Red-Eyed Deadeye
by Sarcastic Metaphor

Summary

Hanzo has been slowly but surely noticing some unusual things about Overwatch's resident sharpshooter cowboy. Bits and pieces of new information combined with startling discoveries cause Hanzo to ask what exactly McCree is, and how his condition came about. The funny thing is, the more he learns, the more he finds himself growing closer to McCree.
Before Hanzo joined the secretly recalled Overwatch, he had done his homework. He gathered the names of every recalled agent from his brother and researched each and every one of them.

He knew that Jesse McCree, infamous Cowboy sharpshooter, was part of the original Overwatch. He knew that McCree was on the list of former Blackwatch agents as well. He knew that Blackwatch had clashed quite often with Talon. Meaning that McCree probably had many interactions with Talon. And Hanzo was smart enough to skirt around most things related to Talon.

And he would’ve never thought that McCree would be related to Talon in any way other than an enemy on the field.

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His first tip had been McCree’s eyes. The gunslinger had brown eyes. They were such a dark brown that in the right light they bordered on black. That was certainly within the bounds of normal. What absolutely wasn’t normal was how McCree’s eyes looked darker and almost crimson whenever he said that he was hungry. “Hungry” as in he just ate an entire rare steak and was still licking his lips for more.

Hanzo first noticed the change in eye color when he shot McCree a heated glare after the mentioned company burped loudly at the dinner table. There was a biting remark on the tip of his tongue, but the reddish hue startled him into silence. Hanzo then spent a good minute or so trying to determine if the color was just another trick of the light when the sharpshooter’s definitely-ruby eyes flickered over to him.

Hanzo quickly looked away to avoid any awkward eye contact, but didn’t miss how McCree pull the brim of his hat lower to hide his eyes. Hanzo’s eyes scanned over all the others at the table, realizing that he was the only one who noticed. Everyone else was still eating in lighthearted peace.

Except for Mercy, who seemed more bothered by McCree’s burp and was shaking her head playfully at him.

That moment lead to the next odd thing that Hanzo had discovered. He realized that McCree ate borderline raw meat all the time. His steaks, his burgers, even the sausages he ate for breakfast seemed dangerously close to being undercooked. The idea of food poisoning actually repulsed Hanzo, but if no one else was lifting a finger to point this out to McCree, then why should he? It was needless to say, but McCree loved his meat rare. Bloody, even.

Hanzo had decided to keep to himself for the rest of dinner, not daring to look up from his plate.

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After dinner, Hanzo decided that a shower would do him some good and made his way to one of the base’s several bathrooms. He thought that he had finally grown used to sharing such a personal space, but almost faltered mid-step when he saw McCree leaning over one of the sinks. The other man seemed to merely brushing his teeth for the night. Hanzo tried to walk briskly past him, but McCree washed his mouth out with water and turned to wave at him.
“Howdy, Hanzo.”

The archer paused to acknowledge his colleague. “Hello, McCree.”

McCree looked like he wanted to say more, but seemed as if he were still testing the waters with Hanzo.

“So, uh, something at dinner have ya spooked?”

Hanzo raised an eyebrow. Internally, he knew that McCree must’ve known that he was staring.

“What is it that you are referring to?”

McCree shrugged. He was trying to act casual. “Ya just looked a little startled is all. Couldn’t tell if it was somethin’ I did.”

Hanzo tilted his chin upwards. “Well, I suppose I am just not used to such loud company.”

At least McCree had the shame to look away. “Sorry ‘bout that, darlin’.”

Hanzo allowed the ghost of a smirk to grace his lips. He turned away to head for the showers.

Before Hanzo entered the shower stall, he allowed himself another glance back at McCree. Just out of the corner of his eye, Hanzo caught something in the bathroom mirror.

The other man was flossing his teeth, and Hanzo swore on his razor-sharp vision that he could see a set of unusually large canines that certainly weren’t there before. They poked out beyond the rest of McCree’s teeth like a set of fangs, too much like a wolf or tiger.

McCree must’ve noticed Hanzo’s sudden falter in movement because for the second time that day, Jesse McCree caught him staring. Hanzo quickly entered the stall and made sure that McCree was gone when he came out.

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It was chaos. The mission was supposed to be a simple stake-out to investigate rumors of Talon activity. The leads had brought a team of Overwatch members to an abandoned port on the coast of New England.

It was too slow at first, with almost no signs of life. Then all it took was a single trip wire a few centimeters off the ground…

Then two hours. Two hours of fighting, of Talon calling in reinforcements, and then taking care of said reinforcements. More than once, Hanzo risked getting shot in order to retrieve some of his arrows.

After the last of Talon had either gotten away or were incapacitated, Hanzo was left with an empty quiver, a gash in his forehead from a stray bullet, and a pounding headache from all the constant gunshots and screams. God, he was thankful he had his sake on him.

“Damn, wish I brought my flask with me.”

Hanzo huffed at the southern drawl that spoke much too close for comfort. He turned around made a point to take a few steps away from the cowboy. His serape and body armor were riddled with scorch marks and bullet holes. Hanzo’s eyes travelled upwards. He wanted to scowl at McCree for ignoring his personal space again, but faltered once more at the sight of his eyes.
They were that abnormal scarlet color again, visible even in the low light of the moon. However, McCree didn’t appear to notice this time. He seemed more preoccupied with chewing rather vigorously on his cigar. And even more preoccupied with staring at Hanzo.

McCree tapped his forehead lightly. “Eh, uh, partner? Ya might want to go an’ see Mercy ‘bout that.”

Hanzo instinctively brought up a hand to touch his wound. It was deeper than he thought, and when he brought his hand away, Hanzo’s fingertips came back stained with red.

“I will be fine.”

Hanzo glanced up at McCree, half debating with himself if he should complement the sharpshooter on being so caring. There were words ready to be spoken, but Hanzo was startled silent by a low grumbling sound. For a moment, Hanzo thought that it was the sound of a distant car approaching and instantly thought *Talon!* Before he noticed how McCree jumped in surprise.

The rumbling sound resumed, and Hanzo realized what it was. He kept his demeanor composed, but was snickering internally.

“What’s up?”

McCree tipped his hat lower. He grumbled out a soft “maybe” and left it at that. Despite the fact that Hanzo couldn’t see his eyes, he could feel McCree’s eyes still staring at him. Hanzo chose to ignore the cowboy, even as the team made their way back to their safe-house.

Now, Hanzo wasn’t one to judge others for their drinking. After all, he carried a gourd of sake on every mission. But it was startling for him to see McCree practically dive for the flask he had accidentally left on the coffee table. McCree chugged the entire thing in a few quick gulps.

Hanzo wanted to be disgusted. He wanted to make some sort of comment towards his teammate so desperate to get his fix, but he had some other problems to worry about.

Hanzo really tried to look on as discreetly as possible, but with eyesight like his, it was easy to get distracted by the drop of dark red liquid threatening to trickle over the lip of McCree’s flask.

Much like McCree’s eyes, it was no trick of the light. Whatever was in that flask was certainly not alcohol.

The archer felt a hand tug on his shoulder, and saw Mercy flitting at his side. Hanzo allowed the medic to whisk him away to tend to his wounds. He was lead to the private med-bay and gratefully sat down on the examination table. Hanzo thought he could get away after bearing some antiseptic and bandages, but Mercy had another idea.

“You of all people should know that it is rude to stare.”

Hanzo blinked up at the medic.

“Pardon?”

Mercy pursed her lips together, uncharacteristically displeased. “McCree. He doesn’t care anymore, but you could at least be a little more discreet.”

Hanzo felt his cheeks heat up. If Mercy wasn’t busy cleaning his wound, he would’ve looked down in embarrassment. Hanzo quickly began thinking of a way to squirm out of Mercy’s
accusations. She had caught him staring at McCree. McCree, who seemingly didn’t bother to hide his... abnormalities. (At least, not very well.)

So who was to say that Hanzo really was the only person to have noticed? During that dinner when Hanzo first saw the cowboy’s red eyes, Mercy had looked up at McCree as well. She must’ve seen something.

“Do you… have you noticed-”

“It is not my place to speak of others.” Mercy’s tone made it clear that she wouldn’t speak of it any further.

Hanzo groaned internally. He just wanted to know if he was or wasn’t going insane. Mercy glanced towards the door, as if checking to make sure that they were alone.

“If you must, then I recommend speaking to Jesse yourself.”

Without another word, the medic ushered Hanzo out of the room and called in her next patient.

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Hanzo couldn’t sleep that night. Or the night after they had returned to the Gibraltar base.

After two nights to himself, Hanzo began piecing what little information he had together. Jesse McCree was part of the original Blackwatch. He’d fought against Talon, but who was to say that the evil organization hadn’t gotten their hands on him? After all, Hanzo had read snippets of a report claiming that the wife of an Overwatch member was kidnapped and experimented on by Talon. Couldn’t they have done the same to anyone else?

Hanzo reflected back onto Mercy’s unusually brisk attitude earlier. She was either very defense of others, which was a given as her status as a healer, or surely knew more than she let on. And Hanzo didn’t even need to look up the doctor’s own Wiki article to know that she was a major part of the original Overwatch. Meaning that if something, namely Talon, gave McCree his oddities then Angela would’ve been there at the time for it. Maybe she had gone to extremes to even try and treat it, whatever it was, like she had done for Genji.

With all these crackpot theories floating around in Hanzo’s head, the archer knew that he wasn’t going to sleep anytime soon. What Hanzo needed was his pipe, or his sake, though at such a late hour perhaps a good cup of chamomile tea would suffice.

Hanzo tossed off his blankets and grabbed around in the dark for his prosthetics. After finally reattaching the metal limbs, Hanzo made his way to the kitchen. Despite having to make the trek in the dark, Hanzo was relieved to find that everyone else had gone to sleep. There would be no one to disturb him.

Hanzo flicked on the kitchen light, wincing slightly, and began digging the kettle out from one of the creaky cabinets. He filled it with water and set it on the stove. Hanzo, still tired from two days without proper rest, decided to sit down at the kitchen counter while the water heated.

A minute passed. There was the faintest sound of a door opening and closing down the hallway. Hanzo sighed, internally cursing whoever it was that was going to disturb him. He sat with his back to the doorway and listened to the sound of shuffling footsteps.

“Can’t sleep neither?”
Speak of the devil, apparently. Hanzo cast a glare over at the Southern sharpshooter leaning against the doorframe, as if to say ‘it had to be you’.

McCree looked odd without his hat, and even odder in nothing but a pair of gray sweatpants and a black tank top. At least he got the message. The sharpshooter raised his hands in a show of peace.

“I can see that yer in a pretty sour mood, but would ya be kind enough to spare a tired man some company?”

Hanzo wanted to look the cowboy dead in the eye and say no, but he didn’t want to risk seeing that admittedly unnerving crimson color again. So without saying a word, Hanzo turned his attention back to the kettle and waited for what McCree would do. Apparently, all he was here for was to mosey through the fridge for a late night snack.

“Damn, someone’s gonna have to make a snack run soon, we ain’t got nothing good.”

McCree shut the fridge and eyed the heating kettle.

“Say, what’cha got there partner?”

Hanzo felt his eye twitch. There was just something about being called partner that irked him to this day.

“It is tea. And none of that iced nonsense you Americans like.”

Hanzo thought for a moment. “I do not suppose you would like a cup?”

He was really hoping that McCree would just politely refuse and leave, but no, this dumb American cowboy just had to flash a would-be charming smirk at Hanzo instead.

“Hell, I suppose it’s better than nothing.”

McCree slid into the stool next to Hanzo, and that’s when the archer got up to grab the teabags and pour two cups of hot water. McCree eyed the tea curiously.

“Is this the stuff that Lena likes?”

Hanzo couldn’t resist a small grin. “No, it is chamomile. It’s good for sleeping.”

McCree laughed softly, still mindful of the nearby dormitories.

“Hell, if that’s the case, I’ll chug a gallon of this stuff for a good night’s rest.”

Hanzo snickered, the closest to laughing that he’s done in front of others. The two of them sat in silence for a while, just basking in the peace of night. Hanzo had drank all his tea and McCree’s was cold by the time he finally spoke up.

“So...uh, Hanzo, there’s actually somethin’ I feel like I should talk to ya about.”

The archer’s immediate thought was ‘shit he knows that I know’, but as a trained, professional assassin, Hanzo knew how to mask his emotions. He merely glanced over at his companion, secretly relieved to see a set of normal brown eyes.

“Angela warned me that you might want to talk to me. An’ it’s not like I was ever good at keepin’ it a secret.”
Hanzo cocked his head to the side. McCree seemed like he was trying to reassure himself more than Hanzo. The sharpshooter started drumming his fingers on the kitchen counter.

“I’m sure by now with all that starin’ ya’ve done that you’ve noticed some things that seem pretty off ‘bout me. Am I right?”

Hanzo had the kneejerk reaction to claim that he certainly wasn’t staring, but even he couldn’t deny the truth like that.

...“Yes.”

McCree smirked ever so slightly.

“Well, I hope ya aren’t about to conk out now, ‘cause oh boy, do I have a tale for you.”

Hanzo wasn’t sure if he should learn forwards or shift his chair further away from the cowboy. He settled on staying still.

“Well, ya see, it was about a year after I got into Blackwatch when I made the dumbest mistake of my life. I was young and cocky and blind to all the obvious hints of a trap, but I went into a mission guns blazin’ anyways and there ended up being a bunch of guys from Talon…”

McCree rubbed the back of his neck. He stared sheepishly at Hanzo. “Well, to put it lightly, they jus’ straight up kicked my ass. I got knocked out like nothing and the next thing I knew, I was strapped to a cot with Talon injecting God knows what into me.”

McCree paused to look for Hanzo’s reaction. And how did Hanzo feel about all this? At least he was miraculously right about McCree and Talon, but he could only begin to imagine the exact details of McCree’s torture. Hanzo showed no sign of wanting McCree to stop, so the cowboy continued.

“Anyways, I’ll spare you all the gory details. By the time Blackwatch came to rescue me, I was barely recognisable. They almost mistook me for an experiment gone wrong, and maybe that’s what I was, considerin’ that Talon lost me.”

Hanzo’s tired brain was rushing to process all this information. What had Talon done to him? Did any of it have anything to do with the fact that he now had a prosthetic arm? And who else knew about this, considering that it took place back in McCree’s Blackwatch days?

Hanzo was snapped back into reality when the sound of McCree’s drumming fingers stopped. The sharpshooter shifted in his seat, staring at Hanzo with a glimmer of what looked like apprehension.

“So...either I was totally wrong ‘bout thinking that maybe you knew, or ya jus’ kept getting distracted by my gorgeous face. Either way, if ya got any questions, go ahead and shoot.”

Hanzo finally found his voice. “So your eyes do change color?”

McCree seemed relieved, but smiled rather wistfully. He lightly tapped his temple. “Only when I get hungry. But it’s involuntary, I can’t control it.”

“And your, um, teeth? Are they-”

McCree barked out a laugh as softly as he could. He gave Hanzo a toothy grin. That grin widened when Hanzo gaped as McCree’s canines grew and sharpened before his eyes. McCree flicked his tongue against the fang-like canine.
“I’ve gotten pretty darned good at controlling these bad boys over the years. Never used ‘em much though.”

McCree retracted his fangs. He went quiet, assuming that Hanzo would ask more. Thankfully, there was just one more thing that Hanzo wanted an explanation for.

“Would it be correct to assume that what is in your flask is not actually alcohol?”

McCree actually looked surprised. He scratched the back of his neck. “Damned, you picked up on that?”

Hanzo nodded. He was surprised when McCree started looking rather sheepish. The sharpshooter glanced down at his cup and scratched his jaw. He was stalling.

“Look, it’s like I said, I’ve mostly gotten used to everything by now, but are ya sure ya want to get down to the real nasty stuff?”

Hanzo nodded. He’s seen too much to be disturbed if his theory was true.

“Well then, if ya really wanna know, that flask o’ mine is specially made to keep blood fresh.”

Hanzo opened his mouth, but McCree held up a hand.

“Before ya say anything, no, it ain’t human blood.”

McCree looked down at his cup. “I got it from a rabbit I hunted down ’round here.”

The sharpshooter sighed. His voice softened, as if wary of anyone overhearing his next words. "I need a fresh fill of the stuff from time to time or else I get downright nasty. My trigger finger gets pretty itchy too."

Hanzo stared, almost disbelieving. His theory was right, but McCree still refused to meet his eye. Hanzo realized that the sharpshooter was expecting some kind of reaction from him. For a few seconds, Hanzo grasped at straws for anything to say.

Finally he settled for, “Thank you for trusting me with this information.”

McCree cautiously tilted his head up and saw Hanzo’s typical stoic mask. Despite not showing any visible emotion, McCree looked downright elated to find that Hanzo wasn’t outright disgusted.

“My pleasure. I always love talkin’ ‘bout myself.”

McCree got up from his seat and stretched, giving Hanzo a generous view of his midriff. He graciously took the two cups and left them in the sink. Hanzo had stood up as well, but there was something else he wanted to know. He spoke up before McCree could leave.

“One more question, McCree?”

The cowboy paused in the doorway. He eyed Hanzo uncertainly.

“If I may ask, who else knows of your… condition?”

McCree seemed relieved that Hanzo didn’t go back to the blood issue. He leaned against the doorway, as when he had when he first appeared, and started counting on his fingers.

“Well, Angela pretty much saved my life after Overwatch rescued me. Jack knows, so does
Reinhardt, Winston, Lena...and just about anyone else who used to be in the old Overwatch.”

McCree shrugged. “I don’ really consider it a secret, given as to how half the people here know. I just don’t go showin’ off the fangs to the new ones; don’ wanna spook them, after all.”

With a gruff laugh, McCree turned around and started to leave again. But before he disappeared entirely into the darkness of the hallway, McCree cast a glance over his shoulder.

“And Hanzo? I’d really appreciate it if ya didn’ go runnin’ around telling everyone else. I’d rather talk to the others myself if they notice anything.”

Hanzo didn’t get a chance to formulate a response. He merely watched as McCree left and heard the faint clicking of his door shutting close. The archer slowly sat back down and rubbed his temples. He really wanted his sake right about now.

Chapter End Notes

It'll probably take me a while to update, so be warned! I'd also love to hear comments/ideas and constructive criticism is welcomed.
When Hanzo had returned to his own room, he was still left reeling from the fact that McCree had just openly admitted what he was. Hanzo was not well versed in western myths, but even he could compare McCree’s condition to that of a classic *vampire* of all things. The eyes, the pearl-white fangs, the whole need for blood. It created an uneasy feeling in Hanzo’s chest.

McCree was neither Omnic nor cyborg (and no, Hanzo did not count his prosthetic arm), and most likely not even entirely *human*. Could Hanzo truly not bat an eye at that fact? Only time would tell, because the moment Hanzo collapsed onto his bed, he fell into a fitful night of sleep.

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After their encounter, there were many moments where Hanzo couldn’t help but be reminded that McCree was *not human*. It wasn’t like he was trying to discriminate against McCree, but those eyes and fangs were not easily forgettable.

When Hanzo saw McCree laughing at something someone else said, he couldn’t help but check to make sure his canines were not in fact fangs. Even if they were perfectly normal, Hanzo couldn’t help but think *he’s not human*.

Every sip from his flask was accompanied with the thought of *he’s not human*.

Every glance at his eyes to assure himself that they were brown came with the thought of *he’s not human*.

It was toxic and distracting, but he just couldn’t help it. McCree had characteristics beyond any normal human. He was something entirely on his own.

And whether he was willing to admit it or not, that unnerved Hanzo. So what did he do to resolve this problem? Well, confrontation was not Hanzo’s strong suite. Instead, he just started avoiding McCree. Sometimes eating earlier or later than usual to avoid contact at meals and continuing his reclusive ways.

He managed to make it a week without any sort of long term confrontation.

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It was McCree’s need for blood that caused Hanzo to distantly wonder if everyone in the base was in some sort of danger. The archer thought logically that if the others saw McCree was a threat, then he wouldn’t have been given the recall. Right?

Even if he was well stocked in his precious blood, what would happen if McCree were to run out? He did say something about an itchy trigger finger.
Hanzo pondered all this as he was fitting his bow with a new string.

Suddenly, there was a knock at his door. The archer pushed his bow aside and went to answer whoever it was. And speak of the devil again, it was McCree himself standing before him. (In the very back of his mind, Hanzo wondered irrationally if McCree had a sort of sixth sense to know when people were thinking of him.)

Hanzo said nothing as the gunslinger tipped his hat to him.

“Well, howdy.”

Hanzo didn’t realize it when he took a small step back. “Is there something I can help you with?”

McCree shrugged. “Nah, I jus’ wanted to know if you’d like to accompany me for some target practice.”

“No, thank you.” Hanzo tried to shut the door, but McCree stuck his foot out.

“C’mon now, darlin’. I can see yer upgradin’ yer fancy bow, why not give it a spin now?”

Hanzo glanced over his shoulder realized that McCree was half a head taller than himself. It was probably very easy for the sharpshooter to spy the weapon lying on his desk. Despite this, Hanzo wanted to refuse, to claim that it was easier for him to concentrate if he was alone. Or maybe say that he was still working on his bow.

Hanzo turned back to McCree and was met with a set of chocolate brown eyes staring down at him in an almost pleading manner. Hanzo was absolutely astonished at how well a thirty-seven year old man with crows feet and an untamed beard could pull off the kicked puppy look. Then again, Hanzo had heard somewhere online that western vampires could hypnotize their victims.

“I’m sorry, but I’d rather not.”

McCree straightened up and shrugged. “Alrighty then.”

There was absolutely no ill will in his voice. “I can tell that ya don’ wanna go. Too nervous to be alone with me again, is it?”

McCree laughed. The sound felt unusually hollow, though McCree stopped when he saw Hanzo’s face.

McCree backed up and spread his arms out. “I promise I don’ bite, but if ya want me to, then I’ll leave ya be.”

McCree tipped his hat to Hanzo again and turned on his heel. The way he didn’t even bother to glance back tugged something in Hanzo’s chest. It was a very familiar sensation, one that he’d do anything to rid himself of; guilt.

The sharpshooter had hardly taken three steps before Hanzo spoke up. “Wait.”

Why was he doing this? Hanzo did in fact want to be left alone. Maybe his subconscious was telling him that this could be an opportunity to gather information. If so, then damn Hanzo’s subconscious.

McCree turned around, pleasantly surprised.

Hanzo hesitated for only a second. “Let me grab my quiver.”
Hanzo drew back his bowstring, noting that it needed to be just a touch more taut, and fired. As he knew it would, the arrow landed in the exact center of the bullseye in the farthest target from the shooting line, about twenty-five yards away. Besides him, McCree whistled.

“Damned, that’s one helluva shot right there.”

Hanzo tried not to look the other man in the eye. “Do you think you can match it?”

McCree chuckled. Hanzo was pretty sure that he didn’t blink, but the next thing he knew, McCree had his gun drawn. The sharpshooter fired and Hanzo stared at the arrow that was now splintered in half.

“Sorry for wasting one of yer arrows like that, but I jus’ couldn’t resist.”

Hanzo spared no time in nocking another arrow. If McCree wanted to see something impressive...

Hanzo took a few steps back, then sprinted for the nearest wall. He used his momentum to jump up and kick off the wall. Hanzo felt the whole world shift upside down and mid-flip, he fired at the next target. When the archer’s feet hit the ground, Hanzo was pleased to see he had struck another bullseye.

McCree tipped his hat back, as if to get a better look at the target. Then he laughed. “Holy shit, now I jus’ know yer showin’ off.”

Hanzo stood a little taller. “Are you saying I have bested you?”

“Hey now, I still got my own tricks up my sleeve.”

McCree took several steps behind the firing line. He gave Hanzo a cocky little smirk before tossing his gun in the air ahead of him. Hanzo watched as McCree dove into an admittedly fluid role, landing on one knee, and caught his gun seemingly without any time to aim before firing. His target had two holes pierced right through the center.

“Now how’s about that?” McCree proudly holstered his revolvers. “I was quite show pony when I was younger. I reckon I still got it.”

Hanzo's eyes automatically traveled down to McCree’s gaudy belt buckle. He raised an eyebrow.

“You have changed so much.”

McCree snickered. “Was that sarcasm? From you?”

“Perhaps.”

The two of them resumed actual target practice. Despite the constant sound of his bowstring and McCree’s gunshots, the silence between them could almost be called comfortable. Much too comfortable for Hanzo’s liking. Why was he so content standing besides this not human man?

“So, Hanzo.”

Worst of all, why did McCree now have to break the silence, Hanzo’s only barrier of comfort? The archer was snapped out of his focus at the moment he released another arrow. He bit his lower lip upon seeing the arrow only hitting the outer edge of the bullseye. Hanzo turned to acknowledge McCree.
“You still gonna avoid me after this?”

Hanzo lowered his bow. He furrowed his eyebrows in an attempt to appear confused. McCree merely holstered his guns.

There was no hint of jest in his voice. “Don’t treat me like a fool, Hanzo. I understand, it takes time to accept this,” McCree chilled Hanzo’s blood with a brief flash of his fangs. “But I don’t want cha constantly skirting around me. So let’s clear the air now.”

All pretenses forgotten, Hanzo resumed his typical detached mask. He still chose his next words carefully. “You are undeniably a dangerous man, McCree. Please understand that I’d prefer to take caution around you.”

McCree seemed to take Hanzo’s words in stride. “Except that you haven’t been around me. ‘Sides, everyone here is ‘dangerous’, Hanzo...Or am I really just that off putting?”

Hanzo refused to back down. “You are different. Are you even still human?”

In an instant, McCree’s eyes darkened. Hanzo thought that McCree might lash out at him, but the sharpshooter made no move towards him.

