will find them,” he joked just as the door swung open and his senior officer stood at the door.

Iwaizumi’s cheeky grin dropped immediately and he froze, like a deer caught in the deadlights.

Ushijima stared at him, brows raised.

“Ooh, naughty, Iwa-chan!” Oikawa chirped in his ear which kind of made him want to shrivel up a little further. “And what happens if I do-”

“I need to go now, talk to you later, bye,” Iwaizumi rushed in one breath and immediately hung up. He placed the phone down and did his best to gather up the rest of his dignity and look as professional as possible. “Evening, sir,” he greeted.

Ushijima eyed him carefully before he nodded. He closed the door behind him and sat right across from him. “You’ve read the news lately, I assume?” he asked, and that was so ‘him’. He never beat around the bush, always jumping right to the point.

Iwaizumi felt his good mood begin to melt away and he nodded. “Yes.”

“Guess Monster’ they called him.”

“Yes.”

Ushijima nodded more so to himself and sat back. He crossed his fingers together and placed them neatly in his lap, watching the other.

The strain of his gaze left Iwaizumi tense, apprehending. He looked away, focusing on the stack of files instead.

“They relocated the culprit.” He said, despite being fully aware his senior already knew this.

Ushijima sniffed once and glanced elsewhere. “He has been moved to a small cell for the time being. The district team is in the midst of examining his home and trying to piece his criminal history. For the time being, it only seems to be a string of petty crimes, nothing more serious.” He peered over at him from the corner of his eye. “I’ll be paying a visit to hopefully get more insight from him.”

Iwaizumi nodded. “That’s good to hear-”
“Hajime.”

The officer grew rigid. He was already anticipating this speech, but he felt his muscles tighten like it was preparing for a physical blow.

Ushijima’s eyes had sharpened significantly. He gazed down at the other, expressionless. “You defied my orders.”

Iwaizumi forced himself to look up at the other. His heart was palpating uncomfortably but he kept still. “Yes,” he replied.

“You’ve purposely defied my orders despite being displaced off the case.”

“I did.”

“You chose not to listen. Instead, you decided to take measures in your own hands without notifying me of the situation. Not only that, you even dragged your fellow officers in to this mess.”

Iwaizumi clenched his jaw. “They are well-managed officers, sir. You give them less credit than they deserve.”

Ushijima didn’t seem to notice, unaffected by his clipped response. “You placed them under great risk without any consideration of the potential dangers of the culprit.”

His self assurance irritated him beyond measure.

“Excuse my manners but it’s not that I didn’t consider the danger of the situation. I had it under control.”

“There is no guaranteed control over a ransom.”

Iwaizumi flared up, anger chipping away at his self-control. “I saved his life,” he answered in a low voice. “You have no idea what it was like for him. When I found him, he was tied to a chair in an abandoned warehouse. If anything were to happen to him, no one would’ve known.”

The officer leaned in, challenging the other. “He was forced in to a dangerous situation and I did the best I could do and got him out of it. If it weren’t for me and my men, he could’ve ended up much worse.”

Ushijima maintained his gaze, unmoved. He unlinked his fingers and sat forward. “Yes,” he replied in a casual tone. "Which is why I’m here to commend you.”

“Yes, well I-" Iwaizumi paused. He blinked once. “Huh?”

Ushijima stared at him, stern as ever. “I said I am here to commend you,” he repeated. He held out a hand. “You defied my orders despite the consequences and risked your own safety in order to save a life. You’ve gone above and beyond your duties. I commend you for following your instincts. Good job, officer.”

Iwaizumi stared, looking thoroughly confused. He looked down at the outstretched hand then back up at him.

The senior officer raised a brow. “You’re meant to shake it, officer.”

“A-ah, right,” Iwaizumi quickly accepted the hand shake. He didn’t know how to react. “Thank you,” he said, still baffled.
Ushijima eyed him. His lip quirked up in a charming smile. “Continue to make me proud.”

Iwaizumi’s eyes widened for a brief moment and he immediately dropped into a deep bow. “Thank you sir.” He repeated, this time much louder and definite.

Ushijima inspected him lightly then gave a nod of affirmation. “I just wanted to stop by to express my gratitude. I’ll be on my way now.”
He stood up from the chair and Iwaizumi immediately followed. The senior officer held a hand out to usher him back down. “Don’t bother.”

Iwaizumi stood anyway and bowed deeply. “Have a good evening, sir.”

Ushijima acknowledged his farewell. “Likewise,” and began to make his way to the door. However, he paused midway.

“Oh and,” the senior peered over his shoulder. “Give your men a break once in a while. Whenever I visit here, they’re always working hard, especially Kuroo and Bokuto. Let them relax a bit.”

Iwaizumi fought back a snort. Oh, the irony.

“You won’t get mad if I let them loose?” he smiled lightly. “Even if they go wild and cause a havoc?”

“It’s not that I approve of it, but I’ll turn a blind eye just this once.”

“I don’t recommend it, sir. It could end up catastrophic.”

“Yes, well.. then again,” Ushijima paused, raising his eyes to the ceiling in brief contemplation. They flickered back down to meet his and for a brief moment, Iwaizumi could’ve sworn he saw faint amusement. “I suppose you could just ‘dump their bodies where no one will find them’.”

It took a while for Iwaizumi to register what the other had said and by the time he had, Ushijima was out the door bidding farewell to the other officers.

The officer sat there for a long time before he dropped his head and laughed.

Work was a pain. But he enjoyed it anyway.

Chapter End Notes

ALMOST THERE
WE’RE SO CLOSE TO THE END

Next chapter will be the final ENDING! but I will be posting one more semi-chapter (only oikawa and iwaizumi) after that (so I guess it’s a pre-ending?)
thank you again for reading this enormous work and I’m so happy to be sharing this with you guys!! ♡ヾ(●’◡’●)

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