“Lotta people have asked me that question over the years. Never took to me very kindly afterwards.”

McCree narrowed eyes at Hanzo’s, and for half a second, the archer was worried that they might turn red.

They didn’t.

“But I got a feelin’ you might be different. So if I told ya exactly what I was, would it put yer fears to rest?”

Hanzo crossed his arms. “I am not afraid of you, though you do still concern me.”

McCree chuckled lowly and lowered the brim of his hat. “Well then, to be exact, genetic testing showed I’m still at least three-quarters human. ‘Bout seventy-seven percent, to be precise.”

Hanzo raised an eyebrow. “And what of the other twenty-three percent?”

“A mighty fine cocktail primarily composed of vampire bat with some snake and a pinch o’ dog genes. Happy now?”

At least the dog part explained McCree’s scruffy facial hair, but it wasn’t enough.

Hanzo shook his head. “No. There is still one more thing I must know if I am to trust you.”

“Then get on with it.” The way McCree spoke made it sound like a challenge. Like he was daring Hanzo to think up the worst of possibilities.

Hanzo steeled himself for any backlash. “Do you actually enjoy the taste of blood?”

McCree stared at Hanzo for a second. Then he blinked. Then he tossed his head back and laughed. The sound bounced around the lofty walls and ceiling of the shooting range.

Hanzo was… startled, to say the least. Why was this so funny? There was absolutely nothing about this subject to laugh about!
McCree quieted down after a moment and wiped an invisible tear from his eye.

“Oh Lordy, I’d be locked up for life if I actually liked blood, no doubt about it. Thought you might’ve realized that by now.”

Hanzo clenched the fist not gripping his bow. McCree seemed to be relishing in Hanzo’s apparent naivete. He leaned in closer to Hanzo with a twinkle in his eyes.

“Listen, darlin’. Blood is still blood, even to me. It’s metallic and bitter and kinda gross when it’s cold. But hey, ya know beggars can’t be choosers.”

Hanzo stared incredulously at McCree. “So...you do not actually need it?”

McCree hummed in thought. “Well no, I’m still a little bit o’ vampire bat after all. Blood just keeps the animal parts of me in check. But I am proud to say that I’ve been on a low-blood diet for years now. Can now go for a week or two without so much as a drop of the stuff.”

“And does any of this blood come from humans?”

McCree shivered at the idea. Though whether or not it was for dramatic effect was unclear.

“O’ course not. Can you imagine me running ‘round bitin’ people left and right? I’d either be shot dead or nicknamed Dracula.”

Hanzo supposed that yes, that would seem unrealistic. Actually, scratch that. Everything about McCree seemed unrealistic.

“So then do you really only drink animal blood?”

McCree nodded. “Sure, got plenty o’ fish, rabbits, ‘n birds around here. It’s like an open buffet for me.”

Hanzo blanched at the image of McCree’s words. “Then I refrain from apologizing to you, McCree. You are still a filthy American savage.”

The gunslinger’s eyes widened comically. “Woah now. You were really gonna apologize to little ol’ me? You really do have a heart after all.”

Hanzo blinked and felt a shiver run down his spine. He suddenly relived a series of flashbacks; missions and kills that could easily prove the opposite of what McCree had just claimed. And he should’ve felt offended that he was seen as heartless, but really, it was nothing new.

Offput somewhat, Hanzo decided to ask, “Should we continue target practice now? We have ‘cleared the air’, as you have put it.”

McCree seemed to suddenly remember that they were still alone in the shooting range.

“Oh yeah sure, if ya want to.”

That silence between them resumed, but lacked the comfort that Hanzo had previously enjoyed. McCree spoke up again awhile later.

“Ya know, Hanzo. Believe it or not, ya sure took the news better than most people back in the day.”

Hanzo was in the middle of nocking an arrow when he spoke. “How else would someone react?”
McCree shrugged. “Dunno. I’ve had people threaten to kill me if I went outta line. People who wanted to experiment on me to see if they could make a new type of bioweapon. And people who dropped ties with me faster than a speedin’ bullet. Now, whatever you do or say Hanzo, I get the feelin’ you’ve been through too much shit to care all that much.”

Hanzo refused to meet McCree’s eye. Instead, he kept his focus on the target ahead. McCree was wrong. Hanzo had treated him as a threat, in his own way. All because the other man was turned into something he never asked for.

That faint tugging feeling in his chest returned. Hanzo had been comparing McCree, a real person and his ally, to a villainous fictional creature. It wasn’t fair to McCree, who seemed to be going out of his way to help Hanzo understand.

“How did you even tell me if you expected contempt?”

McCree chuckled and fired another round from his guns. “Well, for one, I’m sure with eyes and a mind like yers, ya would’ve figured it out sooner or later. And I never said that everyone hated me. Most o’ the folks here took it well enough.”

Hanzo could feel McCree’s eyes on him. He pretended not to notice and fired another arrow.

“Ya might be a bit of a recluse, and pretty damned standoffish at times, but that jus’ means yah sure do know how to keep yer mouth shut. And in my experience, that makes you a trustworthy man, Hanzo.”

**Trustworthy?**

Hanzo had not been called that in years, and had thought himself as quite the opposite for much longer. He couldn’t remember the last time he did it, but Hanzo chuckled. It was a bittersweet sound even to him.

“No one has called me that in a very long time.” Hanzo lowered his bow. “Frankly, I feel as if you are just trying to flatter me. Maybe make me lower my guard.”

“Well now, I am many things, Hanzo,” McCree holstered his revolvers. “but I certainly ain’t no liar.”

The sharpshooter winked mischievously. “Besides, why’d I ever lie to such a pretty face?”

Hanzo sputtered and further embarrassed himself when he felt his cheeks heat up. McCree tossed his head back and laughed yet again.

“Oh darlin’, I’m just playin’ with ya.”

“You just said that you were not a liar!”

“And I ain’t.” McCree moved closer. Under the shooting range’s white lights, the sharpshooter’s hat cast a shadow over his eyes. Hanzo resisted taking a step back, towards the exit. He watched warily as McCree brought a hand up, as if to place it on Hanzo’s shoulder.

It was second nature for Hanzo. He smacked the hand away without even thinking. McCree looked taken aback.

He rubbed the back of his neck. “Oh, right. Personal space an’ all that. Sorry, darlin’.”
Hanzo shook his head. “No, I should apologize. It has been quite the week for me, but I had been… unfair to you.”

Hanzo didn’t miss how McCree tried to hide his smirk. The cowboy spoke as breezily as ever. “Water under the bridge, sugar. I’m jus’ glad I could clear up any misconceptions.”

Hanzo quirked an eyebrow. “Is that the true reason you invited me here tonight?”

“Maaaybe.” McCree’s voice was laced with childlike playfulness. “But now that chya ain’t gonna avoid me no more, I’d love to hit the hay now. So how’s about I walk you back to your room for the night?”

Hanzo huffed indignantly. “I know where my room is, I doubt I will need a guide.”

McCree shrugged. “Fine then. I’ll just walk back to my room besides you.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes, but there was no real venom in his stare. The two of them left the shooting range side by side. Hanzo’s room was closer, so McCree had ended up walking him there anyways.

McCree tipped his hat to Hanzo as a goodbye. “Night, Hanzo. Sleep tight.”

The archer paused in his doorway. Before he let the automatic doors slide shut, he said, “Goodnight, McCree.”

Chapter End Notes

I know McCree isn't exactly a "real" vampire, but I'm trying to make him as close to it while still fitting the game's canon. I'd love to hear feedback, and thanks for reading!
Death Valley

Chapter Notes

So starting now, there'll be a lot of jumping back and forth in POV from Hanzo to McCree. I think it's pretty clear who's perspective each part is from, but if it gets confusing I'll gladly add a little label to the sections.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was about damned time they got a mission. McCree was getting far too antsy for his liking. His team, comprised of him, Hanzo, Genji, Reinhardt, Tracer, and Mercy were going to be shipped out to Southern California for signs of Talon in the surrounding cities and deserts.

On the jet ride there, McCree found himself suddenly missing the states. Distantly, McCree wondered if the others would let him spend a little time in Las Vegas, since they’d be so close. Probably not, if Angela had anything to say about it.

To distract himself, McCree glanced over at Hanzo. He watched as the other man took stock of his quiver, assuring himself that he had everything he needed. McCree chuckled to himself. Hanzo was quite the character. Distant, reserved, calculative, quiet. He was many things that McCree was not. And yet, both he and Hanzo were expert marksmen, fast on the draw, quick to action, and even if Hanzo didn’t know it, he was pretty damn clever. Plus, it was almost funny how seriously Hanzo took everything, though his attention to detail was admirable.

McCree stopped his staring before Hanzo could notice. He then pretended to fiddle with the brim of his hat, all while still eyeing the archer.

The rest of the ride passed in relative silence. Everyone was ready for action, should there be any fighting. Though before they landed, McCree excused himself to go to the jet’s bathroom. It was cramped as hell, but enough for the sharpshooter to apply a generous amount of sunblock on his face, neck and arms.

McCree looked back wistfully on when he was a kid. Being of hispanic descent, sunburns were of little concern to him. After the incident, McCree needed his hat and serape for more than just looking cool.

Oh well, he supposed, this was part of the price he had to pay for his idiocy and McCree had gotten used to living with it.

McCree eyed himself in the mirror, making sure that there were no white streaks or smears to give away the sunblock. Once satisfied, he exited the bathroom. The others were preparing for the landing, but Hanzo was hanging back, as usual. McCree stared at his teammate’s bare arm, shoulder, and chest. A thought suddenly occurred to him.

“Ey, Hanzo. Think fast!” McCree tossed his tube of sunblock at Hanzo. As expected, the assassin’s lightning-fast reflexes saved him from taking the tube to the face. Hanzo stared at the sunblock in confusion.
“It’s SPF 75. Ya don’ wanna get cooked like a lobster in this heat, do ya?”

McCree didn’t miss how a ghost of a smile formed on Hanzo’s lips.

“I suppose not. Thank you, McCree.”

The sharpshooter tried not to beam. “Ain’t no thang, darlin’.”

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A few hours into their investigation, the team had found a group of Talon agents crossing through a place called Death Valley of all places. Hanzo wondered in amazement who exactly thought of the name.

An hour later, and after engaging in combat, in the open desert and Hanzo realized how the name came about. It was only May and already thirty-eight degrees Celsius. And as the team member with the most exposed skin, Hanzo ended up extremely grateful for that sunblock. The desert heat was almost unbearable.

From his perch on a high hilltop, Hanzo spotted McCree weaving through enemies below. Hanzo heard a crunch of gravel and turned around to shoot the Talon agent attempting to ambush him. Returning his attention to his team, Hanzo witnessed McCree’s hat getting shot clean off his head. But who..?

There was a dark blur of movement from a distant cliff. Damn.

Hanzo pressed his comm link. “They have a sniper southeast of here.”

“I know, they got my hat.” McCree sounded especially bitter.

“So sorry for your loss.” Tracer commented.

Hanzo skidded down the side of the hill and took cover behind an abandoned Talon rover. He risked a glance over at the sniper’s position. He aimed in a split second and fired without hesitation.

The sniper ceased firing.

“Sniper taken care of.”

“Well done, brother.”

Hanzo ignored Genji’s comment. He brought his attention back to the fighting, which he was much closer to now. Hanzo poked his head around the other side of the vehicle. Reinhardt seemed to enjoy wreaking havoc onto anyone in his path.

Hanzo’s eyes swept the rest of the area. He fired a scatter arrow at an oncoming rover, piercing it’s tires, windows, and sending it skittering into a ravine.

A stray bullet nicked Hanzo’s shoulder. He hissed in pain and dove for a new form of cover. Hanzo made sure that he wasn’t going to bleed out before resuming his assault. He took a step back and felt something soft bend beneath his foot. Hanzo glanced down and saw McCree’s hat, blown by the wind, underneath his heel. A singed bullet hole graced the hat’s brim.

Hanzo made sure the immediate area was clear before scooping the hat up and tying it to his hip; he’d have to give it to McCree later.
The sun was just touching the horizon when the enemy ceased firing. Their week long stake-out had turned into a gunfight that lasted only half a day. McCree would be pretty disappointed, if it weren’t for the fact that he literally felt like he was burning alive.

The little parts of him that were vampire bat and snake did not fare well in the merciless heat of Death Valley. His head and eyes stung. And if McCree moved too fast, he started seeing double. His face felt uncomfortably sore too. The sharpshooter reckoned he had a little bit of red in his cheeks now.

Now especially miserable without his hat, McCree tried to not scratch the sunburn on his face for the fear of his skin actually peeling off.

Yeah, he really didn’t any repeats of that experience.

“Not feeling too well, are you love?”

McCree jumped slightly. He never got entirely used to Lena seemingly popping into existence besides him. He started reaching for his hat before remembering that it wasn’t there.

Disgruntled, McCree muttered, “Sun’s stingin’ me so bad, I feel like Dracula.”

Lena gasped besides him. “Oh not again with the puns, I thought you grew out of those!

McCree forced himself to grin at the mock horror on Lena’s face. “Never.”

The two of them started to make their way back to the rest of the team, but McCree lost his footing in a divot in the path and nearly fell over. Luckily, Lena caught him at the last second. She draped his arm over her shoulder before he could protest.

“It’s the sun, innit?”

McCree was more focused on not falling over again (since he doubted Lena could bare his full weight) than talking. But he was and always had been sincerely grateful of his current companion’s easy acceptance of his condition. And having Lena did make the trek a little bit easier.

“Yeah…”

“I’m not feeling too well either. But do you, ya know… need to eat?”

McCree chuckled. He fumbled for the flask that he actually remembered to take with him.

“You mind if I take a sip?”

Lena brushed him off. “Oh, you know that doesn’t bother me.”

McCree smiled gratefully and uncapped his flask. He took one sip and instantly recoiled. The blood wasn’t just warm, it was hot. Now, normally warm blood was a luxury for McCree. But most of the water had evaporated from the substance and left a thick, rancid tasting liquid behind. McCree sighed and recapped his flask.

He’d have to go hunting again soon.

Lena eyed the flask curiously, confused by her friend's displeasure. “Expired again?”
“In a way.”

“Do I need to get Angela?”

McCree shook his head. He could start see the rest of the team waiting for them anyways. “Nah, but a burger and beer’d be nice right about now.”

McCree quickly assured Lena that he was strong enough to walk on his own. When he reached the rest of his teammates, McCree was surprised to see Hanzo brush off Angela’s first aid to approach him.

“I believe this belongs to you.”

McCree swore, there was a tear in his eye as Hanzo flourished his hat. Good ole reliable had a little bit of dirt and a bullet hole in her, but it was a hell of a lot better than nothing. (Besides, McCree had plenty of spares back at the Gibraltar base.)

“Thank you very kindly, Hanzo.”

The archer nodded. “It was nothing. Though you should be more careful next time.”

McCree laughed. “Will do, darlin’.”

He didn’t miss Lena and Angela gaping at him from the corner of his eye. After all, it wasn’t like him to not brush off words of caution. But Hanzo was a different case.

Genji broke the silence that ensued. “I have informed Winston of our success. He says we can return now if we so wish, or spend the night in the safe house.”

Lena yawned and stretched an arm over her head. “No offense to any of you, but I’d love a little rest before piloting.”

McCree shrugged. “Ain’t no problem with me.”

The rest of the team agreed that it would be best to recuperate a little bit before flying. They soon started picking their way through the rapidly cooling Death Valley to the van they rented out.

The night air helped McCree, but he was still lagging behind by a few yards. McCree was hardly concerned with where he was going; he had excellent vision in the dark. And the relative silence away from the other’s chatter helped clear his head.

McCree noticed Hanzo try to discreetly glance back at him. He thought nothing of it until the archer slowed down and aligned himself besides McCree.

“Is there somethin’ I can help you with?”

Hanzo took a moment before answering. “No, I just thought that it would not be wise to leave you behind while you are so exhausted.”

McCree smirked. “So ya do care about me?”

Hanzo looked away. “I care about you… as a teammate. You are of no use to us lost or dead.”

McCree laughed. “Well, you don’ have to worry about me gettin’ lost, that’s for sure.”

“And why is that?”
McCree pointed at a dark blotch in the path. “Well, for starters, you’re ‘bout to walk smack dab into a cactus.”

Hanzo stopped himself inches from said prickly plant. He carefully skittered around it and resumed walking besides McCree.

“How did you see that?” His voice didn’t sound awed, but rather surprised. McCree guessed that Hanzo wasn’t used to being outmatched in the vision department.

“I’m part bat, remember? Night vision is all part of the package.”

“...I see.”

McCree perked up. “Oh, can you? Couldn’t tell when you almost walked into that cactus.”

The sharpshooter snickered slightly over his little pun. Hanzo groaned besides him.

“Stop.”

McCree burst out laughing, much to Hanzo’s apparent dismay. It was a breathy and short laugh, but full of his familiar lively spirit. McCree turned his attention back to Hanzo and saw him staring at the ground, probably for anything else he might trip over.

McCree soon pulled him closer to avoid a large rock in the path. Hanzo looked startled and somewhat angry to be touched so suddenly, but also grateful for not having fallen over. The two of them walked in silence after that.

Then Hanzo returned the favor when he steadied McCree after he embarrassingly stumbled over his own spur.

“Are you alright?”

McCree waved Hanzo off. “It’s just the sun still gettin’ to me. I’ll feel better after some shuteye.”

At least, he hoped so. Besides McCree, Hanzo hummed in thought. He looked like he wanted to ask something, but was hesitating to do so. McCree waited until the archer was ready.

“Being part bat, does the sun always bother you to such a great extent?”

McCree chuckled. “It’s only bad in such a damned hell hole like this. Most of the time, it just stings a little bit.”

Hanzo stared at him with something akin to worry. McCree spoke up quickly.

“But I grew up under the sun in New Mexico. It’s just got a little more bite to it now, is all. ‘S why I always got my hat on.”

McCree merrily tipped his hat to Hanzo, though he doubted the assassin could see the gesture very well. Which brought McCree to a new question; why did he care so much about reassuring Hanzo? Just a few days ago, he was being pseudo-interrogated by the guy. Or maybe McCree simply let Hanzo ask all those questions. Either way, McCree felt a need to put Hanzo at ease.

It was probably the fact that the guy was just such an uptight recluse that McCree was trying to save him from an early death from stress. McCree snickered silently to himself, almost missing Hanzo’s question.
“‘M sorry, darlin’. What was that?”

Hanzo sighed. “I asked if that is why you always say it is “high noon”. You feel like it is an accomplishment to be out in the highest point of the sun?”

McCree scratched his chin. “Well, no, it’s mostly just what they always say in the movies- I’ll show you some one day- but I suppose so.”

McCree thought back to when he was first turned into the hybrid thing he was now. Any light beyond pitch black stung his eyes.

“I never really thought about it before, but back when I was younger, I couldn’t dream of going out in broad daylight.”

McCree nudged Hanzo. “Why? You tryin’ to give me an ego boost?”

Hanzo pushed him away, though it lacked any of his usual stiffness or cold composure.

“Oh please, as if your ego could get any bigger.”

Did McCree’s eyes deceive him or was Hanzo smiling? Like actual, genuine, unobscured smiling? McCree should be praying to the high heavens for his clearly delusional teammate.

The two of them walked in a comfortable silence until they reached their vehicle. No one felt like talking one they reached their safehouse. McCree was exhausted, and he knew he’d feel worse in the morning without his much needed intake of blood, but fell asleep so soon as his head hit the pillow.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading and feedback is greatly appreciated!
McCree felt awful. When he woke up, he found himself in a cold sweat. His head was pounding with a worse pain than any hangover could create. His eyelids wouldn’t open, and every time they did, McCree winced from the light, despite the actual lights being turned off. McCree fell into a coughing fit and there was a scratchy, parched pain in his throat that made his tired eyes water. After his fit, McCree was left panting in a desperate attempt to get more air in his lungs.

But worse of all was the hunger. McCree’s stomach felt like it was eating itself. But it wasn’t normal hunger. It was the physically painful need for something else. McCree needed blood now.

He forced himself to roll over onto his side. He counted back the days since he last drank any blood. Today was Thursday, and McCree remembered last drinking blood on Tuesday… of last week.

It’s been nine days.

McCree bit his lip. He’s gone on for longer, but with that god awful mission in Death Valley, nine days was really pushing it. McCree took a moment to gather his strength, or what little of it he still had. Then he brought himself to his elbows.

McCree’s arms shook with tiny tremors as he pushed himself the rest of the way up. He listed to the side unintentionally and tumbled out of bed.

Well, at least he was up, so to speak.

McCree spent a good five minutes on the floor, just trying to wait out his bout of hunger pains and the pounding in his head. Once McCree had less pain to focus on, he realized he was still breathing abnormally fast.

A chill went down his spine. McCree brought a hand up to the pulse on his neck and noted that yes, his heart was beating much too rapidly. It was another sign of that the part of him that wasn’t human was trying to get out. Soon, McCree’s sense of smell will heighten, as will his hunger for blood, and then he’ll be able to tell if someone gets a paper cut from a mile away.

To prevent losing his mind or sensory overload, McCree really needed blood. He couldn’t afford to let his other side out now. And his only comfort was that he didn’t have to go hunting in the middle of urban California for his meal. He just needed the nearest super market.

McCree grabbed the nightstand and hoisted himself up. He didn't need to look in the mirror above his nightstand to know that his eyes had already turned red. The gunslinger grabbed his hat and pull the brim down to cover his eyes. He was still in the flannel shirt and sweatpants he wore to bed, but they’d have to do for the public. McCree then dug out the wad of cash he kept under his mattress and headed out of his bedroom door.

Hanzo would’ve loved to actually sleep in after such a grueling mission, but he was an early riser by heart. He woke up hours before anyone else with a familiar mild ache in his shoulders from a good fight. Hanzo thought it would be best to pass the time and relax himself with a cup of tea.
Maybe he’d even indulge in the morning’s news.

He got up, changed into a set of casual wear, and spent nearly an hour sitting at the kitchen table with his tablet and tea. The consistent thud of heavy footprints started to pull him out of his stupor.

Hanzo looked up. He was prepared to acknowledge whoever had awoken, but was left utterly surprised by McCree up so early. Hanzo was about to gather his wits and say hello when his teammate stumbled and started to fall. Hanzo rushed out of his seat to catch McCree.

It all happened in an instant. But when his brain caught up to reality, Hanzo tried not to think about it. He was clutching an exhausted McCree to his chest almost intimately. It was a far cry from his usual distaste to physical contact.

McCree’s hat fell off and Hanzo resisted shivering at those cold, red eyes. But something else was very wrong.

McCree was squinting in the low light of the safe house kitchen. His cheeks were flushed red but the rest of his skin was abnormally pale.

“Hanzo.”

The archer was jarred into action by the soft, raspy voice of his teammate.

“Help me up.”

Hanzo compiled and helped McCree get to his feet. He had his boots on, was he actually planning on going out like this?

McCree leaned heavily against the kitchen table. His slightly labored breath was barely audible, although the other was doing his best to conceal it.

“Are you sick?”

The slightest headshake confirmed that no, McCree was not ill, even if he looked it with the miniscule beads of sweat dotting McCree’s forehead.

Hanzo took a step back to asses the situation. McCree looked like he was gravely ill. His complexion was far paler than it’s usual sun-kissed tone. And he had the table edge in an iron grip, as if desperate to steady himself.

McCree looked… fragile, and it didn’t sit well with Hanzo at all. McCree was supposed to be a hearty American with a thrill for danger, yet as reliable and sturdy as a workhorse. He was supposed to be snarky in firefights yet almost gentlemanly in the way he spoke to allies. But here, in the dull lights of the safe house kitchen, he looked like he could barely keep himself together.

Several more heartbeats passed, then McCree seemed like he was ready to try to continue whatever fool’s quest he was on. He pushed himself off the kitchen counter, grabbed his hat off the floor and started for the nearest exit.

“Wait.”

Without thinking, Hanzo reached out and grabbed McCree’s wrist. He chose not to dwell on how cold and clammy his skin felt.

“Where are you going? You are in no condition to go outside.”
Despite McCree’s weakened appearance, he tried to tug his wrist free with a surprising amount of force.

McCree tried to put on a facade. “I’m fine.”

Hanzo looked him dead in the eyes and refused to let go. “You clearly are not. I must alert Dr. Z-”

“No!” McCree barked. He glanced around to make sure he hadn’t woken any of the others. Then his red eyes settled back on Hanzo’s. “Please, I promise I’ll be fine. I-I jus’ need a little blood in me. That’s all.”

Hanzo stared suspiciously. That was what this was all about? But how was McCree supposed to go hunting? He was barely strong enough to walk to the kitchen by himself. Besides, the nearest desert or hunting grounds of any kind were miles away.

The archer suddenly had an idea. He traveled to the cutlery drawer, feeling McCree’s eyes on him with every movement. Hanzo drew a clean knife from the drawer. Then he turned around to meet McCree. He held the knife to his outstretched forearm.

“You could not possibly go hunting in your condition. Would my own blood suffice?”

McCree’s breath audibly hitched. Hanzo watched as the crimson nearly disappeared from McCree’s eyes as his pupils dilated. Then he didn’t even see McCree coming when the sharpshooter barreled into him. Hanzo felt himself seized up as he was knocked back against the kitchen counter. McCree was standing over him and the brim of his hat couldn’t hide his eyes. Hanzo could see them, and they were nearly black. Any color, whether red or brown, was drowned in his pupils.

It took another second for Hanzo to realize that McCree was gripping the wrist holding the knife.

“Y-you…” McCree’s voice sounded almost feral. It was a harsh, ragged whisper. “You really don’ want to be doin’ that, partner.”

McCree let go of Hanzo’s wrist, and neither of them noticed the red, finger shaped indents in Hanzo’s skin. McCree took several shaky steps back. He let out a breathy sigh as his eyes returned to normal. Or, at least, as normal as the color crimson can be.

“Besides, who ever said anythin’ ’bout hunting?”

Hanzo’s eyebrows furrowed. “Then what is your plan, exactly?”

McCree shrugged in an attempt to act casual. “Go grocery shoppin’?”

Hanzo would’ve scoffed at the idea. “I doubt that a grocery store here will sell what you’re looking for.”

McCree seemed to be growing frustrated. “I’ll jus’ be out for a few minutes. It ain’ nothing for you to worry your pretty little head about.”

If it were any other scenario, Hanzo would’ve shot McCree with an arrow for calling him pretty. But Hanzo refused to give into his temper or budge from his position. He stood as straight as he could and bared his shoulders back.

“You look like you are moments from death. Stay and rest.”
“I don’ need resting .” McCree practically snarled, “I told you, I’m fine!”

Even as he said it, Hanzo’s eyes widened as McCree’s canines grew into fangs. McCree himself seemed to realize it as well. Instantly, he slapped a hand over his mouth to hide them. McCree probed at his canines, and a look of both confusion and horror passed over his face.

“My fangs… this is bad.”

McCree tried to rush past Hanzo, but he was not nearly as fast as the archer himself. Hanzo caught him yet again.

He used the authoritative tone that used to occasionally work on Genji when they were young.

“McCree, what’s wrong?”

McCree refused to meet his eye. “I can’t retract my fangs. I need to eat now, or I won’t be able to control myself.”

Hanzo didn’t need or want to know the implications of McCree’s statement. Hanzo still tried his best to remain calm. As always, he had a new strategy forming in his head.

“McCree.” The sharpshooter instantly stood still to pay attention. Hanzo looked at him with a calm, collected demeanor.

“Tell me what you need. I will get it while you stay here.”

McCree gaped at him like a fish. He even tipped his hat back to get a better look at Hanzo. “Would you really do that for me?”

Hanzo nodded.

A voice in the back of his head was asking him why was he nodding. First offering his blood, now this? Why was he going out of his way for McCree? That little voice told him that maybe this was the remnants of his past guilt for treating McCree like a threat.

The utter relief that flooded McCree’s features and caused a sort of clenching in Hanzo’s chest might’ve stated otherwise. McCree took off his hat and clutched it to his chest.

“I’m sorry for snappin’ at ya like I did. But I tell ya, yer too good to me darlin’.”

Ah, and there was that American idiot that Hanzo knew best. He tried not to let his own relief show on his face.

“Do not get used to it. Now, what is it that you need?”

“Raw meat. Red, preferably beef. And lots of it.”

Hanzo didn’t want to know what McCree had planned for with this.

“Is that it?”

McCree nodded. He pulled out a crumpled wad of American money and pushed it into Hanzo’s hands.

“Yer a lifesaver, doll.”

Hanzo tried not to look too pleased. “I doubt you could have done it without showing your eyes or
fangs anyways.”

McCree did his best to laugh. He was still pale and shaking, after all. Hanzo noted this and insisted that he walk McCree back to his room.

“My, my, what a gentleman ya are.”

Hanzo said nothing, contemplating tripping McCree, though ultimately deciding against it. He made sure McCree had made it to his quarters and was safely inside. Then he returned to the kitchen. Hanzo used his tablet for the directions to the nearest supermarket before setting off.

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Until Hanzo could get back, McCree dealt with the hunger by curling up on his bed and biting his pillow. He didn’t care that he was practically ripping the thing to shreds with his fangs, McCree just needed a distraction.

A few minutes passed before McCree heard something. It was a rapid, jackhammer-like pounding sound that was slowly growing louder, but quite familiar to McCree. It was Lena’s heartbeat as she sped down the hallway.

Damn. McCree must be losing the fight with his animal parts if his hearing had already increased like this. He always hated this part of his hunger; where his human mind and animal instincts collided. It could last for hours, or it could last for days. Either way, McCree always felt as sick as a dog because of it.

Less than a half hour later, McCree could hear a steady heartbeat grow louder. It was accompanied by the faint clicks of metal feet against metal floor. Hanzo.

McCree’s stomach growled ominously. With Hanzo came the mouthwatering scent of raw meat and blood. McCree bit harder on his pillow and clenched his serape with shaky fists.

A few seconds later, there was a knock on the door. McCree muttered out a muffled, “H-hanzo?”

“McCree?”

Yeah, that was Hanzo alright. McCree didn’t trust himself to get up. As of now, the only thing keeping him from tearing right through that door was his pillow and serape.

“McCree? Are you hurt?”

“N-no. Jus’ gimme a minute.”

There was a pause. Then, “I’m coming in.”

“No!”

McCree flung himself out of bed and practically tackled the automatic door’s control panel. He spammed the lock button for good measure. McCree realized how erratic his breathing was. He tried to close his eyes, but all he could hear was his own labored breath and Hanzo’s quickening heartbeat. McCree rested his head against the cold metal door.

“Look. Jus’...just leave the stuff outside the door.”

“Why?”
There was a heavy silence before McCree spoke. “I don’ trust myself...to not hurt you.”

“Then should I not get help? Certainly Mercy could-”

McCree snapped. “There ain’t no helpin’ me now.”

He opened his eyes to glare at the door. “Just leave the meat here.”

Desperately, McCree added, “Please, Hanzo.”

McCree listened to the archer’s heartbeat. It was quick, but nor erratic. Hanzo was debating with himself.

“Fine, then. But if you are not well an hour before we are supposed to leave, then I will get help.”

McCree couldn't help but grin. Hanzo sure was as stubborn as a mule. “Ya got yerself a deal, partner.”

McCree heard the rustling of plastic and then the clicking of Hanzo’s footsteps fading away. The sharpshooter spent a good two minutes just standing there, trying to compose himself when a bag of delicious fresh meat was mere inches away. McCree made sure that no one was coming his way when he finally unlocked the door and snatched up the plastic grocery bag with inhuman speed.

He opened up the bag and saw four packages of premium raw beef. McCree whistled, it was a really nice brand, too. He sat down at the desk besides his bed and tried not to think about he was reduced to eating raw meat with his bare hands. The damned stuff didn’t even have much blood in it, but was enough for the snake in him that made up his fangs, and the dog that made up his enhanced senses. The part of him that needed blood to survive would just have to wait another day or two.

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Hanzo only wanted some tea. He spent a good five minutes rummaging around the safehouse pantry to no avail.

“Whatcha looking for, love?”

Hanzo turned towards the sound of the new voice. He gawked at Tracer, displeased at being called “love”.

“We are apparently out of tea.”

In a flash of blue light, the girl was standing right besides him, going through the shelves for herself with abnormal speed.

“Darn, I always hate missing tea time.”

Hanzo sighed and left the pantry, only to meet the rest of the team as they entered the kitchen. He did his best to skirt around the others, but they all insisted that he sit at the table with them. Hanzo was reluctant, but sat pointedly at the end of the table.

“Is Jesse sleeping in again?” Mercy asked.

Reinhardt laughed, “Sleeping in, you say? Sleep is for the weak! I will go rouse our friend!”

He stood, but Hanzo found himself actually speaking up. “Wait.”
Everyone’s heads swiveled towards Hanzo with varying degrees of surprise, though he managed to keep himself composed. “McCree told me he is not feeling very well.”

“Is that so? It was awfully hot yesterday.” Mercy didn’t look surprised by the news, but she stared at Hanzo curiously. “And he told you this?”

“Yes.”

Tracer giggled, though what she found so funny was beyond Hanzo. She scooted her chair closer, and Hanzo fought the impulse to push himself away.

“Is there anything else he’s told you?”

“Lena!”, Mercy scolded.

“What? I just want to know if-”

“I know,” Hanzo interjected. “about McCree.”

The table was silent for a second. The Lena squealed with an, “Aww, he trusts you!”

She tried to throw an arm around Hanzo’s shoulders and the archer batted her away at the last second. “What are you talking about?”

“McCree has put a lot of faith in you, brother.”

Lena moved herself as close to Hanzo as she could be without physically touching him. “Yeah, and you can’t be the scary bloke everyone takes you as if good old McCree trusts you.”

Indignantly, Hanzo stood. He had quite the image of the stone cold assassin that he’d like to protect, even if he could feel the slight heat rising in his face. But before he could make a curt exit, a massive set of arms engulfed him in a bone-crushing hug. Hanzo wheezed as Reinhardt laughed.

“No need to be shy, you are among friends here!”

Trust? Friends? Hanzo’s mind reeled and out of the corner of his eye, he could see Genji trying to discreetly pull out his phone. Utterly flustered, Hanzo pried himself out of Reinhardt’s grasp and excused himself as quickly as possible. On his way back to his room, Hanzo was halfheartedly cursing McCree for softening his image, even when the sharpshooter wasn't even there.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!
McCree was still hungry, even after more than enough of his fill of raw meat intermixed with a series of naps. Each time he woke up, McCree found that his hunger would ebb away a little bit more, and he could retract his fangs again. But his throat was still parched for blood. McCree hoped that some water and another quick nap would help solve the problem, even if past experiences had told him otherwise.

Eventually, McCree was awoken by someone knocking on his door. He got up, and his throat felt as dry as the desert, but McCree felt like he was strong enough to actually get up and answer the door.

And there was Hanzo.

McCree suddenly wondered what time it was. He scratched the back of his neck. “Oh, did I oversleep?”

Hanzo shook his head, seemingly unperturbed by McCree’s raspy voice. “Hardly. We are departing in about an hour. But I came to check on you.”

McCree suddenly remembered his little deal. “Ah, right. Well, as you can see, I’m feeling much better.”

“You sound much worse, actually.”

It must’ve been Hanzo’s deadbeat delivery, because McCree found himself chuckling at the assassin’s words. Unfortunately, it turned out that laughing worsened his sore throat, and McCree was reduced to a short bout of coughs.

“I promise, I feel better than I sound. I-”

McCree paused, hearing the telltale footsteps of someone else coming by. He grabbed Hanzo by the sleeve and yanked him inside his room. The assassin squaked indignantly, but let McCree shut the door behind them. A few seconds later, and they both heard Lena zipping by, followed by the light steps of several other teammates.

McCree sighed in relief, even when Hanzo’s nose scrunched at the smell of raw meat and leftover cigar smoke. Then he saw McCree’s desk.

“Do I have to alert Mercy that you are in danger of food poisoning?”

McCree glanced back at the empty packages lying on his desk.

“No, actually. Part dog, part snake. Remember?”
McCree leaned casually against the wall, but didn’t like how Hanzo looked almost disapproving. McCree ran a hand through his hair.

“Look, I was a bit behind schedule with the blood. Plus, it wasn’t like yesterday was a walk in the park for me.”

McCree wanted to make sure that Hanzo wouldn’t worry over him.

“I don’ usually do this sort of stuff, but I jus’ needed a little pick me up, okay?”

… “Okay.”

McCree cocked his head to the side. Did he misshear Hanzo?

“Oh? Really?”

Now it was the archer’s turn to look confused. Well, as confused as Hanzo would let himself look.

“Is there something else you wanted me to say?”

McCree shrugged. “Dunno. Figured you’d make a little more fuss over it.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes. “You are a grown man. I will only “fuss” over you when there is no other alternative. Besides, I am starting to think you are just too flustered to ever go to a medic for help.”

Even with his gravely voice and sore throat, McCree laughed. “I told ya, there ain’t no medic in the world that can help this.”

McCree showed off his fangs again, hoping to get a reaction out of Hanzo for kicks. To his great displeasure, Hanzo showed nothing more than a blink of the eye. That joke had apparently worn out it's welcome.

“So, I assume that if you are well enough to joke, then you’re well enough for the trip back to the Gibraltar base?”

McCree put away his fangs with a sigh. “Yeah, jus’ about feelin’ like my old self now.”

Hanzo crossed his arms. “Good. I’d hate to have to go to the trouble of carrying you to Mercy.”

McCree cooed, “Darlin’, ya would’ve carried me? Shucks, I’ll faint now if that offers still in the air.”

Hanzo pointed at McCree. “Don’t you dare.”

McCree smirked. “I’m just jokin’ with ya, sugar. O’ course you wouldn’t be able to handle all this.”

McCree gestured to himself in a wide, sweeping motion. He planted his hands on his hips and expected Hanzo to become flustered again. Instead, Hanzo’s eyes glimmered with a hint of mischief. He stood a little bit taller and nonchalantly began inspecting his nails for dirt that wasn’t there.

“Yes, I suppose you are a bit much to handle. After all, I doubt even Reinhardt could carry you.”

McCree dropped one hand to his side and pressed one against his chest. “Excuse me?”
Hanzo didn’t back down. “You heard me.”

McCree mimicked the angered tone his mother used to take on. “First of all, I am what folks call ‘big-boned’. Secondly, I invite you into my room, my sanctuary, and you go insultin’ me like this?”

Hanzo huffed. He tried not to smile as he said, “Well, would you prefer it if I left? You do have to get ready to leave, after all.”

It took a second for McCree to realize that he did in fact have less than an hour to get ready for the team’s departure.

“Oh yeah…”

Hanzo snickered. “Then I will leave you to it.”

He began to walk out of the room, but McCree threw a hand across the doorway first. He tipped his hat to Hanzo in respect.

“Look, Hanzo. I really do appreciate everythin’ ya’ve done for me today. Yer a real lifesaver, ya know? I really felt it in my gut I could trust you.”

McCree didn’t miss how Hanzo dropped his eyes to the floor. There was a remorsefulness in his hidden gaze and dropped shoulders.

“Do not think anything of it.” Hanzo hurriedly pushed past McCree’s arm. And McCree couldn’t stop him when Hanzo speed-walked down the hall.

McCree watched as Hanzo’s hair tie whisked back and forth behind his retreating figure.

Suddenly, McCree called out, “Don’ think I’ll drop this, Hanzo.”

The assassin paused to glance back, eyebrows furrowed. McCree just grinned as he swept his hat off his head and gave Hanzo a little bow.

“As a gentleman, I can assure ya I’ll be payin’ back your kindness. Whether you want it or not.”
After McCree left for half a day to find himself some blood, he returned in full spirit, better than ever. And Hanzo really didn’t think that McCree would actually try to repay him.

No, he was far more comfortable with cooking his own meals and eating alone, or at the very least eating in silence among the others. Now, McCree would rush to the Gibraltar base’s moderate kitchen to save Hanzo a seat at the cramped table. It was always his preferred seat at the corner of the table, away from most of the usual meal-time ruckus.

Meaning that McCree was purposely taking himself out of the center of the table’s boisterousness for the sake of sitting next to Hanzo. McCree did this for several weeks, but never made it seem like a hassle, so Hanzo let him do it.

Then they went on another mission to Germany to smoke out possibly hostile Omnics. Hanzo perched himself on the balcony of an abandoned apartment complex and started firing at will.

He got a headshot and heard a whistle from three stories down.

“Nice shot.” McCree flashed him a thumbs up, then ran past him without another word. Hanzo thought little of this new encouragement.

After that incident, McCree had started to invite him to target practice and sparring matches whenever possible. Hanzo preferred to do his practice alone, but gladly took the opportunity to sweep the floor with McCree’s face at least once a week.

“You really should improve your hand to hand combat. Beating you within a minute is starting to get boring.”

McCree laughed from his position sprawled out on the floor. His sweat was starting to show through the gray tank top he wore to sparring.

“Sorry, darlin’. I usually let Peacekeeper do all the talkin’, ya know? Ain’t much use takin’ yer fists to a gunfight.”

“I disagree.”

Hanzo stretched his arms out in front of him. He ignored how McCree’s eyes instantly went to the rippling muscles beneath his tattoo. Maybe Hanzo himself should wearing something more than his own navy cutoff top.

“Besides,” Hanzo remarked, “why would you insist that I beat you every week if you do not even think it’s worthwhile?”

Oh boy howdy, do I love writer's block! JK, but I'm starting to get back my motivation and I'm sorry if this chapter still sounds choppy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
McCree shrugged and pushed himself up into a sitting position. “I never said it wasn’t. I just feel like I might be slackin’ off in this department. Besides, this is fun.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes and offered his hand to McCree, who gladly took it. After he was hoisted to his feet, McCree readjusted his sweatpants.

Hanzo looked away from the gesture and asked, “How could losing possibly be fun?”

McCree laughed. He leaned down slightly to be at eye level with Hanzo. “I tend to think more about how I’m spending time with you than how I’m gettin’ my ass kicked.”

Hanzo stared at McCree in disbelief, but otherwise said nothing.

“Besides, it ain’t exactly fair with yer lifetime’s worth of learnin’ all yer fancy ninja moves. ‘M much more accustomed to my own style of fighting, thank you very much.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes. “Oh? And have you actually studied some form of martial arts on your own before?”

Hanzo could tell that he hasn’t, at least not extensively. Though he had to admit, while McCree wasn’t the fastest fighter, he was sturdy where he stood and could easily still take a hit or two.

But there was that glimmer in McCree’s eyes again. It was the same look as when he was particularly happy, proud, or about to tell a bad joke.

“Sure thing. I studied a fine art passed down from generation after generation of the McCree family. Something improved upon by the infamous Deadlock Gang and perfected by the very best of Blackwatch.”

Hanzo tried not to sound too curious. “And that is?”

McCree couldn’t even keep himself from grinning. “Good old fashioned boxing.”

Hanzo replayed the words in his head, making sure that he didn’t mishear. There was a notable disappointment in his voice.

“Are you serious?”

“As the plague.”

Hanzo sighed. “Is this anything like the fake American wrestling your people tend to love so much?”

“Of course not! In boxing, there ain’t no chair to bash over your buddy’s head.”

McCree chuckled at his own joke. “But seriously, ya might like it. It’s got hand to hand stuff, no wimpy gloves like the fake stuff, and sometimes there’s grappling. It’s the whole shebang. Even if you don’t, there’s always actual wrestling.”

Hanzo himself was not one for change, but maybe McCree had a few of his own moves in a style closer to what he knew. Who knows, McCree might even win this time.

“All right, I will try your boxing.”

McCree whooped in celebration. Hanzo held a hand up to catch his attention.
“However, do not be offended if I beat you at your own game.”

McCree leaned down so he could be eye to eye with Hanzo. “Honey, I’d like to see you try.”

Three seconds into McCree’s version of boxing, and Hanzo realized that it was nothing like the jujutsu, aikido, or karate that Hanzo had learned before.

First of all, McCree insisted that his style of boxing had no rules, since in a real fight in the field, the enemy wouldn’t play nice. At least Hanzo agreed with him there. Secondly, it was almost like wrestling at times, with bits and pieces of other martial arts mixed in. There were headlocks, tugs, shoves, and just a bit too much contact for Hanzo’s comfort. Third of all, McCree was either too far away, or way too close. McCree clearly had plenty of experience boxing, because it was frustrating for Hanzo to jump back and forth while essentially chasing after McCree.

After blocking a set of rapid punches, Hanzo realized that his topknot was coming undone. Strands of hair were sticking to his forehead from sweat. And his breath was quickening.

With a lurch, Hanzo realized that McCree was actually challenging him.

When they had sparred before, it was with their own respective styles (and Hanzo also happened to never break a sweat). His fluid forms could overpower McCree’s fighting. Now, it was exhilarating because he was trying to learn something new.

Granted, the blocks and dodges he had learned before came in very handy, but it was almost liberating, in a chaotic way, to throw away every rule Hanzo had learned about fighting and just try to go in for the kill while McCree did the same.

“This is-” Hanzo paused to block a kick, “how you fight all the time?”

McCree jumped back a good foot or so to avoid Hanzo’s punch. “Sure, it’s the only way I learned how.”

Then McCree rolled forwards and attempted to sweep Hanzo off his feet with a move similar to his own martial arts. Hanzo jumped to the side just in time.

“Did Blackwatch really teach you all this?”

“Look,” McCree paused to dodge a series of jabs, “back when Blackwatch was busy fighting Omnic’s that could adapt as we fought ’em, mixing things up was the easiest strategy.”

But he couldn’t believe it. This wild, exhilarating, lawless “boxing” is how McCree fought every single battle? How has the man not died of exhaustion by now? He was wasting ridiculous amounts of energy every time he switched forms or attack patterns.

Unless McCree was simply used to it.

Hanzo caught McCree’s punch and threw the other man over his shoulder. McCree miraculously recovered mid-air. He landed heavily on his feet behind him and Hanzo felt two arms wrap around his chest. Before he could react, McCree whispered, “Welcome to Suplex City.”

And before he knew it, Hanzo was being flipped upside down. The ground came barreling towards him, and at least he hand enough sense to throw an arm out and cushion the fall.
McCree let go of Hanzo, and he fell rather ungracefully to the floor. For the first time since their sparring matches began, Hanzo was left reeling on the ground as McCree stared down at him.

It was a hard won match. McCree’s chest was heaving, and he wiped his sweat with the hem of his shirt, revealing the abs softened slightly by age. Hanzo himself was trying to catch his breath, though maybe for more than one reason.

McCree pulled Hanzo to his feet and stared proudly at him.

“So, whaddya think? Pretty fun, ain’t it?”

Hanzo laughed softly. “I can hardly call that boxing, but it was… fun, I suppose.”

McCree clapped a hand on Hanzo’s shoulder. “Damn right it was.”

The two of them left the training area together, both tired from fleeting adrenaline. McCree was trying his best to coax a smile from Hanzo, and for all his efforts, Hanzo did actually end up grinning at McCree’s antics.

Although it only took the two minutes until they got to Hanzo’s room that he realized McCree’s hand was still on him, and Hanzo had let it stay there.

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Hanzo didn’t know what to expect when he heard banging on his door at six in the morning. It was still fairly early, and Hanzo was glad that he at least threw on his usual clothes before opening the door.

“What is it?”

When Hanzo finally opened the door, it was McCree standing before him. He was dressed in a strange assortment of gray sweatpants, brown button-up, and serape hastily thrown over his shoulders. His hair seemed only minimally brushed as well. Despite what was usually an ungodly hour for McCree, he was grinning from ear to ear.

“Mornin’, Hanzo.” McCree’s eyes were shining like a child on Christmas day. “Come with me.”

Then he grabbed Hanzo by the wrist and started hauling him off to wherever they were going. Flustered, Hanzo pulled his arm out of McCree’s grasp and jogged to keep up. “M-McCree! What is the meaning of this?”

The gunslinger was biting his lip with anticipation, and his dark brown eyes seemed unusually warm and wet.

“There’s some people here I’d like ya to meet.”

He didn’t say anymore as Hanzo practically chased after him to the lounge. Half of the base was awake as well, with some sitting and some standing around one of the rickety tables. There was laughter and hushed voices in an unusually excited air. The room felt almost like a party, and the uncomfortably charged atmosphere pressed against Hanzo’s chest like a vise.

He grabbed McCree’s sleeve before they could be noticed. Hanzo didn’t want to draw attention to himself, and kept his voice low. “What is going on?”

McCree bit his lip in anticipation. “Some old friends finally came around.”
So then these were former Overwatch agents? Now that McCree mentioned it, Hanzo realized that those awake were indeed from the old Overwatch. Even Genji was there, speaking to someone obscured by Reinhardt’s massive bulk.

McCree parted the crowd with Hanzo close behind. The younger woman didn’t surprise Hanzo, she seemed like she barely was in her thirties, after all. But it was the older one that caught him off guard.

Her hair was pure white from age, there was an eyepatch over a quarter of her face, and she looked closer to Reinhardt’s age than anyone else’s. And without a suit of power armor, it was hard for Hanzo to imagine that this older woman wasn’t in retirement by now.

Hanzo looked to McCree, and sucked in a breath when he took his hat off out of genuine respect.

“Ana, Fareeha, this here is Hanzo. Hanzo, these lovely ladies are Fareeha and her mother, Ana.”

Hanzo found himself under the immediate scrutiny of the older woman. Uncomfortable with almost everyone else’s eyes on him as well, Hanzo gave the two newcomers a stiff bow.

“Hello.”

“So you’re Hanzo?”

Hanzo looked up to see Fareeha staring at him curiously. Her rigid posture spoke of time in the military. The quick glance of her eyes up and down Hanzo’s form showed that she was subtly scrutinizing him for whatever reason. “Jesse spoke of you briefly, before he ran off to go get you, that is.”

She smiled softly, but Hanzo caught the name Jesse, and it admittedly took him a second to remember that that was McCree. Hanzo stiffened when a hand clapped itself over his shoulder.

“Yessir, Hanzo here is one helluva shot. Reckon he could give ya a run for yer money, Ana.”

The older woman chuckled. Her eye shined playfully. “We’ll have to see about that.”

Hanzo soon noticed the rifle strapped to Ana’s back. She was… a sniper? She had to be excellent if she was here at her age. Speaking of age, Hanzo noticed that everything from the stiff way she sat to the polished metal of her rifle barrel showed that time had not yet worn her down.

A cough from someone startled Hanzo. He looked toward Genji, seemingly staring at the hand still on his shoulder. Hurriedly, Hanzo brushed away McCree’s hand.

Ana tilted her head at them. “Why don’t you two take a seat, hm? I would love to catch up.”

McCree sat down besides Fareeha. He ushered for Hanzo to take another seat, but he opted to politely stand to the side instead.

McCree seemed only mildly disappointed until Fareeha nudged him. Hanzo watched as he was dragged into the conversation.

“I jus’ can’t believe how long it’s been. I mean, the last I heard of ya Fareeha, you were just startin’ boot camp.”

The woman smiled warmly. “And the last I heard of you, McCree, you were responsible for a heist aboard a hypertrain.”
McCree scratched the back of his head. “So ya heard about that, huh?”

Ana remarked, “Honey, half the world heard about it. Any sort of gossip relating to Overwatch instantly makes international headlines.”

There was a round of laughter around the table. Hanzo took a half step further away. He wanted to say something, he really did, but this was his greatest weakness; social interactions. Trying to be relaxed, or trying to initiate casual conversation, was where he struggled. And what was he supposed to say?

Hanzo was more of an outsider than in any other situation before. These people had history together. They had fought together for years before fighting with Hanzo for mere few months. What could Hanzo say?

Eventually, he sucked in a breath when he saw McCree’s arm drape over Fareeha’s shoulder. There was no hesitation in their touches, because they were already familiar to them. Hanzo realized that he could not have that, at least not with someone like McCree.

He melted into the shadows, and left without anyone even noticing.

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McCree knew that he should’ve tried harder to keep Hanzo in the conversation. He tried talking about Ana’s sniping experience to interest Hanzo. He swapped old and new stories, several of which involved Hanzo saving his ass from certain death from afar, and even tried mentioning Hanzo by name more than once. But he couldn’t stop Hanzo from making a silent retreat. McCree didn’t see him leave, but heard the distinct click of his metal heels on the floor fading away.

Maybe it was just the atmosphere. Hanzo didn’t seem like the kind to take up reunions like this.

Or maybe he wasn’t as interested as McCree had hoped. As the new members floated in to meet the newcomers, McCree tried to not let it bother him. He took a sip from his flask and Ana lightly smacked the back of his head.

“Jesse!”

McCree coughed into his hand. “What? It’s just blood.”

Fareeha laughed. “So you carry it in a flask?”

McCree shrugged nonchalantly. “Makes it easier for me.”

Though for his company’s sake, McCree did put his flask away. The rest of his day was spent showing Fareeha around the base, since the last time she was here, she was twelve. It really did bring back memories. McCree remembered carrying Fareeha around on his back, trying to set records for fastest piggy-back ride around the base. Fareeha remembered the time he accidentally let her stay up until two in the morning to marathon scary movies with him. It was a kind of nostalgia that McCree actually welcomed for once.

Later, when they got to the largest the training room, McCree whistled softly.

Hanzo was there alone, and he seemed to have started up Torby’s new automatic launchers. Plastic disks were being launched into the air from different directions, sometimes two at once, but Hanzo easily kept up with them. He backflipped and fired at a disk, hit it directly in it’s center, landed, and shot another arrow over his shoulder without more than half a second to aim.
Fareeha whispered, “He’s incredible.”

“I know,” McCree was glad she agreed.

When Hanzo ran out of arrows and remotely paused the machines, McCree whistled much louder than before. He even got to see the back muscles unobscured by Hanzo’s fancy clothes stiffen.

However, McCree’s smug grin dropped when Hanzo glanced slowly over his shoulder. His gaze was reminiscent of when they had first met; thinly veiled discomfort covered by forced disinterest.

Was Hanzo mad at him? After they started getting along so well? McCree got tongue-tied for a moment, but Fareeha seemed to pick up on it.

“You are quite the archer.”

Hanzo turned around fully to meet them. “So I have been told.”

Hanzo approached them, and McCree noticed the beads of sweat on his brow. And now that she was standing, Hanzo gave Fareeha the quick once-over she gave him, but McCree didn’t like it. He had a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach that Hanzo was sizing her up. Granted, Hanzo did that to everyone when he first arrived, but McCree had hoped, or maybe just assumed, that he broke the archer out of his shell.

“And you are Fareeha, yes?”

Fareeha held out her hand. “That would be me.”

They shook hands briefly. Hanzo still seemed on edge.

“So, what brings you to Overwatch?”

Fareeha stood just a little bit straighter. “I was originally working for Helix Security International, safeguarding the Anubis program until it’s destruction. But my time with Helix is over, and I’ve moved on to bigger things.”

“Like workin’ with us.” McCree pointed a thumb at himself.

Fareeha chuckled. “Yes, like working with this idiot here.”

“Excuse me?” McCree tipped back his hat to proper mock-glare at Fareeha.

Fareeha patted his shoulder. “Oh you know I don’t mean it.”

McCree crossed his arms and pouted. “Sure ya don’t.”

“Ahem.” By then, Hanzo was looking more visibly uncomfortable. “I would much rather clean up the training room in peace.”

McCree perked up a little bit. “Ya need help? I’d b-”

“No.” Hanzo slung his bow over his shoulder. “I can take care of it myself. Besides, it looks like you are already busy, to say the least. Why not show your friend the rest of the base, hmm?”

Hanzo turned away, giving McCree the cold shoulder once more. McCree wanted to ask him what exactly was wrong, but Fareeha was already starting to lead him away.
“Jesse? Didn’t you say the viewpoint from the walkway was stunning? Let’s go there.”

McCree just nodded along and guided his companion through the halls of Gibraltar.

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“I’m tellin’ ya, it ain’t much use comin’ here now. The view’s much better at sunset.”

“I don’t doubt you.”

The two of them were sitting on the edge of the walkway, watching the boats in the distance slowly sail through the sparkling blue water. Fareeha sat cross-legged, and McCree let his legs hang over the edge. He tipped his hat just a little lower to shield himself from the sun’s glare.

Fareeha glanced at him, then over his shoulder towards the walkway entrance, and towards the other entrance on the far side.

“No one’s around, you don’t have to hide your fangs around me.”

“Huh?” McCree glanced around. “Oh, yeah. Would ya believe it if I said I got used to keepin’ them retracted?”

Fareeha raised an eyebrow. “Not possible. You hated concealing them.”

McCree smiled knowing. “Cause I was a reckless idiot that couldn’t conceal ’em. Control came with age, sweet pea.”

“So you are telling me that you won’t take up the opportunity to let “the boys” out?”

“Which boys? The ones up north or th-”

Fareeha punched his shoulder to silence him, and McCree was surprised at how much it hurt. It wasn’t bad, but it was a far cry from the twelve year old McCree had first met.


The two of them fell into silence. The few clouds in the sky had parted so the sun could shine even brighter on the water below. Honestly, it hurt McCree’s eyes a little bit, but his company made up for it. McCree was pulled out of his reverie when Fareeha spoke.

“So… that man, Hanzo.”

McCree peered over at his companion. “What about him?”

“Are you close to him?”

“More or less.”

“What exactly is that supposed to mean?”

“I think we’re still testin’ the waters.” McCree shrugged. “Remember, to most swimmers I’m still the god damned shark.”

Fareeha rolled her eyes. “I see, so he knows what you are?”

“O’ course.” McCree stated matter-of-factly.
“Then is that why he acts so coldly towards you? From the way you spoke of him earlier, I was surprised by how far he was from the saint you made him out to be.”

McCree sighed tiredly. “Well, he started off kinda cold, I’ll admit, but he’s got a helluva lot better recently. Not really sure what ticked him off though. I think it was something I did.”

Fareeha propped her elbows up on her knees and laced her hands together. She rested her head on her hands and seemed to be thinking fast. “When did it start? The change in Hanzo’s temperament?”

McCree scratched at his beard. “Uh, today I suppose.”

“I see.” What Fareeha saw, McCree was unsure of.

“Was he fond of you before?”

“I’d like to think he was.”

“Hmmm...” Fareeha hummed in thought. She looked like she was thinking about something. “Is he particularly close to anyone else in the base?”

McCree scratched at the back of his neck. “Dunno. It’s a little complicated between him an’ Genji.”

Fareeha cocked her head to the side. “Genji?”

McCree nodded. “They’re brothers.”

“Oh.” Fareeha went back to gazing out into the ocean. The little boats were still plodding along through the sparkling waves.

“Jesse, can I ask you something rather personal?”

McCree shrugged. “Shoot.”

Fareeha had a resigned look in her eyes, like she couldn’t believe what she was about to ask. “Does...Hanzo know you prefer men?”

It took McCree a few seconds to process Fareeha’s words. “I, uh...what?”

Fareeha snickered at the clueless expression on his face. “I’ll take that as a no then.”

McCree pulled the brim of his hat down even lower to hide the embarrassment in his eyes, not that Fareeha wouldn’t be able to see through his ruse. So he tried to divert the attention to a different topic. “Why ya even askin’?”

Fareeha nudged his side. “Because, whether or not Hanzo himself prefers men, he is obviously upset that his only ally has just been whisked away by someone else. A woman, no less.”

McCree snorted at the idea. “Look, besides the fact that yer implyin’ a grown man my age has a crush on me, Hanzo ain’t like that. He looks broody, but he’s tough and smart and sure as hell ain’t the jealous type.”

Fareeha rolled her eyes. “Jesse, the broody types are the jealous types. Why else would they brood?”
McCree opened and closed his mouth several times. The notion, this talk… it was all much too ludicrous because Hanzo was Hanzo; he was mysterious, yet fierce, with a determined, protective attitude beneath his battle-hardened exterior.

And McCree was himself; he was a rugged, southern “gentleman”. Hanzo had saved his ass on their last mission in more ways than one and McCree was glad to pay that kindness back in whatever small way he could. He was also polite, even when calling Hanzo “darling”. To imagine that he could ever get any further than that?

“Yer wrong.”

“What makes me wrong?” The confident tone in Fareeha’s voice made it sound like she was challenging him.

“Everything.”

Fareeha clapped her hands. “Yet another wonderful argument from you, Jesse. You are clearly as articulate as ever.”

“Don’t sass me.” McCree grumbled out his displeasure. He flopped onto his back on the walkway, looking up at the scattered clouds. “Look, jus’ to make ya happy, I’ll assume yer right. What do you want me to do? Straight up ask him out? Want me to stop talkin’ to ya too? I could try, but yer ma would shoot me in the back o’ the head.”

Fareeha shrugged. She laid down besides McCree, letting her hair spill around her, to stare him in the eye. “You know him better than I. Although it could never hurt to talk.”

McCree pouted. What the hell was he supposed to say? ‘Hiya darlin’, I jus’ wanted to tell ya that I like guys and Fareeha is just my best friend from my Blackwatch days. Wanna hang out again?’ Yeah right, he’d get an arrow up his ass for something like that.

McCree decided that he was done talking about this. He got to his feet and offered a hand to Fareeha. “Wanna go to the mess hall?”

Fareeha stood on her own. “I thought you said the base is never well stocked in snacks.”

“Yeah, but I skipped out on breakfast.”

Fareeha made a tut-tut sound, so similar to how Ana used to reprimand him. It brought back even more old memories to McCree as he and Fareeha made their way back inside.

Chapter End Notes

Not very sorry for those of you who don't care for Fareeha or Ana. I've been planning to include them for a while now and I'm really excited to finally write them in. Input is welcome, and thank you for reading!
McCree somehow went a solid week without really seeing Hanzo. He couldn’t find him at meals with the rest of the group or in the training rooms. He saw fleeting glimpses of the other man’s golden hair tie from around corners, but could never catch up. McCree even risked climbing halfway up Gibraltar’s cliffside to see if Hanzo was hiding in one of his little perches.

After seven days, McCree had to admit defeat; Hanzo was avoiding him again.

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It turned out that the only thing that could flush out Hanzo was a mission. They had heard rumors that the Russian government had lost control of Volskaya Industries. In the meeting room, McCree finally saw Hanzo, standing a good few feet away from the rest of the group like he used to do.

McCree wanted to know what was going on, what he had done to piss off the archer, but got lost in the mission briefing. Their team was to shut Volskaya down, at least temporarily, while the government scrambled to gather their forces.

McCree and Hanzo were put on a team with Zarya (obviously) and Torbjorn. Further accompanying them (at their insistence) were Fareeha, and Ana as both their support and second sniper. Winston tried to argue with Fareeha, saying that maybe she should train with the others some more. That is, until Mama Bear Ana death-glared the poor scientist.

McCree honestly thought that their first mission had come up a little soon too, but neither women were willing to take a softie reconnaissance job as their first stint. Besides, he didn’t want Ana looking at him the way she looked at Winston.

Everyone on the team was cautioned to prep for the mission to Siberia by gathering up their warmest clothes. Zarya had assured them that the temperature wasn’t that bad this time of year, but she was the only one willing to take the chance. McCree himself was dressed in a white version of his typical attire, except his getup was much better insulated.

When McCree joined up with the rest of the team, he gawked at Hanzo’s gear.

Hanzo noticed his staring. “What?”

“There is a wolf on yer head.”

Hanzo cocked his head to the side. “Yes, and..?”

McCree tilted his head. “Well, uh, is it real?”

“Of course it is.”

McCree would’ve loved to hear the story of how Hanzo got a real wolf pelt for a hat, but the rest of the team had arrived, (i.e., Ana and “Pharah”) and Hanzo made it a point to board the jet at that time.
The flight to Russia was quiet, to say the least. Everyone was gearing up for a fight in a place that could literally make soldiers at will, but Hanzo seemed especially somber, which was really saying something.

The trip was roughly five hours long, and at about four hours in, McCree could tell that they were nearing their destination. He was acutely aware of the cold climate settling in his bones, despite the jet’s heating system. It must’ve been the fine combination of his acclimation of warm weather in both New Mexico and Gibraltar, as well as his sensitivity to cold (thanks, cold-blooded snake DNA).

When they had arrived, the mission started off well enough. Volskaya was much bigger than McCree had anticipated, but nothing intimidating. Torbjorn was actually having the time of his life wrecking the factory’s machinery and security systems while he, Zarya, and Pharah fired at will.

When McCree fought several Omnics at once and took a metal fist to the jaw, he felt a familiar jolt go through his body. The pain dissipated immediately and McCree fanned the hammer on his enemies. After dispatching the Omnics, McCree looked up and saw Ana’s shadow moving through the rafters.

McCree couldn’t find Hanzo, but ran past several Omnics with arrows jutting out of their metal bodies.

Torbjorn’s voice crackled to life over the comm link. “I need backup, they’re sending reinforcements to guard the power supply.”

McCree had only a rudimentary mental image of Volskaya’s layout, but he knew that the main power generator and backup supplies were located on the north side of the factory, and McCree was probably as far away as he could be.

He pressed his finger to his comm. “I’m on my way.”

“As am I.” Pharah responded

McCree took a shortcut through one of the many open spaces in Volskaya Industries and made it to a massive room holding most of the assembly line. The sudden sounds of gunfire and explosions kept him on edge.

McCree ran past more fallen enemies, this time with arrows embedded in them. He ducked behind several crates and peaked out at the chaos unfolding.

And what the hell was Hanzo doing?

The archer was seemingly alone, in plain sight, firing wherever he saw fit. He jumped from the ledge he was standing on to the moving platform, using another scatter arrow to decimate a squad of enemies. Sure, he was technically doing his job, but he was bound to run out of arrows at this rate and Torbjorn needed them.

McCree ran from his hiding spot, rolled in order to avoid being shot, and tossed a flashbang at the cluster of enemies giving Hanzo the most trouble. He unloaded Peacekeeper into them and sprinted over to the platform Hanzo was standing on.

McCree called out, “What the hell are ya doing wastin’ ammo and time like this?”

The archer leaped gracefully from the platform, but buckled on impact. McCree caught Hanzo before he could fall to his knees and suddenly smelled blood.
McCree saw the rip in Hanzo’s pant leg, and the bloody wound beneath.

“Ya’ve been shot.”

Hanzo straightened himself out and pushed McCree off of him. “Really? I had not noticed.”

He tried to run off to find cover, but McCree could see how hard he was trying to fight his limp. McCree ran after him, simultaneously keeping enemies off their tail while also keeping an eye on Hanzo.

When McCree stopped to kick over a stack of supply crates, he heard Hanzo shout. McCree turned around and saw an Omnic clearly designed for combat taking a swing at his teammate. Hanzo was knocked off balance and his bow went skittering across the floor. Instinct took over.

“Hey ya damned tin can, over ‘ere!”

McCree fired once at the Omnic to make it mad before dodging to the side. He didn’t think that something twice the size of Bastion could move as quickly as they did, because the next thing McCree knew, there was a stunning explosion of pain erupting in his side. There was half a second where McCree felt utterly weightless, and he realized that the damned Omnic took one nasty swing at him.

Another half second later and McCree realized he could hear someone calling out his name. Then he collided with the nearest wall, ten feet away.

McCree rolled to the floor, staring dazedly at the ceiling. At least he still had his chest armor, or else he’d be suffering some broken ribs. He blinked away the stars swimming in his vision and noticed something wet seeping into the hair at his temple.

It didn’t take him much to know that he was bleeding. McCree tilted his head to the side so blood wouldn’t get in his eyes and noticed a little, persistent glint of blue in his peripheral. Turning his head to the side, McCree saw Hanzo’s storm bow sitting so innocently just a foot or so away.

McCree almost would’ve been content to lay there for a while longer, sitting in a daze, if it weren’t for the series of heavy footsteps growing louder and louder, altering McCree that something was approaching. He couldn’t quite figure it out until the Omnic stood over him. A metal arm loomed over McCree’s head and he suddenly realized what was about to happen.

In a quick, jerky motion, McCree hastily grabbed Hanzo’s storm bow and used it to block the Omnic’s blow from bashing his face in. McCree bared his teeth with the effort, realizing too late that he was still cornered against the wall.

“Hey, kotchi ni!”

McCree caught sight of Hanzo’s metal leg before the archer leaped onto the Omnic’s leg. He climbed up their back as gracefully as a tiger and plunged an arrow through the Omnic’s weak point.

McCree managed to roll out of the way as the Omnic fell to the ground. He started to push himself to his feet when a hand presented itself in front of his face. McCree looked up and saw Hanzo standing expectantly before him.

McCree gladly took the hand. “Thanks for the save, partner.”

Hanzo, unfortunately, said nothing, even when McCree returned his bow. “Sorry ‘bout abusin’ the
The archer did a quick examination of his weapon as the two of them started moving again. “Do not concern yourself, it has been through much worse.” Hanzo’s eyes flickered to McCree’s forehead. “Besides, your pretty face is already ruined.”

McCree brought a hand up to his face, wincing at the noticeable scrape and bruising on his forehead. The two of them tried making their way towards the rest of the team. McCree’s head still ached, but even with his wound, he noticed the slight tremor in Hanzo’s leg.

“Hey now.” McCree pushed himself underneath Hanzo’s arm, mindful to not smear any blood on Hanzo’s fancy getup, and effectively draped the other man’s arm over his shoulders. “We gotta get ya to Ana fast if ya don’ wanna bleed out. Ya got anything to wrap ‘round that wound?”

Hanzo sighed. “Here.”

He untied one of his belts with only slightly shaking fingers, and McCree took it from him. They stopped so McCree could tie the fabric around the wound to keep it from worsening.

Once they were moving again, Hanzo frowned at the matted mess of hair and blood on McCree’s forehead. “And what about you?”

McCree managed a smirk. “Tis but a scratch, darlin’.”

Hanzo merely rolled his eyes. He kept his eyes trained on the path ahead. Suddenly, their comms crackled to life.

“Jesse, Hanzo, where are you two?”

Pharah. McCree sighed with relief, though Hanzo’s nose scrunched with clear displeasure.

“Tell your friend that we’re on our way.”

If McCree were any pettier man, he would’ve been irked by how Hanzo refused to call Pharah by her name. McCree, however, felt like now wasn’t the time to bring it up. He pressed his comm link.

“Hanzo’s been wounded. It ain’t too bad, but we ain’t exactly makin’ top speed here.”

Ana asked, “Wound? Where are you? I’ll meet you there.”

Hanzo tugged off his wolfskin to get to his comm. “I’m fine.”

“You sure as hell ain’t.” McCree snapped. He said over the comm, “We’re in the long-ass hallway between the main power supply and the main assembly area.”

“McCree.” Hanzo warned.

“I’m on my way. Don’t do anything too stupid until I get there.”

McCree couldn’t help but smile at Ana’s words. Decades had gone by, but it felt like almost nothing had changed about her.

He was pulled out of his reverie when the lights in the factory flickered for a few seconds before shutting off entirely. Machinery stalled as well, and even the little red emergency lights that were supposed to come on didn’t. Without the faint moonlight peeking through the clouds, it was pitch
black.

McCree hardly needed to squint to see. His vision was perfect, but he knew Hanzo needed something, a little moonlight, at least. “I take it Torbjorn managed to shut down the power.”

Hanzo muttered, “A little warning would have been nice. Can you see?”

“It’s as clear as day to me.”

Hanzo grumbled some angry Japanese under his breath. Soon, they could see their breath in front of their faces and McCree pulled his serape up to cover his face.

“How ya doin’, Hanzo?”

“Fine.”

McCree wanted to prod Hanzo a little more, but a sudden light and the click of boot heels announced that someone was coming around the corner.

“Ana?”

“Jesse?” Ana shined a flashlight down the hallway and immediately spotted them. She ran up to them and immediately grabbed Jesse’s face with her free hand, not caring if she squished his cheeks like a child. “What happened to you?”

“It looks worse than it is.” McCree nodded over to Hanzo. “He’s the one ya should be lookin’ after.”

Ana flashed her light down at Hanzo’s leg, as if suddenly remembering why she had even come to meet them.

“Oh. Of course.”

She aimed her rifle at Hanzo’s leg, and he instinctively tried to jerk away.

“What are you-”

Ana fired.

Hanzo gasped and jolted forwards, muttering obscenities under his breath in Japanese. He closed his eyes and would’ve fallen if McCree didn’t have an arm around him. Slowly, Hanzo straightened himself out and tested out his leg by putting more weight on it. He looked surprised.

“The pain…”

“Is gone.” Ana finished. “Now, I can’t do serious repair in the middle of a mission like this, so we have to go. I told the others to meet us at the ship.”

“Whatever ya say, Ma’am.”

Ana slung her rifle over her back. “Do you need any more help walking?”

Hanzo shook his head. “No... Ma’am.”

“Good, then let’s hurry.”
The three of them twisted through the halls and open areas of Volskaya while avoiding panicked Omnis searching for the intruders. So at least the plan to stall the industry’s production was successful.

Ana was perhaps the only one that still needed the flashlight. The moonlight was just enough for Hanzo, and McCree could already see the pinpricks of light in the distance that belonged to the ship.

“We’re almost there.”

“I can see,” Hanzo retorted.

Torbjorn, Zarya, and Pharah were waiting for them. They were all a little banged up, but nothing that Ana couldn’t fix. Once they were safely in the air, the jet was set to autopilot. Per standard procedure, at least one person had to be awake for “guard duty”, just to make sure nothing went wrong.

McCree volunteered to take the first shift. No one else complained.

With the rest of his team strapped in and nothing but cool skies ahead, McCree wanted nothing more than to prop his feet up on the console. The only thing stopping him was the prospect of accidentally pressing the wrong button or kicking the wrong switch.

So he settled for stretching his feet as far as he could and staring at the night sky. He leaned his head back and watched the clouds part, revealing the full moon.

McCree chuckled silently to himself. He remembered way back when even the full moon hurt his eyes. He could barely stomach the slightest light, and look at him now; strutting around at high noon.

He slowly chewed on his lip, itching for a cigar. To sate another craving, McCree pulled out his flask and took a sip. The last time he had any blood was only a few days ago, but missions always made him hungry.

An hour into their flight and McCree tilted his head to the side. He could hear a faint, yet persistent rustling noise. He got out of his seat and went to go check whatever was making that sound.

He peeked in on the rest of the team. And there was Hanzo, squirming almost like a child in his seat.

McCree whispered, “Psst. Hanzo.”

The other man suddenly froze, blinking slowly at him. McCree grinned.

“Can’t sleep too well, huh?”

No response.

McCree gestured over his shoulder. “Come sit up in the cockpit with me. Might clear yer head.”

Hanzo folded his arms. “I would rather not.”

“Suit yerself. But ya might end up wakin’ some o’ the others will all the noise yer makin’.”

McCree held out a hand. “C’mon. We need to talk, anyways.”
Hanzo glanced at the hand being offered in front of him and the man offering it. McCree had a bandage on his forehead to stop his wound from bleeding, but his eyes were as soft and gentle as ever.

Hanzo felt irked. It was almost like McCree was pitying him for some strange reason.

Hanzo thought briefly on McCree’s offer. What could the man possibly have to say to him? Then again, it wasn’t like he’d be getting any sleep tonight. There was a deep ache in his leg, and it was keeping him up. Hanzo sighed.

Perhaps it wouldn’t be McCree talking to him, but him speaking his mind to McCree.

Hanzo pulled the plush wolfskin from his head and set it down on his seat as he got up. He ignored McCree’s hand and went up to the cockpit himself. He sat down in one of the two seats and waited for McCree to do the same.

Even then, he chose to focus more on the clouds ahead than his teammate.

“Hanzo, I have to be honest with ya. I ain’t the patient type, so whatever I did to piss ya off so damned much, ya better jus’ tell me now.”

Hanzo inhaled through his nose. He spared himself a quick glance at McCree. The moonlight reflected off his gaudy belt buckle and illuminated his admittedly stunning white attire. McCree’s eyes were also fixed so intently on Hanzo, it was almost disconcerting.

But oddest of all, McCree thought that Hanzo was… mad? At him? For what?

“I do not understand what you mean.”

“Sure ya don’.” McCree leaned towards Hanzo to look him even closer in the eye. “And why have ya been avoidin’ me like the plague for the past week?”

Hanzo’s tongue felt stuck in his throat.

He only wanted to give McCree space. The woman from his past had suddenly come back into his life and did he really expect Hanzo to try and intrude on that? They clearly had history together, whether friendship or something more.

And Hanzo couldn’t compete with that. He couldn’t act as comfortably around McCree in front of others as Fareeha could. Hanzo thought, even deeper down, that McCree wanted this, that he would want space and time.

Hanzo was never mad, he just felt… not intimidated by Fareeha’s presence. But perhaps maybe discouraged by it. It was a shameful feeling that he spent all week trying to purge. He thought that long hours meditating in silence would help, or that eating alone and contemplating his thoughts would allow him to get over whatever he was feeling.

He was wrong.

“I was never mad at you.” Hanzo couldn’t bear to look at McCree as he spoke. “I assumed you had more important things to attend to.”

He could feel McCree’s eyes resting heavily on him. The silence between them was… how did
McCree once say it? Thick enough to cut. Yes, that would be accurate.

After a few moments, McCree asked, “What could make you think I’d drop you like a sack of bricks?”

Hanzo must’ve been more exhausted than he thought, because the name tumbled out without him even realizing it.

“Fareeha.”

A heartbeat’s worth of time passed.

“What about her?”

Hanzo finally found it in himself to look at McCree. There was genuine confusion etched in his brow and in the frown he wore.

“You… you two are close, yes?”

McCree tilted his head, as if to get a better angle on Hanzo. “Well, sure but I’d don’ see…” He trialed off, leaving his words unfinished and his mouth hanging slightly open.

McCree took off his hat and fanned himself with it as he combed a hand through his hair. He seemingly found it very difficult to look Hanzo in the eye.

“Hanzo, I swear to ya, there ain’t nothin’ like that between us.”

“But,” Hanzo almost couldn’t process the words McCree just said. How could they not be together? “you know her so well, and she seems to understand you better than anyone else.”

Better than Hanzo, at least.

McCree chuckled and put his hat back on. “Shoot, I should know ‘er, considerin’ I used to be her babysitter.”

“Excuse me?” Hanzo let his utter bewilderment show on his face, not caring how unlike him it was.

“Y-up.” McCree put his hands behind his head and leaned back. “Me and Fareeha go way back to my first Blackwatch days. She was just a kid then, a real doll when she was little. Treated me like an older brother right away, even after my rescue from Talon.”

Hanzo swallowed and tried to say something responsive. “So she is merely your friend?”

“Sister’s more like it. Ya shoulda seen us back in the day. She looked up to me less like a hero and more like a brother. Even thought I sounded like a movie star with my accent, could ya believe that?”

McCree laughed quietly. Those days felt so long ago.

“Now she’s all grown up and kicking ass with the big kids now. Mighty proud of her.”

Hanzo shrank in his seat a little bit. He resumed staring out the window. “I see.”

His trepidation, his concerns, his fears... were they all for nothing? Was this just further proof that Hanzo’s people skills were painfully lacking? Hanzo even wished he kept his wolfskin on so he
could pull it over his head.

He propped his elbows on his knees and rubbed his temples, going back to insistently not looking at McCree.

“Hey now,” The gunslinger leaned over and patted his shoulder. Hanzo did not lean away.

“I’m flattered ya got so cut up over me like this, but it ain’t worth mullin’ over.”

Hanzo sighed slowly. His old fear was overcome with some kind of mild humiliation.

“You should go sleep. I would like some time alone for now.”

“Ya sure? Yer lookin’ mighty tired, ‘specially with that leg of yours.”

Hanzo kept his eyes on the moon floating in the sky ahead. “I am quite sure. Go rest, McCree.”

The sharpshooter chuckled softly. Then he slowly stood, stretched, and began to exit the cockpit. McCree paused for just a second with his hand on the door.

“Night, Hanzo. Don’ stay up too late now.”

Hanzo nodded. “Goodnight McCree... sleep well.”

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McCree walked out of the cockpit. As silently as a man wearing spurs could walk, McCree made it over to one of the nearby seats and collapsed in it. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes.

Fareeha was right about Hanzo.

Chapter End Notes

Translation: Kotchi ni- "Over here", at least according to Google Translate

And yes, the wolf on Hanzo’s head is a reference to his legendary Okami skin, and McCree's white outfit is a reference to his White Hat skin.

Thanks for reading!
The day they returned from Volskaya, McCree was immediately needed for another mission. Winston apologized profusely for such short notice, but the gunslinger waved him off and asked where he was needed. It turned out that he was destined for his old turf on Route 66.

For Hanzo himself, he was content to sit on the base’s roof after getting his leg properly cleaned, stitched, and bandaged. As someone who was not typically wrong about anything, Hanzo’s mind was still reeling from last night. He almost shattered whatever it was he had with Jesse. All because he had to be so incompetent in such a simple thing like communication.

“Hey! Hanzo!”

Hanzo startled into reality and glanced down. Of course it was McCree standing below him. The sunset threw a shadow over his eyes, obscuring them beneath his hat.

“You okay up there?”

Hanzo called down, “How did you find me?”

McCree laughed. “Ya got a knack for nesting up in places like this.”

Hanzo chose not to comment on that. Instead, he carefully climbed down the side of the building using the maintenance ladder.

His injured leg buckled suddenly and Hanzo felt himself slipping. He tried grabbing the ladder with a hand, but could not regain his footing. Hanzo fell nearly three meters down, and landed in a pair of arms.

“Woah now.”

Pain shot up Hanzo’s leg from the rough catch and his vision was obscured by a flurry of red and gold. Hanzo realized it was McCree’s serape blowing in the wind. When he could see again, Jesse was smiling kindly down at him.

Hanzo could feel his cheeks heating up. He almost whispered, “McCree.”

“Yes, darlin’?” The light made McCree’s eyes look much lighter than usual, with a soft burgundy hue beneath.
Hanzo suddenly tried to smooth his clothes out and tried to get out of McCree’s grasp.

“You can set me down now.”

Hanzo managed to get his feet on the ground, but McCree stubbornly insisted on keeping a hand on Hanzo’s shoulder.

“No way, I don’t trust that leg of yours.”

Hanzo tried to push the other man away, and tested his injured leg. He could put pressure on it well enough.

“I am quite fine, but thank you for catching me. Besides, you have a mission coming up soon. You should prepare.”

McCree shrugged. “Eh, figured I’d say goodbye first.”

McCree smiled as he walked besides Hanzo. They went inside and under the luminescent lights, Hanzo realized that Jesse’s eyes really were brick red, a shade between crimson and brown. He was hungry.

“Low on blood again?”

McCree instinctively reached for his face. “Are they red?”

“Not exactly, but I wouldn’t call them brown either.”

He sighed. “It’s the back to back missions gettin’ to me.”

“Then you should not go.”

McCree shook his head. “I’ll be fine. The team’s just doing reconnaissance and I know the area better than anyone else here. Won’t take much longer than a few days.”

Hanzo bit back a frown. It sounded dangerous for McCree to leave. What if something like Death Valley happened? Should he further voice his concern? Even before he could make a choice, Hanzo realized that they had arrived at the docking bay. The jet was waiting for McCree.

Hanzo stopped at the entrance and grabbed Jesse by the wrist.

“I have a bad feeling about this. You shouldn’t go.”

He actually laughed. It wasn’t mocking in any means, but didn’t feel any less demeaning. McCree tipped his hat to Hanzo.

“I’m flattered ya care so much Hanzo, but I’m a big boy. I can handle myself… For the most part.”

McCree smiled, so sure of himself, and twisted his wrist free. He grabbed Hanzo’s own hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze. Then he turned to leave and Hanzo was left staring at his serape as McCree boarded the jet.

After it had departed, Hanzo still stood there, uncertain. Then he heard light, approaching footsteps and sighed through his nose.

“Yes, Genji?”
Hanzo turned around and indeed, there was Genji coming to stand besides him. Hanzo still had many mixed feelings towards him. He tended to avoid Genji when not on missions, and spoke very little to him not out of spite, but out of guilt. Hanzo couldn’t let himself be forgiven so easily, and felt like he should never again have the privilege of calling Genji his family.

“Lost in thought again, brother?”

**Brother.**

Hanzo looked away. “Not thought, concern.”

“Ah yes, for Jesse.”

Hanzo looked up quickly. “How-”

Wordlessly, Genji held up his phone. On the screen was a blurry picture of Hanzo in McCree’s arms, taken just moments ago. Instinctively, Hanzo lunged for the phone.

Genji easily dodged and turned the device off.

“You two have gotten along surprisingly well since you joined. I am still amazed that Jesse told you about his condition.”

Hanzo felt just a tiny bit offended. He also took note of how Genji was fond enough of McCree to call him by his first name.

“What is there to be surprised about?”

“Well, it’s not that I’m surprised you’ve made connections with people, but I am surprised that it’s Jesse McCree of all people.”

Hanzo admitted, “I didn’t think I’d become as fond of him as I am, even with that unruly beard of his.”

Genji laughed. It was a smooth, robotic sound that unnerved Hanzo.

“I’d like to talk more over tea. Care to join me?”

Hanzo paused for only a moment. In all honesty, he’d prefer to run away and never confront the cybernetic personification of his greatest crime ever again, but he could tell that there was something Genji wanted to talk about.

“I suppose so.”

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They came to the kitchen and it turned out that Genji was already heating up some water and had extra jasmin tea, one of Hanzo’s favorites.

They sat down at the table face to face, and Hanzo stared as Genji removed his face plate. Those familiar brown eyes were framed by a flurry of pale scars that made Hanzo’s skin crawl.

Genji casually sipped his tea and smiled softly. “So, you and Jesse?”

Hanzo warmed his hands with his cup.
“What about us?”

“You two are quite fond of each other, yes?”

Hanzo nodded.

Genji’s soft smile suddenly turned almost teasing, just like when he was a rebellious teenager. It made Hanzo’s chest hurt.

“And how long have you two been fond of each other?”

Hanzo blinked bewilderedly. He was suddenly suspicious of Genji’s ulterior motive here.

“What do you mean?”

Genji leaned forwards. He propped his elbow up on the table and leaned his face against his hand. The would-be charming smile on his face was similar to the one he once wore when he tried to get out of trouble.

“You don’t have to pretend with me, brother. We’re alone here, and I just saw you in his arms.”

Hanzo realized with embarrassment what Genji was implying.

“No, no, no, we are just friends-”

“Sure you are.”

Hanzo scowled. “We are not together.”

Genji didn’t lose any momentum. “Well would you like to be? I could always help w-”

“Genji.”

The cyborg held his hands up in mock-defeat.

“Alright then. You are in denial. I can still work with this.”

Hanzo slammed his palm on the table. “There is nothing to work with.”

He pinched the bridge of his nose and was tempted to just leave then and there.

“Where did all of this even come from?”

Genji studied Hanzo carefully. “Well, you two are quite close. And not many people have gotten past Jesse’s exterior as quickly as you have. And I know of no other that has gotten past your own shell, brother. Not only is he neither human nor machine, but he is quite the personality. And that has put many people off before.”

Hanzo drank from his cup and stared contemplatively at it. “He certainly is something.”

By now, both Genji and McCree himself had brought up his past. It made Hanzo curious.

“Do you know what McCree was like when he first became what he is now? Did he change much?”

Genji waved a hand dismissively. “It was during his earlier days in Blackwatch, before I was recruited, actually.”
The cyborg leaned in closer. His smile was gone. “I cannot tell you exactly what happened, but I have heard rumors. None of them were quite pleasant, but what Jesse himself told me was even worse.”

Genji paused for a moment. He looked down at his cup to find the right words to say.

“Brother, he has been through much more than you can imagine, but it is not my place to tell you. Even if I wanted to, I doubt I’d be entirely accurate.”

Hanzo must’ve seemed discouraged, because Genji immediately tried to speak again.

“I only wanted to be sure you knew exactly what you were getting into when it came to Jesse. That is why I asked you to join me here, to be certain that you were content in your choice. But if you two are not together, then there is no need for me to worry. And if you would like to know more about him, I’d suggest asking Jesse himself.”

Genji took another sip of his tea and his gentle smile returned. “Although, if you’d like some entertainment, Ana has plenty of stories about Jesse from back in the day.”

Hanzo furrowed his brow. “What kind of stories?”

“Stories from when he was young, and much less of the experienced fighter he is now. Go visit her, it will be well worth your time.”

Genji snickered to himself. He stood and offered to take Hanzo’s empty cup. Hanzo let him, and left the kitchen in deeper thought.

What Hanzo really needed was some rest. He showered briefly and let his hair down before slipping into his bed. Hanzo didn’t think that he’d fall asleep very easily, but he somehow managed to drift away from consciousness. He dreamt of fleeting moments with a pair of soft crimson eyes looking down at him.

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The next morning, Hanzo woke up much earlier than usual. It was hardly even five in the morning when he got dressed and made himself breakfast. When the other early risers came trickling into the kitchen, Hanzo excused himself and headed for the shooting range.

He passed several others on his way, some who said half-hearted hellos and some who knew better. When he arrived, the shooting range looked empty.

Hanzo was about to start firing when something else pierced his target. It was a bullet, and it came from above. Hanzo spun around, instinctively drawing his bow, and aimed for the general direction the bullet came from.

Ana waved to him. She was sitting in the rafters of the shooting range, more than fifteen meters above.

“Hello, dear.”

From that height, Ana’s voice had a slight echo. Hanzo lowered his bow. He could see how someone like himself could climb up the wall and get to the rafters, but how did she do it at her age?

“How did you get up there?”
Ana laughed. “I climbed.”

So she was much stronger than Hanzo originally thought.

“Fareeha left a few minutes ago for breakfast, but would you care to keep me company up here? The vantage point is excellent, you know.”

Hanzo thought about it. The climb up seemed like an excellent challenge, but he had his leg to worry about.

“The ladder’s over there, in case you’re wondering dear.”

Hanzo saw the maintenance ladder that lead to the lights and rafters in the corner of the room. Not wanting to be outdone by an old woman, Hanzo decided to just be extremely cautious with his leg. He climbed up slowly, sat on the rafter next to Ana, and looked down. The drop would kill him, but he’s been higher in even more dangerous situations before.

So Hanzo coolly notched an arrow and aimed. Ana was right, the view was excellent. So Hanzo fired and was pleased with the bullseye he got.

Ana seemed impressed. She pursed her lips together with interest. “Jesse did not exaggerate, you have fantastic aim.”

Hanzo tried not to let his pride get to him. “Can you do as well?”

Ana laughed at the challenge. She laid down on her stomach with her rifle and fired. It was another bullseye that hit right beside his arrow. Hanzo was impressed.

“You are quite the shot as well.”

“Thank you, dear. I’ve had decades of practice.”

“In Overwatch?”

Ana scoffed. “Oh please, I spent more time on my own than in the Egyptian military and Overwatch combined.”

Hanzo respected anyone who remained in their line of work for as long as Ana has. Especially without dying.

“Speaking of Overwatch,” Ana stared at Hanzo curiously. “I don’t recall ever seeing you in any of the bases.”

Hanzo huffed. “I was invited here a few months ago by Genji.”

“I see.”

Hanzo fired another arrow, hitting another target. Ana muttered something, but Hanzo caught Jesse’s name in it.

“Pardon?”

Ana looked up from her scope. “Oh, nothing dear. I was just saying, it is quite the surprise how close you and Jesse have gotten. From what he has said, I would’ve thought you two had years of experience working with each other.”
Hanzo drew back his bowstring with more force than necessary. “I doubt he would say that.”

“Jesse also told me you are an expert marksman with legs that could kill a man.”

Hanzo almost fell off his rafter, and felt his heat rush to his face. His next shot missed the bullseye by a few centimeters. He sputtered, “He did not say that.”

“It was all subtext, dear.”

“He would not imply that, either.”

“Is that so?” Ana tilted his head up, knowing smirk on her face. She raised her eyebrow at Hanzo.

“I was apparently wrong, you do not know him as well as I had assumed. No matter,” Ana fired, and hit the center of her target, “there will be plenty of time for you two to bond, now that you’ve stopped avoiding him.”

Hanzo almost dropped the arrow he was notching.

“How...who...did M-”

“I was awake, when I saw Jesse ask you to sit with him on the way back from Volskaya. I figured you two had talked it out.”

Ana winked at him. “But if you’d prefer it, then I never saw a thing.”

Hanzo felt like there should have been a waterfall of words tumbling from his mouth, but this woman had left him speechless. She was old, left calloused from age, and yet as wily and fierce as McCree. Their similarities were fascinating, and Hanzo was beginning to understand exactly why she was so well respected.

“Are you going to flap your mouth like a fish or is there something you’d actually like to say?”

Hanzo immediately shut his mouth. He had nothing left to say.

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McCree returned from his mission late that night, and Hanzo didn’t even know he had returned. He was sitting alone at the kitchen table, reveling in the silence, when he heard the familiar clink of spurs.

He looked up from his cup of chamomile tea and saw McCree standing in the doorway. He was still in his serape and chaps, and his eyes hadn’t yet turned fully red.

“Howdy, partner.”

McCree sounded healthy, and Hanzo fought to keep his relief from being too obvious.

“You are looking well. The mission was a success?”

McCree shrugged. “The mission was a bust, it’s why we’re back so soon.”

He sat down beside Hanzo and leaned his chair back.

“Gave the kid Lucio the scare of his life after the mission, though.”
Hanzo snorted. “What happened?”

“He ran up to us when we got back. I yawned and flashed the fangs. Poor kid almost had a heart attack.”

Hanzo looked McCree over. There were faint bags under his eyes. It must’ve been the two missions in a row that left him bereft of sleep.

“You must still be tired.”

“I took a power nap on the ride here. Not really sure what to do with myself now, so I figured I’d mosey through the kitchen. And look at what I found.”

McCree nudged Hanzo’s shoulder and glanced down. “How’s the leg holdin’ up?”

Hanzo smiled softly. “Excellent. I climbed up and down a ladder today without falling.”

McCree whistled. “No shit. Who let ya do that?”

“Your mother hen, Ana.”

McCree stared at Hanzo like it was a joke. “No way, I don’ believe ya. She remembered yer injured, right? She’d never let ya take a step off the ground otherwise.”

“The pain has lessened greatly from yesterday, and she must have known it.”

McCree chuckled, and Hanzo was pleased, to say the least. He took another drink of his tea and thought it rude in front of McCree, who most likely hadn’t eaten much all day.

“Would you like some? It is chamomile.”

McCree waved Hanzo off. “No thank you, darlin’. But I do suppose this means ya can’t sleep too well now?”

Hanzo shook his head. “No, I am just too busy thinking. I need something to calm my thoughts.”

McCree nudged his shoulder. “Yer always thinkin’, though. If somethin’ bothers ya so much, why not share what’s on yer mind?”

Hanzo rolled his eyes. His mind was too much of a mess at the moment to sort through.

“I suppose I am just curious.”

Was now the right time to bring it up?

“‘Bout what?”

“About Genji, about myself… about you.” Hanzo side-glanced at McCree, who was suddenly staring at him with wide eyes, as if Hanzo were made of gold. McCree took his hat off and pressed it to his chest.

“‘S that so, darlin’?”

Hanzo lightly shoved McCree’s shoulder, almost making him fall out of his chair. “Yes, and put your hat back on.”
Hanzo drummed his fingers against the side of his cup, watching the little ripples in the tea.

“When I spoke to Ana-”

“She didn’t scare ya off now, did she?”

Hanzo lightly smacked McCree’s arm. “No, and let me finish.”

McCree settled back into his seat, holding his palms in the air in defeat, and gave Hanzo his full attention.

“It has been months, and I still feel as if I do not belong here among these people, or alongside you. I still find it difficult to eat with the group, and I misinterpreted your relationship with Fareeha.”

Hanzo kept drumming his fingers.

“As you can imagine, I am frustrated with my lack of social skills.”

McCree seemed surprised, and confused. His brows were furrowed and he bit his lower lip slightly. “Aw, sugar. That ain’t nothing to be ashamed of. Ya jus’-”

McCree paused mid-sentence to cock his head to the side. He stared down into the hallway.

Hanzo asked, “Is there something wrong?”

“No, no…” McCree turned his attention back to Hanzo. “it’s just that we’ll have company in about three seconds.”

Tracer soon came zipping in, wearing bright pink pajamas and that machine on her chest. Closely following was Lucio in a neon green tank top and his skates, and Hana bringing up the rear in Hello-Kitty pajamas and playing on her cellphone. The three of them were probably here to raid the pantry again.

Hana saw them together and immediately took a picture. “Aww, the old men are bonding.”

McCree mock-glared. “Hey! I’m young at heart!”

“Of course you are, luv.” Lena zipped into the pantry, and came out pouting at Hanzo.

“Did you drink the last of our tea?”

Hanzo glanced down at his cup. He looked back up at Lena and smirked cryptically.

“Perhaps.”

“Whoa, so that's what you sound like?” Hana looked up from her phone to gawk at Hanzo.

Lucio quickly elbowed her in the side. Hanzo only found it as even greater evidence that his communication skills were nonexistent.

So he fixed his typical judgmental gaze on Hana. “Yes, I can indeed talk. I just find it difficult to speak to a child such as yourself.”

Hana sputtered, and McCree laughed besides him. Hanzo noticed that Lucio was staring at McCree’s mouth.
When he calmed down, McCree asked, “Do y’all need the kitchen? We can step out if ya want.”

Tracer was quickest to respond. “Oh no, we won’t be long.”

Lucio visibly deflated. “So we aren’t making cookies?”

He reminded Hanzo of Genji when he was young and had an insatiable sweet tooth. Besides him, McCree nudged his side.

“Hey, how’s about us old men leave the kids to stir up trouble, yeah? I know a much better place we can talk.”

Hanzo looked between McCree and the three youngest Overwatch members pulling out random ingredients from the cabinets. A clash of cultural cuisine was sure to follow.

“Yes, let us old men leave them be.”

McCree’s idea of someplace they could talk turned out to be his own room.

He explained, “Jus’ didn’t want to give the younguns any ideas.”

Hanzo didn’t know what to expect when it came to McCree’s quarters, but what he saw wasn’t quite what he pictured.

The bed was unmade, but the sheets were not wrinkled. His desk was littered with cigar packs and boxes of ammunition, but also held framed pictures of friends from his past. There was a small mini-refrigerator tucked besides his nightstand. When McCree had the chance to pull off his chaps, boots, and chest armor, he tossed the clothes carelessly into his messy closet. And a well-worn map of the world hung above his bed, with dozens upon dozens of little red stars decorating it.

Hanzo walked over to the map and touched the aged paper.

“What do all these stars mean?”

McCree walked over to him and looked at the map fondly. “It’s all the places I’ve ever been to. Went all ‘round the world at least three times over.”

Hanzo could see the clearly older stars, but saw the fresh ink over both Death Valley and Volskaya Industries. He realized once again how different he and McCree were. He came and went like a ghost, leaving behind as little evidence as possible. McCree was so loud and set in leaving his mark on the world, quite literally.

“What about ya, Hanzo? Had yer fair share of travellin’?”

Hanzo nodded. “I’ve seen many different places, but nothing quite like this.”

McCree’s eyes shined with genuine interest. “I’d love to hear ‘bout it.”

Hanzo pulled himself away from the map. “Perhaps another time. We came here for different reason, did we not?”

McCree nodded. He opened his mini fridge, casually pushed aside a plastic bag of bright red blood, and pulled out a beer. McCree held out another bottle to Hanzo.
“Ya want one?”

Hanzo pushed the bottle away. “No, thank you.”

McCree shrugged. “Suit yerself.”

Then Hanzo witnessed as McCree extended his fangs, only to use one to pop the bottle open. McCree spat the cap into the nearby trashcan and sat down on his bed. McCree leaned against the headboard and patted the space besides him. With as much dignity as he could muster, Hanzo sat down cross legged besides McCree.

McCree scooched over to give Hanzo a little more space. When Hanzo clasped his hands together in front of him, he caught McCree’s eyes admiring the head of his dragon tattoo on his wrist. Hanzo subtly stretched his arms out and his companion’s eyes immediately went to his rippling biceps.

“Never did tell ya, but that’s a mighty fine tat ya got there.”

Hanzo stared at the intricate design of clouds and scales.

“Thank you. Though it is quite old, I really should get it touched up soon.”

McCree’s eyes shined with intrigue. “How old yer ya when ya got it?”

“Twenty.”

McCree whistled. “Damn, still looks amazing. Real work of art, it is.”

Hanzo silently agreed.

“Speaking of age, may I ask you something personal in return?”

McCree smirked. “Hun, ya can ask me anythin’ in the world.”

Hanzo’s brows furrowed at the word hun, but he pressed on.

“Alright then.” Hanzo wanted to carefully phrase his next words. “How old were you, when you became... you , I suppose. Because Genji brought it up and-”

McCree interrupted. “Ya don’ gotta explain nothin’ to me, sugar.”

He took a drink from his beer bottle.

“I was about nineteen or twenty, give or take, when Talon got their hands on me.”

Hanzo stared at him. “You do not remember exactly when?”

McCree shrugged.

“Talon did something to my head, and messed up my memories. My early years an’ my first Blackwatch days are still pretty murky. But I ain’t caught up in what I can’t remember. It all happened in the past anyways, ain’t no point in missing it.”

Hanzo felt the confusion mix of emotions he felt towards Genji, and couldn’t help but want to agree with McCree’s sentiment. However, unlike McCree, Hanzo did not have the luxury of forgetting.
McCree took a drink from his beer bottle.

“What is it like,” Hanzo suddenly asked, “to be yourself? Do you ever wish you were...normal?”

Hanzo instantly regretted using the word *normal*, because it made McCree sound like something negative. And the sharpshooter had proven again and again that while he was quite unique, he was sincere and kind.

McCree sighed. He took another drink from his bottle and watched the contents swirl inside. “Ya mean if ever wished I was still human? Like, one-hundred percent human?”

Hanzo nodded slowly. He was worried that he was overstepping some sort of boundary. But as he noticed before, McCree easily took anything Hanzo said in stride.

“Nope, not any more.” McCree looked at Hanzo with faraway eyes. “But I used to, when I was first turned into whatever the hell I am now.”

Hanzo could feel a story coming on, and leaned in closer.

“Back when I was a youngun, not that I’m old now mind you, I would’ve traded *anything* to be normal again. I wouldda sacrificed Heaven and Hell to trade back my fangs and red eyes, just for a *day* of being like everyone else.”

McCree closed his eyes and leaned his head back.

“But I found blessin’ in the curse. I could hear and see better than ever before, and I made some real good friends along the way. So it really ain't all bad.”

McCree suddenly opened his eyes, looking embarrassed with himself. He tugged his hat down.

“Look at me, ramblin’ like Reinhardt ‘bout the good old days. Ain't worth much to regret what already happened, right?”

Hanzo looked down, at his tightly clasped hands. He didn’t respond for several moments.

“Tell me, McCree. How did you do it?”

“What?”

“Move on? How did you come to accept yourself after everything you’ve been through?”

“Hey now.” McCree’s voice was softer, but still hadn't lost all of its original playfulness. “What's got ya down alluva sudden?”

Hanzo didn’t know if there was a right way to answer. “There is only one thing that truly still burdens me, the only thing I have ever regretted in my life, and I want to move on from it.”

McCree didn’t immediately begin to pry, and Hanzo appreciated that. The sharpshooter gave him the time to collect his thoughts.

“Did Genji ever tell you of how he came to become a cyborg?”

McCree answered slowly. “Yes, actually.”

Hanzo’s fists clenched, and he waited for the inevitable disgust or anger or pity that he’s come to expect.
McCree gently patted Hanzo’s arm.

“I know about what you did to Genji. But when he answered the recall, when I saw him after nearly a decade, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was so happy, Hanzo. Happy with himself.”

McCree smiled lightly. “And he was looking forwards to bringing ya here. He wanted us to meet ya.”

Hanzo stared at McCree closely. He couldn’t tell if McCree was merely an excellent liar or being genuinely honest.

“Your words are kind, but I still cannot find it in me to forgive myself.”

“Why not?”

McCree made it seem like more of a challenge than a question.

“How can I?” Hanzo snapped. “I was the heir to a yakuza clan, and caused my brother to permanently lose his body.”

Hanzo scowled more at himself than McCree. He pulled his legs closer to his body and slumped his shoulders forward, losing his perfect posture. “How can I forgive myself?”

McCree must’ve been surprised by Hanzo’s outburst, because there were several long moments of silence before McCree dared to speak again.

“Ya know, I was in a gang once.” McCree couldn’t meet Hanzo’s eyes. “Killed some innocents in my time too. I still ain’t proud of it.”

McCree drank the last of his beer. “But we’re one and the same, Hanzo, ya realize that? We’re both trying to right our old wrongs now, ain’t we? That’s why we’re here?”

McCree’s sincerity made Hanzo’s bristling anger fade away. Sorrow took it's place and Hanzo adverted his eyes to stare down at his clasped hands.

Why did McCree not understand?

“If you look at Genji, you would know my wrongdoings are not as easily fixable. If he cannot ever be human again, then I have no right to forgive myself.”

“But...Genji already forgave ya, didn’ he?”

McCree sounded so genuinely confused, and yet hopeful for Hanzo. So genuinely stubborn in his belief that every sin could be amended.

Hanzo needed to take a deep breath before speaking. “He did, when we first reunited. But the issue is once again myself.”

Hanzo felt something inside himself beginning to crumble. He ran a hand over his face. He couldn’t bring himself to speak louder than a whisper. “I’ve carried this guilt for over a decade, I am not even sure if I am capable of forgiving myself.”

“Hanzo?”

He shook his head. Hanzo didn’t dare respond; his voice would surely waver.
McCree tried again, “Hanzo?”

There was a drop of concern in that Southern drawl.

Hanzo wanted to reassure McCree that he was fine, he really did. But Hanzo wasn’t fine, and he was afraid that if he spoke, too much would come out. But McCree had too much to deal with himself, he didn’t need to know of Hanzo’s every fear and insecurity as well.

A metal hand was placed on his shoulder, and when Hanzo couldn’t find the strength to protest, the hand turned into an arm wrapping around his shoulders.

“I told ya before that I like talking about myself.” McCree’s voice was soft and calm. He did not sound anything like himself. “So lemme tell ya ‘bout how I came to accept myself, and how I got ‘round to accepting my amends.”

Hanzo’s only inclination that he was listening was the slightest shift to lean in closer to McCree.

“Ya see, Hanzo, no matter how many people turned on me when I learned I wasn’t truly human no more, I still had a handful of people to help me along the way. They were friends, and friends who became family. They first gave me a second chance after my days with the Deadlock Gang, then they told me I was still me, even with these.”

McCree flashed his fangs once more, and Hanzo saw the light glint off of them from the corner of his vision. McCree carried on speaking.

“The world is a hard thing to carry on your shoulders alone, I think we both know this. But they stood with me, and no matter how awful I felt about myself, they never let me fall. Not even once.”

McCree gently squeeze Hanzo’s shoulder.

“So maybe what you need, is someone of yer own who’d never let ya fall.”

Hanzo could feel McCree taking a deep breath before whispering.

“I wouldn’t.”

Hanzo felt a surge of wetness in his eyes and immediately wanted to flee. He didn’t deserve this. Hanzo was a disgrace, he didn’t deserve this companionship or kindness.

His breathed once, heaved twice, and then refused to let it go on any further. Hanzo buried his face in his hands and got up, both furious and embarrassed with himself for showing such weakness.

“Hey now.”

Hanzo felt a hand wrap around his wrist. He tried to pull free without looking back, but was pulled back onto the bed, into an embrace.

Wonderful. Hanzo coughed and wallowed in the humiliation of the situation.

“I...I am leaving. Now.”

“Oh no ya ain’t.” McCree started slowly rocking himself back and forwards, which meant that Hanzo was also being rocked.

And it made Hanzo feel like a child.
“It ain’t right to keep stuff bottled up.”

McCree laid down against the headboard, and tucked Hanzo in his arm once more.

“Ya don’ have to talk now, but I couldn’ let ya run away like this without feelin’ guilty.”

Hanzo bit his lip. All he’s ever done in his life is run away. He ran away from his family, he’s still running away from rebuilding his relationship with Genji.

Hanzo pulled his legs up to his chest, rested his head on his knees, and wrapped his arms around his head. He just wanted to hide somewhere dark for a while.

“Is there anythin’ I can get for ya?”

Hanzo didn’t answer.

“Tea?”

No answer.

“A blanket?”

No answer.

“Want the lights off?”

Hiding once more in the shadows felt comforting to Hanzo. He hesitated before slowly nodding his head without even looking up. But he did feel the bed as it dipped. He heard the sound of McCree’s footsteps making their way across the room, and then the lights overhead grow dark.

He lifted his head only slightly, finding that he could just barely see a meter or so ahead. It would’ve been comforting, if his current companion didn’t have perfect night vision.

Hanzo took a shaky breath and once again wished he could disappear. The bed dipped again and McCree sat at his side once more. It was silent for all of five seconds.

“I can tell ya need air, I can hear yer heart like a jackhammer.”

McCree rubbed little circles into Hanzo’s back. “Breathe. I ain’t here to judge ya.”

Why was he so understanding? Hanzo was a grown man falling apart like a child. This was utterly humiliating.

Hanzo squeezed his eyes shut and let out an uneven breath.

Eventually, Hanzo found himself leaning into those little touches, and felt McCree lean against him. The sweet release of sleep finally took him away.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I can totally see Hanzo having a breakdown. He "killed" his brother, abandoned
his remaining family, became an assassin for years, and probably did all this without venting about any of it to anyone. That's got to create a ton of baggage, even for someone who appears as strong as Hanzo.

And if anyone would like to know, I listened to “Here Comes A Thought” from the Steven Universe soundtrack to help me write the last part of this chapter. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants some calming music about how it's okay to fuck up. And as always, thank u all for reading and I hope you enjoyed it!
Oh wow, it feels good to be back! School's been keeping me super busy lately but I'm so excited to be posting a new chapter again. And I know, this might seem pretty disjointed but I had so many little pieces of fluff I wanted to squeeze in for now.

When Hanzo woke up, he was wrapped in an unusually soft blanket. He opened his eyes slowly, blinking in the low light, and realized that the blanket he was curled under was brick red. His own sheets were a steel gray.

This was not his room.

Hanzo kicked the blanket off and sat up abruptly. The lights were still dim, but he recognized the room based on the smell of stale cigar smoke alone.

Hanzo's head whipped to the side, finding the rest of the bed empty. McCree just...left him? Alone? In his own room?

Hanzo fumbled with the alarm clock on the nightstand.

10:13 A.M.

Hanzo almost couldn't process the numbers his mind read. He blinked once, then twice, and when he was certain that it was no trick of the light, Hanzo's mind suddenly reeled. His body would naturally wake up no later than seven o'clock every morning. He overslept by three hours?

The door slid open, and Hanzo sat there, mortified. Light from the hallway flooded in, obscuring his vision for a moment, and whoever was walking in hit the light switch. Hanzo winced as even more light highlighted how much of a disaster he was at the moment. McCree soon strolled in, whistling some old-fashioned western tune, and gave Hanzo his infuriating would-be charming smile. He was holding a tray of food too; rice with natto spread, miso soup, and tea.

“Mornin’, Sleepin’ Beauty. Glad to see ya awake.”

McCree set the tray down on the nightstand.

“Now, I’m not a hundred percent sure what this brown stuff on yer rice is, but Genji says you like this stuff so…”

McCree trailed off, expecting Hanzo to respond.

But Hanzo couldn’t. He couldn’t bare to face the fact that he broke down in front of someone, and have that same person staring at the mess he was now. Especially when McCree was staring at him so intently.

He snapped.
“What?”

McCree quickly realized that steering was not the best idea, and quickly averted his eyes while scratching the back of his neck. “Nothing. I jus’ never did see ya with yer hair down. Thought it’d be a lot longer.”

McCree tried to laugh it off, but Hanzo’s hand immediately flew to his hair. His scarf was gone, and his hair was in an undignified, poofy mess around his shoulders.

Hanzo wanted to jump out the nearest window and disappear forever.

“Hey, uh, ain’t ya hungry?”

McCree pushed the tray of food a little bit closer, but Hanzo had no appetite. He was more preoccupied with how casually McCree was treating this. He even brought Hanzo food, as if he could not get it himself. He was *babying* Hanzo, as if he were a pathetic, little child.

Even though he might as well be a child, shame and rage boiled in Hanzo’s stomach and his scowled at McCree.

“I don’t need your *pity.*”

McCree’s smile immediately faded and he tried to placate Hanzo. He raised his hands in swift surrender.

“Darlin’, I-”

“*Stop* calling me that!” Hanzo clenched his fists as he pushed past McCree. “I am not your damsel in distress, you...you stupid *American.*”

It was the best and worst insult Hanzo could muster in his state. He stormed out of the room with the venom of a snake and left McCree shocked where he stood.

---

Hanzo locked himself inside his room for some peace and quiet. He thought meditation would ease his discomfort, but it only worsened it. There was nothing to think about, but he still *felt* too much; humiliation, fear, *disgust.* It painfully reminded Hanzo of an earlier time in his life.

Even worse, the longer Hanzo spent inside his room, not daring to venture out, the more his little sanctuary seemed to turn on him. The bare walls he once found clean and neat began to loom in on him. The chill of the room that he once found comforting offered a bite like never before.

And worse of all, Hanzo’s favorite scarf was still inside McCree’s room. The room of the man he so rudely insulted after giving Hanzo nothing but kindness.

The assassin sank deeper into his remorse. Eventually, he had slipped back into his old habit of shutting out as much out as he could.

---

Hanzo truly had no idea how much time had passed. He saw, heard, and felt nothing. It took him much longer than he cared to admit to even open his eyes again.

What did it was the knock on his door. It was loud, persistent, and Hanzo realized that he had been tuning it out for at least a while now.
Hanzo debated sitting still and waiting for whoever it was to just give up and go away, but he figured the person on the other side of the door wouldn’t leave any time soon.

Hanzo stood. The metallic tap of his prosthetics on the floor were soft even for him, but when he approached the door, the knocking stopped.

“Hanzo?”

McCree.

Hanzo froze. He couldn’t open the door. It was too soon to for him to face the gunslinger.

“Hanzo, I know yer in there. I could hear yer footsteps.”

Hanzo stood there, frozen with indecision. He still did nothing to respond.

“Allrighty then, I suppose I’ll jus’ talk to yer door now. And ya know, I get why ya ran off, I really do. But you’ve been in there all day an’ I ain’ the only one worried. Genji wants to know if yer okay...and uh, I still got yer hair tie-thingy.”

Another pause. “But I ain’ comin’ in unless ya want me to…”

There was always something about the way McCree spoke that made him sound so sincere. Hanzo supposed it must’ve been the Southern accent, which was why he found his hand suddenly hovering over the door’s control panel. Just a touch of a button and he’d be face to face with McCree.

But he hesitated once more, and that was all the discouragement that McCree needed.

“Ya haven’ said nothin’ yet, so I suppose I ain’ jus’ welcome right now.”

His voice sounded softer. Not disappointed, but almost defeated. Like he assumed Hanzo won this false battle of wills.

The clink of spurs managed to snap Hanzo out of his trance. His hand moved on it’s own and the automatic metal doors slid open calmly, as if there was nothing wrong in the world.

McCree turned at the sound of the door and his chocolate brown eyes widened.

“Hanzo?”

The archer blanched at McCree’s blatant staring. Did he really look that bad?

Any hope of acting casual was crushed, and Hanzo’s shoulders slumped in defeat. “How awful do I really look?”

McCree hastily looked away. “I didn’ mean to be starin’, but…”

He quickly held out his hand, and Hanzo just noticed his scarf in McCree’s hand. “I jus’ wanted to give ya this…”

Hanzo stared at McCree, who was still politely averting his gaze for Hanzo’s sake.

Hanzo gingerly took his scarf back, thumbing over the smooth silk, noting that it was creased in a few spots.
“Where did you find it?”

“Uh, it was jus’ lyin’ on my floor.”

McCree finally lifted his eyes to meet Hanzo’s. “Ya left in quite the rush, after all.”

Hanzo gently smoothed out the creases in his scarf.

“McCree…”

Hanzo sighed. He would not let another mistake torment him.

“I deeply apologize greatly for how I acted last night. It was unprofessional and... embarrassing for someone such as myself to fall apart like I did, and I only treated you terribly afterwards.”

Hanzo swallowed dryly. He couldn’t look McCree in the eye.

“And I understand if you would prefer to… not be around me anymore.”

McCree said nothing for a moment and that made Hanzo felt like he made an even bigger mistake.

“...Why’d I ever do that?”

Hanzo looked up at furrowed his eyebrows at McCree. He tilted his head to the side in silent questioning. McCree tipped his hat back.

“Ya think I don’ know what it’s like to fall apart?”

McCree chuckled softly and put a hand on his hip.

“I think yer fergettin’ I’ve had my own fair share of issues. I think we all have here. ‘M jus’ glad ya haven’ done nothin’ stupid while you were alone.”

Hanzo felt his cheeks warm. He looked away, feeling more like the over dramatic fool.

“What… did you fear I would do in my haste?”

McCree shrugged. “Dunno. But I was still worried ‘bout ya da-, Hanzo.”

He tried to laugh it off, but Hanzo felt the the weight on his shoulders was still there, like a boulder that he still had to carry. More importantly, the toll of his isolation was beginning to catch up to Hanzo.

He rubbed his eyes tiredly. “Thank you for your concern, but I am a grown man, after all.”

A grown man that broke down in front of another man.

“An’ I ain’ saying that cha ain’. But, if ya ever need to talk, Hanzo, I’m always here.”

Hanzo glanced from his returned hair tie to McCree’s honest grin. To his sincerity and the level of open care that Hanzo could never bring himself to come to.

He nodded slowly.

“Thank you, McCree. For everything.”

---
Hanzo went on a solo reconnaissance mission two days later. McCree thought that it might have been for the best, Hanzo had a lot on his mind after all, and he was the kind to appreciate his alone time.

Another two days and McCree was once again low on his blood supply. So he grabbed a rifle from the armory and spent the day out in the surrounding woods hunting.

An hour or so into his search and McCree struck gold with a buck. It was a mighty fine thing with beautiful antlers and a shiny coat. Healthy looking, all right.

McCree lined up the sight of the rifle, remembering the tips Ana gave him once upon a time, and fired. The buck jerked and fell. McCree looked up from his sight, grinning triumphantly.

The wind whistled his praise as he approached his kill. McCree knelt down besides the fallen animal and examined his shot. It was a beautiful kill, clean and precise.

McCree wondered if Hanzo would be proud.

Later, after McCree properly drained the precious blood from the buck, he wondered if anyone would want venison for dinner.

---

When Hanzo returned to Gibraltar, it was to a strange new sense of calm. He felt like the air around himself was less heavy when Genji was around. McCree treated him no differently as he did before his episode. And Hanzo was quite grateful for it.

The next time he saw McCree’s ivory fangs, when it was to open yet another beer bottle after a particularly long day, Hanzo realized that perhaps McCree was paying back Hanzo’s own acceptance. McCree revealed that he was less than human, Hanzo revealed that he was far from the perfectionist he appeared to be, and they both treated each other with as much regard as they did before.

It was… calming, for a lack of a better term. To act as if nothing had changed, but to feel like there was less riding on his shoulders.

Even his leisure time was no longer spent in long periods of isolation. McCree frequently greeted him in hallways, and called to him while Hanzo meditated on the roof. Hanzo more often than not returned the notion.

Genji greeted Hanzo like he always did, and more often than not, Hanzo now gave him some sort of acknowledgement. But strangest of all was Ana, who smiled or winked at Hanzo whenever they saw each other in passing. Hanzo was still unsure what to make of the older woman. She did seem awfully cheeky about something, but Hanzo did not understand what.

Things further changed on missions, but for the better.

Hanzo learned two things while on a mission to Numbani. One, was that McCree and Pharah were fantastic when fighting in the open together. They bounced strategic ideas back and forth like the payload itself.

It would’ve made Hanzo feel…

Jealous? For a lack of a better term. Except that somehow, he and McCree had also melded to become an even greater fighting force. Hanzo felt a natural inclination to eliminate the enemies
targeting McCree from afar. Likewise, the cowboy took care of the pesky enemies that Hanzo found difficult to hit at close range.

When together, Hanzo felt like there was nothing that could stand in their way. Hanzo rained down arrows like lightning bolts, swift and deadly. McCree was like thunder; a loud, powerful force that rolled in from the horizon and promised disaster. They covered the battlefield from above and below, at close and far range, and naturally took care of each other’s respective weaknesses. In short, they were the perfect storm.

The Numbani mission was a smashing success. Hanzo honestly felt like he and McCree didn’t even need the rest of the team. He didn’t know what clicked, but could feel something different. Perhaps now that he and McCree had grown quite close, they were naturally inclined to work together.

Then again, perhaps it was something else.

The funniest thing about sunsets, McCree thought, was that you could go anywhere in the world and the same sun would sink below the horizon. From Santa Fe to Hanamura, it was the same damned sun.

But something about it was somehow even sweeter from the rooftop of Gibraltar. Maybe it was the food, or the company. Considering the fact that Hanzo practically grew up in a castle with a staff of professional chefs, McCree had to hand it to Hanzo’s bento boxes. He was also eternally grateful that Hanzo seemed to tolerate his use of a fork. Chopsticks just weren’t his thing.

They sat on the roof in silence for a while, mainly because McCree knew Hanzo was the kind to enjoy the quiet. Though he was getting better at staying among the rest of their teammates, McCree recognized when someone needed their cool-down time.

And this was pretty enjoyable; nice and calm.

“So, we got a mission comin’ up soon. Gonna be a long one, if Winston’s right.”

Hanzo, with a mouthful of sushi, nodded. When he could speak, he asked, “Both of us?”

“Oh’course,” McCree stated matted-of-factly. “we’re the new power couple, remember?”

Hanzo chuckled, and it was such an airy, genuine sound. “Ah, of course. How could I forget?”

There was no scowl or venomous sarcasm. Hanzo was still smiling, and oh boy did it cause a bubble of warmth in McCree’s chest. How exactly did McCree once think that Hanzo was practically cold-blooded? Er, well, even more cold-blooded than McCree himself.

Hanzo was so distant because of a decade’s worth of time alone. McCree knew personally what going off alone could do to a person; no backup, no support, and no one to come home to put lots of people on constant vigilance. It was a kind of existence that McCree maybe felt like he helped a little bit in ending.

“So you know where we are going this time?”

McCree shrugged. “Somewhere back in the States. Not sure where exactly, but I got the feelin’ it’s gonna a doozy.”

Hanzo quirked an eyebrow at the word “doozy”, but otherwise seemed mostly accustomed to
McCree’s word choices nowadays.

They ate in silence, and there was a blanket of clouds in the sky so the sunlight didn’t hurt McCree’s eyes like it typically would. Enough time passed for them to mostly finish their bento boxes before Hanzo tilted his head slightly to the side.

His calm expression suddenly soured.

“Do not do anything McCree, but we are being watched.”

Of course McCree’s first instinct was to look over his shoulder. Hanzo quickly smacked his leg with the back of his hand, warning him to alert their apparent spies.

“How exactly can ya tell?”

Hanzo set down his chopsticks. “I can feel someone watching us. I doubt it is anyone dangerous, or Athena would have alerted the base by now.”

“Okay…”

McCree’s gut usually lead him in the right direction, but he didn’t feel any sort of nearby danger. Hanzo, meanwhile, reached for his bottle of sake, and accidentally knocked it over.

McCree, stunned at Hanzo’s momentary lapse of control, moved out of the way of the spilling liquor. Hanzo himself muttered furiously in Japanese, catching the bottle and shifting to avoid getting it on his pants.

McCree wordlessly set aside his bento box, and helped Hanzo clean up the mess.

“I see them now.”

McCree furrowed his brows. “Pardon?”

Hanzo finished soaking up the sake with his napkin, flicking his wrist ever so slightly to the left. McCree’s eyes quickly followed, and he could see the outline of several black dots on the rooftop across the base. Talon, maybe? It wouldn’t be the first time they’ve come here. But if they were hostile, then there was no way that Athena wouldn’t alert them. So who were they?

Hanzo started packing away his unfinished food into the basket they brought with them. “I think I will be retiring for the night now.”

McCree agreed that they shouldn’t be on the roof anymore.

“Sounds fine with me, it’s gonna get dark soon anyhow.”

They climbed down the ladder, but instead of taking the entrance literally right below their rooftop perch, Hanzo leisurely strolled across the courtyard to the entrance on the far side. He wanted a closer look at their intruders, so McCree followed as the gentlemanly companion.

He kept close to Hanzo, using the low brim of his hat to hide where his eyes were trained on the roof. He couldn’t spot anything, but they had to act casual.

“Mighty fine dinner though. Would love to eat with ya again.”

“Ah yes.” Hanzo suddenly looked down at the sake bottle poking out of the basket. “If only I had not spilled the sake.”
They neared the rooftop where Hanzo had first pointed out the intruders, and nothing happened. No shadow, no shot, nothing so far.

“Come on now, ain’t no use cryin’ over spilled milk.”

McCree laughed, and the sound carried on the wind. Hanzo suddenly smirked with an unnerving expression in his eyes. Like he was plotting something.

“No, I do suppose there is no use,” Hanzo grabbed the neck of the sake bottle, “crying over some spilled sake.”

Immediately, Hanzo pulled out the bottle, and much to McCree’s surprise, threw it over the roof. No sniper bullet shattered the bottle midair, and it crashed onto the roof. The sound deeply startled whoever was hiding up there, if the scream was anything to go by.

“Let’s go.”

Hanzo dropped the basket and climbed up the roof with fantastic speed, using the little nooks and foothold as always. And as per the norm, McCree was reduced to taking the ladder.

When he made it to the roof, he saw Hanzo holding their intruders captive using nothing but the sharp, shattered neck of the sake bottle. The rest of the glass laid in a puddle on the ground.

More shocking was exactly who was spying on them.

“Well, well. Now what do we got ‘ere?”

McCree strolled up besides Hanzo. Genji and Fareeha sat with as much dignity as they could muster while facing the sharp end of a shattered bottle.

McCree couldn't help but smirk. “Ya’ll have gone ‘n made yerselves a little party now, have ya?”

McCree laughed, thinking that this was no more than a prank or exercise gone wrong. When he paused to nudge Hanzo in the side, he was greeted with an absolutely livid assassin.

“I wasted my sake on you?”

Genji shifted further away from Hanzo, wary of what that alcohol meant to his brother.

McCree quickly grabbed Hanzo’s wrist and tried to gently pry the glass away.

“Don’t think you’ll be needin’ this, Hanzo.”

He did not relinquish the weapon very easily. Time to change the subject.

“What are y'all even doing up here? Stealth training?”

Genji and Fareeha shared a look. It wasn't sly in the slightest.

Eventually, Genji cleared his throat and stood. “Well, McCree, I’d be happy to tell you if I could ask my brother something.”

He didn't wait for a response. Genji clasped his hands together in front of himself, trying to look composed for someone held at glass-bottle point mere seconds ago.

“You, Hanzo, have lied to me.”
Hanzo scoffed. “About what?”

Genji pointed a finger at McCree and Hanzo. “You told me that you and Jesse were most certainly not together, but look at you two now.”

McCree gawked at Genji, suddenly very confused. He wanted to ask Hanzo what Genji was talking about, but a flurry of black and gold launched itself into the air.

McCree suddenly scrambled to catch Hanzo before he could tackle Genji off the edge of the roof. When he caught the archer around the waist, Hanzo let out an indignant squawk and tried to kick McCree off of him.

“Hanzo, what the hell?”

Hanzo tried stepping on McCree’s foot to get him to let go. It didn't work. Hanzo spit something in venomous Japanese at Genji, and it sounded suspiciously like a threat.

“Well, it’s not my fault that-”

“Genji.” Hanzo warned.

McCree felt a sharp pinch to his forearm, and nearly loosened his grasp. At the very least he didn’t send Genji to another early grave, but the daggers in Hanzo’s eyes could’ve sliced apart any armor.

McCree took a step forwards. “So… Fareeha? Care to tell me what the hell’s goin’ on?”

Fareeha seemed to quickly gage the situation, finding the odds of appeasing Hanzo were slim to none.

Instead, she went with the diplomatically best answer of, “Nothing. We were just… admiring the view.”

“Is that so?” Hanzo’s eyes were still trained on Genji.

“Yes, Jesse has told me that the view is best at sunset. He wasn’t wrong.”

Then, in a motion so akin to Ana it gave McCree déjà vu, Fareeha grabbed Genji by the side of his helmet. She bravely dragged him past Hanzo towards the ladder.

“But the sunset is over now, so we will be heading inside now.”

Fareeha lightly shoved Genji towards the ladder and he skittered like a little lizard down the side of the building. Fareeha soon followed, but paused before she climbed down.

“And McCree,”

“Yeah?”

The corner of Fareeha’s mouth quirked up.

“We’re sorry for interrupting your date.”

Chapter End Notes
Just saying now, I think I only have a few more chapters left in this fic. I'm not sure how much more I want to write. But as always, I'm happy to thank all of you for reading!

<3
Alaska

Chapter Notes

I'm happy to say that today's my birthday, and I decided to treat myself by updating a little bit earlier than intended! I'm also super excited about this chapter for terrible reasons, but I hope you all enjoy it.

(Disclaimer: I know next to nothing about Alaska’s climate or topography. I'm also testing out how to better write tense/action scenes.)

McCree noticed that Talon had a noticeable taking to inhospitable environments. They crawled all over places like Death Valley and the little islands off the coast of Alaska, where they currently were.

It wasn’t supposed to take longer than a week, but already ten days had passed. Ten whole days of doing fucking nothing because as soon as they landed, a sudden, nonstop icy storm started battering at the islands and coast. It soon became too dangerous for the team to travel by either air or water.

And that was seven days ago. The weather now was slightly less stormy, but still cold and foggy. While still cooped up in a derelict Overwatch safe-house, a little thing only one quarter the size of a typical Watchpoint, McCree couldn’t stand how the cold seeped into his bones. And he was not a patient man. Sooner or later, he’d start bouncing off the walls worse than Lucio.

At the very least, he did have to hand it to Talon, with the team’s inability to reach them, those bastards struck gold with their precious Alaskan base.

McCree currently stood outside the safe-house’s only window, wistfully staring out at the world beyond. He wanted nothing more than to brave the icy wind or sea and attack Talon just so he could go back to his warm bed in Gibraltar.

Besides, it had already been ten days without any blood. The low level of activity kept the hunger from rearing its ugly head, but a noticeable hint of red was beginning to reappear in his eyes.

McCree suddenly heard a soft tapping sound approach. It was a very familiar metallic sound, but McCree didn’t turn his head. He chose to not give any indication that he was indeed paying attention to anything beyond the rough waters ahead.

“We cannot waste anymore time here.”

Hanzo came to stand besides McCree, looking at the dark clouds hanging in the sky with his hands behind his back. McCree pretended to be pleasantly surprised by his company, if only because he had the suspicion that Hanzo liked to surprise him.

“I’ll say, but look at the weather. Mother Nature ain’t lettin’ us go nowhere.”

“No, look at the sky.”
McCree looked up. Through the veil of fog, there were pockets of dull sunlight piercing through the blanket of clouds. It was the first sign of natural light McCree’s seen all week.

“I was outside on the roof just now. The wind has not let up entirely, but the rain has ceased for now. I believe it may be safe enough to travel by air.”

McCree pursed his lips. “It’d be one helluva bumpy ride.”

Hanzo tilted his head up in defiance. “I’m well aware. But would you rather sit here for another day? Another week, even?”

McCree snorted. “Hell no. I ain’t lasin’ that long.”

He wouldn’t last another week without blood because like the dumbass he was, McCree figured the mission would be quick enough to not need his flask.

McCree kept staring out the window. Just barely peeking up from the horizon were a set of islands. The faster they got there, the faster the mission would be over.

“Alrighty then, pardner. Let’s rally up the gang and see if we can head out.”

The corner of Hanzo’s mouth quirked up. “Finally.”

---

Infiltration for the team was rather quick. Retrieving information could almost have been considered easy. It was fighting their way out that caused so much trouble.

Talon’s base sat on an island comprised mainly of a series of small mountain peaks. And at the moment, Hanzo was the only one keeping lookout on the outside of the base. Despite the biting wind and the spray of ocean water on his brow, he had found a perfect perch on Talon’s roof. He was able to hit anyone trying to escape to the helicopter pad.

When no one dared to venture out for at least five minutes, Hanzo took the moment to ask, “Status?”

Winston’s voice crackled through the comm. “We have what we came for.”

Tracer’s painfully chipper voice added, “And we’re heading out.”

Good.

“But I’m cut off from the others. Gotta make my own exit.”

McCree.

Hanzo bit his lip. It must have been the cold, because a slight shiver ran down his spine. Hanzo made sure to keep alert as he asked, “Where are you now?”

There was a single nerve-wracking minute before McCree could answer.

“Not sure. I had to lead a couple of bozos away from the others. Think I’m headin’ south.”

South? Hanzo ran for the south end of the roof, finding that there was nothing more below him than a fifteen meter drop to the ocean, and obviously no exit. Hanzo swore under his breath.
“McCree, head back! There’s no escape route to the South.”

“Too late. I gotta g-”

McCree was abruptly cut off.

Hanzo frantically reached for his comm. “McCree?”

No response.

Tracer asked over the comm. “McCree?”

But Hanzo didn’t wait for any possible response. He traveled to the north side of the facility and jumped down from the roof, risking injury and enemy fire to slip inside. He kept an arrow notched in his bow and headed in the general direction of south.

Halfway down a particularly narrow hallway, Hanzo saw four Talon agents rounded the corner. On instinct, Hanzo aimed upward. He shot out the lights above and dove down to avoid fire.

A scatter arrow dealt swift defeat to his foes, but not before Hanzo was nearly thrown off his feet.

He hissed as pain arced up his side like lightning. He brought a hand to his abdomen and felt something sickly warm spread from the wound. Hanzo murmured a curse beneath his breath. He had to find McCree and get out fast.

Hanzo made sure that no one was approaching before adjusting his belt to wrap around the wound and keep pressure on it. Then he continued moving forwards.

---

McCree was getting frustrated and very nearly desperate with how many dead ends he was running into. First he’d hit a wall, then he’d have to plow right back through the enemies he’d been evading in the first place. His comm was ripped out of his ear and crushed beneath some goon’s foot nearly ten minutes ago, so he had no way to contact the others either.

But this was hardly the worst situation McCree’s ever been in. No, what made McCree so desperate was the smell. It hung in the air no matter where he went. It was splatted on the walls, floors, and even stained his undershirt and serape.

It was the mouthwatering stench of human blood.

His cigars were no longer of help in easing the hunger at that point. McCree’s fangs had been itching to get out for a while now, long before his tenth day without anything to sate himself.

As McCree traversed the hallways he’d already powered through, the dim corridor lights were seemingly growing brighter. The cracks in the floor and rough crevices in the walls were coming into painfully sharp clarity, but McCree also knew that it was just him. His red eyes were particularly sensitive to light, after all.

After another minute, McCree could smell something new. Something blessedly familiar. It was still human blood, but from someone he knew. Someone he actually knew quite well.

… And on second thought, maybe he shouldn’t count that as a blessing...

McCree followed the scent down one hallway, then around a left corner and came across a set of metal double doors. With all of his typical theatrics, McCree didn’t hesitate to kick open the doors.
He was beyond relieved to have found Hanzo, but wasn’t the archer supposed to be keeping lookout on the roof?

Evidently not, because his quiver was empty and he was fighting tooth and nail against three other people with nothing more than his bow.

The sound of the doors banging open immediately gained the attention of all four people. McCree saw them raise their guns, but he was faster.

“Hanzo, get down!”

Two gunshots, all he had left in the chamber, and two bodies dropped to the floor.

The third guy assumed McCree probably had more and was at least smart enough to shield himself behind Hanzo. There was a shotgun pressed against Hanzo’s temple and it was then that McCree saw the pale parlor in Hanzo’s face and the sweat beading on his forehead. There was already too much blood seeping through his shirt.

McCree realized that if he didn’t do something, Hanzo would die.

Half a second later, and the sharpshooter felt the familiar slow motion of a very, very rash decision. Time itself seemed to lurch to a stop as McCree lunged at the Talon agent, desperate to keep him away from Hanzo. The guy didn’t even have time to pull the trigger.

McCree and the agent tumbled to the floor. The gun skittered off somewhere, but McCree was more concerned with subduing the Talon agent. He tried getting him into a headlock, but in doing so, let one of the agent’s arms free.

McCree saw the elbow coming to slam into his face, but what he didn’t see before was the agent’s sleeve. It was torn over his upper arm, and there was already a gushing bloody gash stretching across his skin.

McCree felt powerless as he got an elbow to the face, and a mouthful of human blood.

-+-+-+-

Hanzo almost wasn’t sure what had happened. He knew with his wound he was in danger, but then McCree burst into the fight with all of his typical American gusto.

But there was something unsettling about the gunslinger. His pupils were dilated to the point where the red of his irises almost weren’t visible.

Then the next thing Hanzo knew, McCree was wildly slamming into the last of the Talon agents. McCree took only one blow to the face before slamming the enemy’s head into the floor.

Hanzo was almost surprised by how desperate McCree seemed to finish the job. He carefully approached his teammate and reached to help McCree up.

“McCree, I-”

“S-stop. ”

There was a tremor in McCree’s voice. Hanzo froze in surprise, hand still extended, as McCree forced himself to his feet.

There was blood smeared around his lips, and Hanzo couldn’t tell if it was McCree’s own.
Hanzo took another step forwards, but McCree hissed like he was in pain and stumbled away. He planted one hand against the wall to steady himself, but still collapsed to his knees a moment later. Every muscle in McCree’s body seemed tensed and rigid, and his breath was growing erratic in a chest that refused to expand. Hanzo suddenly felt a cold dread weigh on his shoulders. There he was, McCree’s only ally in a den full of enemies and he had no idea what was happening or how to help.

“Hanzo, I...you-”

“I’m here.” Hanzo quickly dropped his bow and knelt besides McCree. He reaffirmed, “I’m here. Tell me what is wrong.”

McCree was shaking his head, as if in denial. He was covering his mouth with the hand not braced against the wall. But on his knee, Hanzo could see McCree’s eyes. The pupils were still dilated, but the eyes themselves were wide in unfocused horror. They stared at nothing in particular, and Hanzo recognized the sight of shock.

Hanzo used the authoritative voice that once made Genji actually pay attention.

“McCree.”

“...No...”

Hanzo’s stomach lurched. McCree’s voice was low, shaky, and carried something that Hanzo never realized McCree was capable of feeling.

Panic.

Hanzo did not know what to do when McCree started growling. He reared back slightly from that low rumbling sound. It was too much like a wolf preparing to pounce on its prey.

McCree gritted his teeth, and two snow white fangs emerged from the sharpshooter’s mouth. A drop of crimson blood trickled down one of those ivory fangs.

Hanzo thought McCree was about to pass out, but the gunslinger managed to hiss four desperate words.

“Call the others. Now.”

Hanzo nodded, fumbling with his comm for a painful second longer than necessary. He distantly realized that his hands were shaking slightly. And his eyes remained fixated on those pearly white fangs while he called the rest of the team.

“I have found McCree, but he is unable to move...”

“What’s wrong? Is he hurt?”

Hanzo honestly did not know.

He only saw McCree take a single strike from the last Talon agent. Nothing he hadn’t gone through before, but his face was smeared with blood.

And like the fool Hanzo was, he realized that it was not McCree’s own blood. His refusal to accept Hanzo’s own blood in his time of need made sense now.
Hanzo was almost hesitant to reply to the team. “I am not sure, but I believe he has consumed human blood.”

There was no response for a moment, and Hanzo swore he could hear his own heart racing in his chest, as if in competition with McCree’s own.

Then Tracer’s voice crackled to life, though there was no typical chipper tone or even the slightest sign of a joke in her voice.

“Hanzo, you have to get out of there now.”

Her voice was small but serious, panicked even, and utterly terrified. But Hanzo couldn’t abandon him. He wouldn’t.

“Not without Mc-”

“Hanzo.” McCree voice was just barely loud enough to hear. “Please, jus’ leave now.”

It wasn’t an order. It was a plea.

Even McCree was urging Hanzo to abandon him? That sense of dread was weighing down on him more urgently, but Hanzo refused to even consider it and stubbornly stayed by McCree’s side.

He paid the price a second later.

The next thing Hanzo knew, he was being tackled by something that smelled distinctly of blood and cigar smoke.

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Hanzo barely registered anything that happened in the following ten seconds.

The air was painfully knocked out of his lungs from the full weight of a red and gold blur tackling him. He couldn’t breathe, and there was a starburst of throbbing pain as the back of his head collided with something very solid.

He blinked once, twice, before even attempting to get his bearings. The dull, flickering lights of Talon’s base served only to disorient him further. But there was something in the back of his mind warning him that he was in danger.

And that danger loomed over him in a glint of crimson and ivory.

It was instinct for Hanzo to defend himself. He threw his right fist up, with all intentions to punch whoever it was on top of him. But Hanzo faltered as his blood ran cold. His eyes widen with confusion and horror as McCree bared down on him. He couldn’t move, even as McCree’s eyes became such a dark, crimson red that they were almost black. Not even as McCree grasped his wrist in a bone-crushing grip.

Then Hanzo’s mind finally collided brutally with reality when McCree sank those fangs deep into his arm.

Chapter End Notes
I am super not sorry for this.
Hanzo almost didn’t feel the pain at first. He laid there numbly, watching in abstract horror as his closest ally used his five centimeter long fangs to pierce through Hanzo’s armored glove. McCree ripped through the fabric as if it were rice paper and gouged those ivory fangs into the flesh of Hanzo’s forearm.

Blood blossomed from the twin wounds almost immediately. It ran down Hanzo’s arm like the streams through a mountain face.

Then McCree started viciously shaking his head, ripping into the flesh like a starved animal in order to widen the wounds.

Pain suddenly erupted down Hanzo’s arm, igniting his nerves, and throwing him back into reality. Hanzo threw his head back and shouted.

McCree hissed at the sudden sound and bit down harder, practically biting through his. Hanzo tried to lash out, to kick McCree off him, but the gunslinger did not yield. He slammed the hand not gripping Hanzo’s wrist against his chest, nearly crushing his throat, and began tugging on Hanzo’s arm while keeping his torso flat against the ground.

Hanzo slammed his free fist into the floor, gritting his teeth. An onslaught of pain and confusion rained down on him. He realized that McCree was eventually going to dislocate his shoulder, and even if he had any arrows, or his bow, an archer with an injury like that was practically defenseless.

Even if this was his friend, his ally, something else, Hanzo might die if he didn’t act fast.

He swallowed dryly. The pain radiating from his arm and chest squeezed the air out of Hanzo’s lungs and reduced him to barely speaking beyond a hoarse whisper.

“McCree.”

The feral gunslinger stared at him. Those eyes, which were once such a striking shade of red, were so dark that they were nearly black. With the overlaying shadow of his hat, it was nearly impossible to tell if McCree could even register language at this point.
The strain on Hanzo’s shoulder was growing, and he tried again. There was deeply rooted desperation and fear beneath the tone that he once used to scold Genji.

“McCree... I know you can hear me.”

The gunslinger tilted his head slightly, maybe in confusion, but dragged Hanzo’s arm with him, tearing the wounds open just a little bit more. Hanzo willed himself to speak through the pain.

“I know you McCree. This is not like you.”

Hanzo slowly reached up with his other hand, and tried to put it on McCree shoulder. It was supposed to be a sign of comfort.

When McCree showed no sign of resistance for a single second, a tiny spark of hope grew in Hanzo’s chest. Perhaps even in this state McCree could be reasoned with.

Then that second passed and McCree’s eyes zeroed in on the hand reaching for him.

He hissed, and actually let go of Hanzo’s arm. Those fangs finally retracted from his arm and McCree backed away from Hanzo.

And the archer almost felt relieved.

It soon turned out that McCree did not feel any sort of recognition. He felt no remorse. It was his lifetime of knowing uncertainty and risk that told him that an outstretched hand typically meant danger.

He glared at Hanzo with those deep red eyes. Blood was matted in his beard, Hanzo’s blood was matted in his beard, and stained his serape.

Hanzo sat up slowly, clutching his bleeding arm. The warm, red fluid leaked between his fingers and down his hand. He slowly knelt, and McCree let him, but Hanzo still had to lean heavily against the wall. The hallway tilted to the side for a few moments, until Hanzo blinked the dizziness away.

He tried, “...McCree?”

The gunslinger looked positively feral when crouched low and ready to pounce. Vampiric in all sense of the word with his blood coated fangs, lips pinched back in a silent snarl, and dark red eyes. And worst of all, he did not seem to even recognise Hanzo.

In that very moment, they were only predator and prey.

Hanzo’s heart was not so much beating as slamming itself against the confines of his chest. Hanzo evaluated the situation as best as he could. His storm bow was sitting less than a meter away, easily grabbable, but he doubted it would bode well with McCree.

He tried to reasoning once again.

“Please, McCree…you have to listen to me…”

Hanzo tried to stand, but he lost more blood than he thought between the wound in his side and on his arm. Hanzo’s legs immediately gave out beneath him, and he lurched to the side.

In the general direction of his storm bow.
McCree hissed and lunged once more.

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Hanzo was beginning to feel lightheaded. His wounds were getting to him. Now he had to stop McCree from ripping out his throat.

The gunslinger was baring down on him once more, aiming for the exposed skin of Hanzo’s neck, where there were plenty of blood vessels and arteries.

Hanzo used his left arm to just barely keep McCree and half an arm’s distance away.

But no matter what, among his fight or flight instincts, Hanzo would not die like this. And he would not let McCree be the one suffering the consequences of it later.

Despite the blood he had lost, adrenaline was still pumping through Hanzo’s veins in a last attempt to keep him alive. He stared defiantly at McCree, finally understanding that diplomacy and reason had failed.

Which meant that Hanzo had also failed. He had failed to help McCree, to listen to his warning, to even defend himself.

Desperation and fear started clawing at his chest, fueled by his adrenaline. Hanzo had only one way out now.

Hanzo warned, “McCree.”

No response.

Hanzo closed his eyes and exhaled slowly.

“I'm sorry.”

Then Hanzo balled his right fist, and despite the two bleeding puncture wounds on his forearm, Hanzo reared his arm back and lashed out.

His fist made contact with the side of McCree’s face. The impact made a sickly sound and jolted Hanzo’s arm in a sharp, painful ache, reverberating through his wounds down to the bone. But he couldn’t throw the gunslinger off him. Hell, Hanzo could just barely make McCree’s head jerk to the side. But the gunslinger did not retaliate.

The only sound for the next several seconds was the rapidfire beating of Hanzo’s heart.

Then, very slowly, McCree turned his head back to Hanzo. His eyes were more red than black.

Hanzo tried once more. He asked, “McCree?”

“H-han...?”

Of course physical pain would work on a skull as thick as McCree’s. Hanzo had no time to laugh at the notion, however. McCree scrambled off of Hanzo in a terrified frenzy and stood, backing away from Hanzo like a frightened animal.

How ironic.

McCree swayed where he stood, staring aghast at the blood running down Hanzo’s arm, staining
his shirt, even coating McCree’s glove with unfocused eyes. He still wasn’t all there. Not yet.

Hanzo reached out for him, despite what had happened last time. But there was blood smeared on Hanzo’s outstretched hand. McCree’s whipped up at the sight of the dark red substance and lurched towards it. Hanzo immediately retracted his hand and McCree steadied himself once more.

Hanzo could only watch as McCree desperately fumbled for something in his belt. He almost dropped the flashbang he pulled out.

Hanzo inhaled sharply. What was McCree going to do with that?

He really wouldn't stun Hanzo, not even in this state, would he?

“McCree?”

Hanzo tried to stand.

McCree’s voice was rougher than usual, just barely concealing the feral fear and hunger lurking beneath his words. But he did muster the strength to look Hanzo in the eye. Those blood red irises were dilating and constricting in the poor light of Talon’s base, silently pleading with Hanzo.

“Don’t hold back.”

Hanzo wanted to ask what McCree meant, but the sharpshooter raised the flashbang high over his head.

Hanzo hardly had any time to react. He shut his eyes and threw a hand over his face to protect himself from that piercing light.

McCree immediately hissed in pain. When the light receded, Hanzo saw McCree frozen where he stood, weakly holding his hands to his face.

He had flashbanged himself.

Hanzo suddenly understood McCree’s words. He picked up his storm bow with shaking fingers.

He whispered under his breath, “I am sorry.”

Then Hanzo stood and swung at McCree, hitting the gunslinger over the head as hard as he could.

McCree crumbled to the ground and did not get up.

Hanzo stood, lightheaded and panting, and stared down at what he had just done.

He whispered more to himself than anyone else, “I am so sorry, McCree.”

From that point, time seemed to go on indefinitely slow and yet far too fast until Winston and Tracer rounded the corner and spotted him. Just by looking at Hanzo, the two of them knew what had happened. Though Hanzo could practically see the way Tracer’s heart shattered out of sympathy. She did a rush job of wrapping Hanzo’s wounds, since they were still in a Talon base and had no healer. They were only supposed to sneak in and find information.

When it came to their unconscious teammate, Winston easily carried McCree out of the base. Hanzo himself relied heavily on Tracer to help him walk. The four of them exited the base, finding no enemy opposition.
Once aboard their jet, Hanzo did not object to the idea of tying McCree’s hands together.

The rest of the trip back was very quiet.

As soon as they had returned to the safe house, Hanzo collapsed on a cot in the tiny medbay. McCree was placed on one of the adjacent beds, and Winston made sure that he would not wake up any time soon before leaving in a hurry. Tracer made quick work ridding McCree of his weapons, chest armor, even his spurs.

Hanzo stared at her. “What...what are you doing?”

Tracer left all of McCree’s belongings on the nearby table. She zipped over to grab a first aid kit before sitting down besides Hanzo.

“Luv, he’s had human blood. He isn’t stable like this. He can’t be armed.”

Hanzo furrowed his brows. He let her clean out the wound in his side, but asked, “I know what he is like on human blood, but couldn’t we reason with him?

Tracer looked at him like he had lost too much blood.

“You just encountered him after consuming human blood. You should know better than me that Jesse can’t be reasoned with.”

Hanzo tilted his head at her.

“But I spoke to him. He responded.”

Tracer was in the middle of wrapping bandages around Hanzo’s waist, but her hands suddenly froze.

“What was that?”

Tracer was looking at Hanzo strangely. Was that skepticism? She didn’t believe him?

“How is that possible? I’ve heard stories of what Jesse was like on human blood back in Overwatch. Ana, Jack, even Jesse himself said…” Tracer looked away, “Well, nothing too good, actually.”

She quickly finished wrapping the wound in Hanzo’s side and went on to clean up the one on his arm for him. Hanzo kept his eyes on McCree. The sharpshooter was still unconscious.

So what would do they do now?

Tracer made sure Hanzo was comfortable before zipped off, promising to return with tea. Hanzo watched her leave. When he was alone, Hanzo slowly got up and sat on the cot besides McCree. He did not like the sight of blood on McCree’s face and cleaned it off with a damp cotton ball.

When Hanzo had finished, he returned to cot. Tracer returned a few minutes later. True to her word, she had two steaming mugs in hand. She handed Hanzo a cup of tea and sat next to him.

“So it turns out that Winston called Gibraltar. Angela’s out on her own mission, but Ana said that we need to quarantine McCree somewhere safe until he feels better.”
Hanzo sighed at the news. He glanced over once more at McCree.

“Do we have any place in the safe house that could hold him?”

Tracer shrugged. “There aren’t any holding cells in here, but the basement might work.”

Hanzo sipped his tea quietly. When he thought of the word *basement*, he pictured a cold, cement room with no windows or warmth. Not exactly the best place for a recovering person.

Then there was a light touch on Hanzo’s shoulder. He looked up and saw Tracer smiling sympathetically at him.

“Now, I haven’t ever seen myself what Jesse is like when he has human blood, but if what Ana says is true, then he’ll be back to being his good old self in a matter of days. We just can’t let him have any blood. But there’s nothing to worry about if all goes well!”

*And what if it doesn’t?*

Hanzo watched the rise and fall of McCree’s chest. He was not well, and they were going to throw him into solitary confinement? It seemed cruel, but when Hanzo thought of those ivory fangs dripping with blood, he had to remind himself that McCree was different. His version of *not well* involved a lust for human blood.

Hanzo truly didn’t know the answer to their problem, he was too conflicted, but he hated not knowing. He hated how he still felt so powerless. And he hated that he couldn’t think of any other solution.

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Hanzo didn’t know if the basement was just as cold as the rest of the safe house. He was told to “stay off his feet”, and could only watch as McCree was removed from the medbay. The gunslinger was locked in the basement with nothing more than a cot, a bucket, and several bottles of water.

Hanzo was again told to get his rest, and that Winston and Tracer would be happy to sit tight in Alaska while both he and McCree recovered.

That first night after their return, Hanzo couldn’t sleep. He couldn’t close his eyes without seeing those fangs baring down on him. His injuries ached too much to let him rest as well. They were constant reminders that he failed to help McCree and paid the price for it.

He deserved this.

The second day passed in a slow blur.

Hanzo could barely keep his eyes open, but when he closed them, they burned until he had to open them again. He threw up sometime midmorning.

A cold sweat soon broke out on Hanzo’s brow, and his limbs felt as if they were made of lead. But he recognised the sickly ache that spread across his body. As an assassin, Hanzo has had many people try to kill him over his lifetime. Most attempts were often with guns or blades, but he had been poisoned before.

Hanzo could do little more than lay in bed and think, so he thought. He recalled something McCree had said months ago. That he was part bat, part dog, and part *snake*. Yes, that was where his fangs
came from, his snake DNA. Many snakes also happened to have venom.

Did that mean that McCree was actually venomous? Did he unintentionally poison Hanzo?

Winston went to great lengths using what little tech was in the safe house to monitor Hanzo’s vitals. There was a small amount of an alien substance in his blood, weakening his body like a slow acting poison. Or a venom. Hanzo was certain that it had come from McCree.

Winston assured him that he would live, so long as he took his antibiotics and got his bedrest. So Hanzo stayed in the medbay, and may or may not have eaten anything after that. He wasn’t sure. His mind was foggy and he kept drifting in and out of consciousness. He was, however, sure he at least had another cup of tea, steeped to perfection courtesy of Tracer.

She seemed quite empathetic to Hanzo, stopping by whenever he was awake to ask if he needed anything. At one point, Hanzo asked how McCree was doing. But Tracer only looked at the floor, biting her lip furiously. Hanzo didn’t have the heart or will to blame Tracer for not wanting to tell him. She seemed apologetic, almost guilty, like Genji when he was caught sneaking junk food or boyfriends into the house.

Hanzo had the strangest urge to begin referring to her as Lena.

The second night was no better for Hanzo, even with the meager sleep meds the safe house was stocked in. When it was well past one in the morning, Hanzo could no longer lay there and torture himself with trying to fall asleep.

Even with his sickness, he had to do something.

So Hanzo very slowly sat up in his cot. He put on his prosthetics and draped his blanket over his shoulders. His artificial feet made a soft, metallic tap tap tap as he strolled through the building. Even inside the safe house, the chill of the Alaskan air bit through his blanket and night clothes. Hanzo shivered, his wounds ached in the cold, and he tugged the blanket closer around his shoulders.

The safehouse was dark, so both Lena and Winston must have been blissfully asleep. Hanzo’s stomach growled pitifully. He supposed that maybe he didn’t actually eat after all.

Hanzo approached the kitchen, and stopped to stare. There was a gap in between the sink and counter where the refrigerator should have been. Hanzo knew the thing barely even worked, and was mostly empty, but did the others really get rid of it?

Hanzo was too tired to ponder. He grabbed a piece of bread and chewed softly as he resumed his late night stroll.

Some of the hallways were still dusty even after nearly two weeks of living in them. Hanzo walked deeper into the safe house and realized that these halls were not well traversed. He had yet to grasp his bearings on this side of the building.

Hanzo swallowed the last of his bread when he heard a soft scratching sound. It was like a dog pawing at a door.

Intruders? Talon’s retaliation?

Hanzo really knew he shouldn’t, but he followed the sound alone, walking silently through the
darkness. He came to a corner, and the scratching sound was getting louder. Hanzo crouched low, and peered slowly around the corner…

and there was the refrigerator.

Hanzo blinked, just to make sure he was seeing correctly. And yes, the refrigerator was simply sitting there at the end of the hall. Hanzo stood and walked over to it. He discovered that the refrigerator was unplugged and empty and just sitting there for no apparent reason.

Hanzo was about to walk away when a resounding thud made him jump. He spun around, but there was no one there. He looked back at the refrigerator. There was that scratching sound again. It was louder than before, but still somehow muffled.

Hanzo had an idea. He really was not in the best condition to do it, but he pushed the fridge several centimeters to the side. It took him longer than he’d like to admit, but lo and behold, the refrigerator was actually blocking a doorway behind it.

The scratching sound was louder now. It was coming from the other side of the door.

His instincts were telling Hanzo that something was not right here. He pushed the refrigerator half a meter to the side, admittedly with great effort, and saw why it was sitting where it was. The doors behind it were mostly sealed shut, but there was a hole about as wide as Hanzo’s hand between them, at roughly shoulder height. Then Hanzo saw the finger shaped indents along the gap.

Something had clawed that portion of the two metal doors apart.

And that something threw itself wildly against the door. Hanzo jumped back in alarm. His heart jumped up into his throat as he heard a very familiar hissing sound.

It was McCree.

Hanzo realized too late why this hall was so poorly traversed. It lead to the basement. The safehouse had very little security, and very few materials that could be used to blockade something. The fridge was supposed to bar the doorway.

It was silent for a moment. All Hanzo heard was his own stuttering heartbeat and quickening breath.

Then McCree threw himself at the door again, more frantically this time. Hanzo heard the gut wrenching creak of metal and stumbled to push the refrigerator back into place. McCree pounded at the door. Maybe he was calling to Hanzo to free him. Maybe he had reverted entirely back into that blood-thirsty vampiric phase.

Hanzo had no idea, because he fled as quickly as he could. He couldn’t stand knowing the only thing separating him and McCree was a refrigerator of all things. His blanket slipped from his shoulders somewhere down the hall, but he hardly even noticed the cold.

Hanzo reached the medbay, feeling as if at any moment McCree would lunge at him from the shadows. He kept the lights on as he collapsed besides his cot. No point in laying on the thing now.

He quickly willed himself to close his eyes and take a deep breath.

Hanzo spent the rest of the night on the medbay floor, meditating. He was certain at one point or another, he began to drift off. It was not exactly sleep, because he could always tell when he fell
asleep. He had went through the crueler kind of unawareness where he was awake, yet blind to all around him.

The first thing he registered after what was likely many hours was Lena kneeling besides him. Her hand was on his shoulder. And his blanket folded neatly in her hands.

She didn’t ask what happened. She didn’t need to.

And Hanzo was grateful for it.
They were still stuck in Alaska. McCree showed no sign of recovery and Hanzo was still ill. But both Lena and Winston insisted that Hanzo at least eat something. They had just enough supplies in the safe house for Lena to start cooking some spaghetti for lunch.

Hanzo ate his fill without really tasting anything. They had also ran out of tea.

Midday, a call came in from Gibraltar. Mercy had returned from her own mission and heard the news about McCree. Hanzo was still stuck in the medbay when Winston came rushing in carrying a laptop. The doctor seemed quite anxious to chat with him.

“His fangs pierced through your skin, yes?”

Hanzo simply nodded in confirmation. He was sitting up in his bed, trying to muster as much dignity as he could with his ashen complexion and unkempt hair.

Mercy studied Hanzo with a look of astonishment. She was still in her Valkyrie suit, scuffed and dirtied from her latest mission.

“While I agree that you clearly recovering at quite the steady rate, it’s incredible that you even survived in the first place.”

Hanzo leaned away from the laptop. He was not sure he understood her.

“Are you saying that he would have killed me?”

Hanzo did not like this accusation. He did not want to think back to that night, to how useless he felt.

Mercy immediately retracted her accusation.

“No, no, no. But it is just that, well…”

She ran a hand over her face. The doctor was losing her grace.

“This sort of accident has happened before, many many years ago, when the original Overwatch was still functioning. Jesse didn’t mean to, he never would, but…”

Mercy busied herself with once again going over Hanzo’s complexion. It pained Hanzo to see the pity in her eyes, wounding his already shattered pride, though whether or not it that pity was for Hanzo or McCree, or them both, was unknown.

“You are quite lucky to be alive right now.” She reiterated, “But I want both you and Jesse back in Gibraltar as soon as possible. The two of you need to be monitored much more carefully than with what that safe house can provide.”

Hanzo started to hear a soft tapping sound. The doctor was apparently drumming her fingers on an invisible table. She was nervous.

Hanzo did not know how he felt about that. “Do you know what will become of- of him? Of me?”
He couldn’t bring himself to say McCree’s name out loud. It sounded like it would be admitting defeat to his failure on that mission.

Mercy sighed. “Jesse *should* be himself in a matter of days. But you must understand that this has never happened before. I’ve never seen someone survive one of his episodes.”

Her voice softened, as if the doctor was ashamed to admit it. “I have no precedent to follow. With more extensive medical attention, you could be fine in a few days, a few weeks, or...”

Hanzo raised an eyebrow. “Or?”

The doctor sighed. “It is nothing. I do not want to put any unnecessary stress on you.”

Hanzo did not believe her.

He leaned forward, trying to sound more authoritative than a man contracted to an infirmary bed. “Doctor, if there is something I need to know, I’d rather hear of it now rather than later.”

Mercy chewed lightly on her lip. It was quite the unprofessional habit; she was definitely nervous. “If you insist on knowing, then I can first assure you that your wounds are not infected. The source of your current illness is most likely your body flushing out the weak venom in Jesse’s saliva.”

Hanzo already knew this. He knew his wounds weren’t infected, and that McCree was part snake. If he didn’t know any better, he would claim that the doctor was stalling.

“And?”

“Well,” Mercy stared at Hanzo very gently, “while it is extremely unlikely, the direct injection of a strand of Jesse’s DNA may cause temporary side effects in yourself.”

Hanzo sincerely doubted what the doctor was saying.

“Are you implying that I may actually become like *him*?”

The doctor’s silence said enough.

Suddenly, Hanzo’s wounds ached. He thought of those pale white fangs, reddened eyes, and a need for blood in order to survive. He thought of a life of living with all of that, but it was too outlandish. It seemed like a far away fictional fantasy, to abruptly become something that was not human nor machine. The word *vampiric* once again reverberated in the back of Hanzo’s skull. But McCree wasn’t a vampire. He was real. He was alive and had a heartbeat and was Hanzo’s closest confidant. *Was.*

Mercy, to her credit, was exceedingly sincere in trying to placate Hanzo’s worries. “You will most certainly not become like Jesse precisely, but hunger and fatigue similar to what he feels may occur, although I did say that it was extremely unlikely. The chances of even a temporary side effect is less than likely, much more like a hypothesis we had once formulated back in the day.” She was staring at Hanzo hopefully. “Although I very much doubt his mutation is infectious, it never hurts to be certain.”

The doctor sounded like she was asking for permission. And Hanzo could not deny that he was
concerned for his own health. If all went wrong, what will become of him?

Hanzo heaved a mental wail before nodding slowly. He knew he was in no condition to travel, McCree may be in even worse condition, but they would return to Gibraltar by the end of the week. They had to.

And he would not succumb to the fresh wave of doubt that gnawed at his very core.

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Two days after his talk with the doctor, Hanzo felt well enough to finally leave the medbay, with his right arm and torso heavily bandaged. Although it was still difficult for him to eat anything. And while he was hungry, it was hard to keep most foods down, and he couldn’t eat much at a time to begin with.

The first breath of fresh air Hanzo had since the mission was heavy with mist and salt. The Alaskan ocean beat against the cliffside below the safe house, but the cool, sharp air finally put some sensation back into his body.

Hanzo spent much of that day on the roof, simply allowing himself to be swept up in the cold after days of stifling pain and worry.

He also couldn’t bring himself to begin wondering about him. All it brought were the images of bloody fangs and crimson irises in the place of smooth, dark chocolate ones. Hanzo clutched his healing arm gently. His wounds still ached.

Winston knocked on his door the following morning. They had removed the refrigerator. He was currently recuperating in the medbay.

But Hanzo couldn’t bring himself to do it. He had finally left the medbay, and he couldn’t go back to it so soon. He couldn’t see him so soon, because Hanzo was just too selfish to face his fear.

He politely thanked Winston before shutting the door as quickly as possible. Hanzo made sure the door was locked before collapsing as gently as possible on the bed. As he rested, his hair fell in a matted mess around his face. He wished it didn’t still hurt to move his injured arm.

Hanzo’s eyes started closing before he even knew it. Night after night of little to no sleep and plenty of pain to ponder left him in quite the pitiful state. He told himself that he really shouldn’t sleep now, knowing that he was a mere few doors away.

Hanzo’s eyes closed anyways.

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He had no idea how long he was alone.

His mind was reduced to the most basic of instinctual needs. He had become a monster with the mindset of hunt, kill, eat, repeat. He was locked away somewhere dark and cold, but could still see every nook and cranny. There were rough, rocky walls that scratched him when he threw himself at them in his search for an escape. But part of the walls were smooth and cold, and something told him that this was good.

Eventually, the beast discovered something terrible; there was no prey. No food anywhere. Hour after hour he prowled his prison, lurking for anything he could sink his fangs into.
Eventually, he figured out that he could get some of that delicious poison he craved so dearly by gnawing on his own wrist. It helped, but not by much.

Sometime later and the beast could hear something familiar. It was the faintest little clicking sound of metal on metal. Then he could hear a heartbeat. It was human, and so deliciously close.

The beast threw himself against that smooth part of the wall, clawing and snarling all the while. The heartbeat must have heard him, because it quickly great faint, then impossible to hear.

And then the beast was alone again.

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When McCree resurfaced, his throat was as dry as the desert he first crawled out of. His vision in the dark was still impeccable, and McCree quickly found a stack of untouched water bottles.

He could just barely crawl for it, ripping open the top of the closest bottle with a sore fang and chugging it whole. There was the sickly scent of dried blood hanging in the air, and for one heart-stopping moment, McCree was afraid that he wasn’t alone, or at least didn’t start off by himself.

Then he realized how much it hurt to move his arms. What happened to him?

McCree could only pass his time by straining to remember what the hell happened to him, sleeping, and whistling as best he could to fill the silent void. He often sat with his back against the wall, waiting.

Eventually, he could hear a pair of footsteps. One was light, feathery, barely there, and nearly overshadowed by the heavy thud of what sounded like someone stomping around in lead boots.

Finally.

Lena and Winston moved him to the medbay as soon as they saw his chocolate brown eyes.

On the way there, the light was unbearable. McCree seethed as the lights burned through his eyelids, scorching his irises whether his eyes were closed or not.

They laid him on a cot and McCree quickly felt that damning sting of antiseptic. It spread everywhere; his arms, his torso, his wrists. He grit his teeth and tried to not breathe through his nose. The smell of antiseptic burned his nose, and the others were too close. He could still smell the blood pumping just beneath their skin.

And McCree wasn’t sure, but he vaguely remembers begging them to cuff him to the rails running along the sides of the cot. He didn’t think Lena and Winston had it in them to do it, because he soon felt a needle prick his bicep. McCree was helpless as every single speck of light evaporated into that blessed darkness once again.

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For two days, McCree was fine with staying in the medbay. What drove him insane was how no one would tell him anything.

Nothing of the mission to Alaska, nothing of what happened, and nothing of what in particular happened to Hanzo. They told him he had to focus on recovering, that he had to keep all his attention on himself, and that they were setting their departure for the end of the week.
But something still felt undeniably, terribly, *painfully* wrong. The snippets of memories that floated by every now and then showed him Hanzo’s gorgeous tattoo, that sturdy storm bow, and of a brawl somehow gone wrong with a lowly Talon agent. There were cuts and scratches running along his arms and torso, but McCree knew that he inflicted those on himself. What he couldn’t remember getting was a massive bruise on the right side of his face. It was as if someone sucker punched him just below the eye.

Even more worrisome, it had been two days, and Hanzo had still not visited him either. Considering the fact that the archer wasn’t in the medbay with him, McCree could only assume that Hanzo was somewhere in the safe house.

And that did nothing to ease his anxieties.

There was something crucial that he was missing, and McCree didn’t like the only suggestion his mind kept poking him with.

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McCree, honest to whatever or any god out there, still felt like crap when the end of the week rolled around. His chest hurt, he couldn’t move his wrists very well, his eyes were still adjusting to high levels of light, but he wasn’t *hungry*. It was well over two weeks, it should’ve been a new record for him.

So how painfully ironic it was that McCree was not relieved to see his eyes were their typical brown hue. No black or red whatsoever, and nothing his hat could hide. He didn’t bring a flask with him, and McCree’s worst fear grew in his gut. His only consolation was the chance to kiss Alaska goodbye forever, and finally, *finally* see the elusive archer that had still yet to visit him.

However, McCree’s mental image of Hanzo and what he got in reality were two very different things.

When McCree pictured Hanzo Shimada, he was greeted with the image of a regal, imposing man that hid his doubts far below his composed surface. As soon as McCree heard the familiar *tap tap* of metal feet while waiting on the launch pad with Winston, he simultaneously wanted to advert his eyes, vomit, and throw himself off of the nearest cliff.

Hanzo’s hair was down and clearly uncombed, hanging loosely around his shoulders, so much like that one night McCree spent comforting him. And that was where the familiarity ended.

Hanzo’s clothes were loosely tied, and while he had both sleeves on, McCree noticed the stiff motions beneath the fabric. Hanzo must’ve been wrapped as tight as a mummy beneath those fancy clothes. And while the man had fair skin to begin with, he looked pale, almost ashen even, as he arrived on the launch pad. Hanzo’s made himself look as professional as he could with his bow and quiver slung over his back.

What murdered McCree’s heart was how Hanzo looked at him.

Or rather, how Hanzo seemed absolutely fixated on anything and everything *other* than McCree. The archer stared dead ahead, as if McCree wasn’t even there, and he couldn’t help but notice how Lena walked in between Hanzo and himself.

Hanzo sat prim and proper in the corner seat closest to the pilot’s. Winston made himself comfortable, and encouraged both of them to use the flight to get some extra rest. Hanzo took the...
advice startlingly well, leaning his head back against the wall and closing his eyes. He held his right arm in his lap in such a way that it implied he was taking special care of it.

He was injured for sure, and McCree wanted to know how.

And he wanted to scream, to beg anyone to tell him what the hell happened, but didn’t, because Hanzo was sleeping and that would’ve been rude. Even if McCree could oddly hear the irregular heartbeat of the archer from across the jet, and sleeping people didn’t have heartbeats that stuttered with turbulence. So McCree sat there, wide awake and writhing in his turmoil for all five-thousand miles from Alaska to Gibraltar.

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Hanzo had called Mercy before leaving Alaska. His only request was that she keep some space between himself and McCree. He just wasn’t ready yet.

The doctor was truly an angel, because she had two cots with a tall plastic divider between them already set up when the team returned. McCree had no long-lasting injuries besides his need for blood.

Hanzo was a different story. Mercy’s healing technology was enough so that he could avoid getting stitches, but two little scars remained, dotting Hanzo’s forearm. There was only the barest trace of venom in his blood, and nothing to worry about. His fatigue would go away soon enough. Though his mental health was another beast entirely.

After well over an hour, Mercy finally deemed them both in stable physical condition. Then she had to leave to get them some proper meals.

It was only when the doctor was far enough down the hall that Hanzo heard his voice.

“Hanzo?”

It was the first time that Hanzo had heard that voice in a week, and it was rough and dry, reminiscent of McCree’s condition in Death Valley.

The gunslinger asked again, “Hanzo?”

Hanzo stared at the white ceiling of the infirmary. He willed his mouth to move, but his voice sounded far off and pathetic even to himself.

“...Yes?”

Hanzo could hear a sigh of relief.

“What...what happened ta us?”

It took Hanzo a moment to process the question. Did he… did he really not know? No one told him?

“Do you not remember?”

A heartbeat passed.

“No.”

Hanzo’s chest seized up. That white infirmary ceiling felt like it was coming crashing down on top
of him. McCree had no idea what happened. He had no idea what he did, and Hanzo didn’t know if he had the strength to tell him.

He couldn’t imagine how McCree would react.

“Hanzo? Ya still there, sugar?”

Darling. Sugar. It was like when they had first met.

“I am still here. Where else would I be?”

McCree chuckled softly, even though it sounded hollow.

Hanzo turned his head toward the plastic divider. He could barely see the faint outline of the man on the other side.

“Do you honestly not remember what happened?”

McCree didn’t answer immediately. Hanzo was forced to listen to his own heartbeat quicken as McCree formulated his response.

“I think I remember something, but I don’t know for sure.”

Hanzo hoped that Mercy would return soon.

“I jus’ need to know one thing, Hanzo.”

Anxiety swelled up in Hanzo’s chest.

McCree couldn’t seem to get the words out at first, and Hanzo realized too late what a flimsy form of false security this divider was.

When McCree gathered the courage to speak, his voice was soft and brisk, as if anything above a whisper would hurt his throat.

“Did I hurt you?”

Hanzo felt like he couldn’t breathe properly. What could he say? What should he say? Telling the truth might mean destroying the man on the other side of the divider. But lying meant that Hanzo had to carry even more weight on his shoulders. Although one more stone could not possibly add more weight to the mountain on Hanzo’s shoulders.

“No.”

Then, Mercy came in carrying two trays of food. The smell was enticing, but neither of them had much of an appetite.

Hanzo was formally discharged from the medbay the next day. The doctor still had some tests to do on McCree.

Hanzo had yet to tell the other man anything substantial however, and he could tell it was eating the sharpshooter alive. His guilt only grew when Fareeha approached him, dressed in casual clothes yet no less demanding. She had heard enough from her mother about Alaska. Hanzo had no idea what she wanted from him then, but still let her guide him to one of the base’s walkways. She
sat with her legs hanging off the edge and urged him to sit with her.

Hanzo thought that the rooftop had a nicer view.

“So you know about Alaska?”

Fareeha shrugged. “I know enough. But there is something I don’t understand.”

She wasn’t as friendly as when Hanzo had first met her.

“Why did you lie to Jesse?”

Hanzo couldn’t look at her. He kept his eyes trained on the horizon and kept his voice even and cold.

“He didn’t deserve to have the guilt of knowing pushed down on him.”

Fareeha barked out a short, hollow laugh.

“Guilt? Hanzo, he’s still in a bit of a daze but Jesse knows something is wrong. He knows he’s had more blood than he should’ve, and sooner than later he will realize it was human blood. With you becoming more reserved than before, he’ll piece together his memories and do you realize what he will figure out?”

Neither of them said anything. Hanzo did not want to believe that he was further hurting McCree. First he couldn’t even defend himself, and they both had to deal with the repercussions afterwards. He didn’t want to make another mistake.

“Hanzo?”

The response to his name was automatic. “Yes?”

Fareeha’s voice grew soft.

“Are you mad at Jesse for what happened?”

Hanzo quickly withdrew his gaze from the horizon and tilted his head at Fareeha. Hanzo was tired and guilt-ridden and upset with how little he did to defend himself and Jesse, but why would he be mad? He faced Fareeha, and her eyes were suddenly more consoling than they were firm.

“If Jesse figures out what happened on his own, he will think you hate him.”

It took Hanzo a moment to realize the true gravity of the situation.

“Oh.”

Hanzo let himself run a hand over his face, giving himself that small sign of fatigue. Fareeha gave him a small pat on shoulder before standing.

“He needs you to tell him, Hanzo. Go talk to him.”

Hanzo was truly grateful when Fareeha left. He needed to be alone, and he really wanted some sake.

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That night, Hanzo returned to the infirmary and kindly asked Mercy for a moment alone with her patient. The glow in McCree’s eyes upon seeing him made Hanzo want to turn around and run. But he kept telling himself that he was stronger than that, so Hanzo stood his ground.

He pulled up a chair besides McCree’s cot and admitted everything. He admitted that he lied. He admitted that he was indeed wounded. He admitted that McCree had consumed human blood and Hanzo pulled up his sleeve to reveal the two little scars on his right forearm. He told McCree everything that happened. He told him that it scared him when McCree lost control, but that he was brave to flashbang himself.

At the beginning of his confession, Hanzo wasn’t sure who would break faster. Now he was certain.

Pinpricks of water were growing in the corners of McCree’s eyes, he was gritting his teeth to keep his lips from trembling, and his hands were clenched into fists.

Hanzo kept his eyes trained on his hands folded in his lap. “I am so sorry, McCree. I am so sorry.”

Hanzo thought about leaving in order to give McCree some space. But then, “Why?”

Hanzo looked up. It physically hurt to see someone as compassionate and strong as McCree so close to falling apart.

“I-I don’t understand.”

McCree slammed his flesh fist against the metal railing of his cot. It made a startlingly loud rattling sound.

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

Hanzo internally winced. He didn’t know what to say when McCree buried his face in his hands. Hanzo didn’t realize it when he raised his hand. He wanted to touch McCree’s shoulder and console him. He didn’t expect it when McCree smacked his hand away.

“Why don’t you hate me?”

Hanzo was at a loss of words. Comfort was not something he knew or could give, but he knew he needed to say something.

“I cannot hate you for something you could not control, Jesse.”

McCree blinked at Hanzo. He had never used McCree’s first name before. Hanzo hoped maybe it would help, but McCree’s breath only quickened. He buried his face in his hands again just to avoid looking at Hanzo.

Hanzo felt like he shouldn’t have done this. He thought this was the right thing to do. He thought being honest would help. But now he felt just as powerless as in Alaska, with nothing he could do or say. And McCree just looked so… so…

so much like Hanzo that one night he stayed in McCree’s room.

Hanzo had not even the faintest inkling if this was the right thing to do, but he sat down on the little space available on the cot besides McCree. Hanzo hated how McCree winced when Hanzo
touched him, but he still brought the other man to rest his head on Hanzo’s shoulder.

McCree still tried to fight him. “I ain’t worth non’a this.”

Hanzo sighed. The two of them were too alike sometimes. “Of course you are.”

“But-” McCree sneered in disgust, maybe at himself. “Ya saw what I became. It’s why I can only have animal blood. How can you stand to be around me now?”

“You fool.” Hanzo stared ahead, giving McCree the knowledge that he wasn’t directly watching him fall apart.

“I can not forgive you-” Hanzo felt McCree seize up besides him, “-for something that is not your fault.”

McCree didn’t relax besides him. Hanzo felt a chill as an image of Genji appeared suddenly in his mind, but now was not the time for those feelings. McCree tried to get up.

“I don’ deserve ya.”

“You ignorant cowboy,” Hanzo’s hand reached to brush a lock of hair out of McCree’s face. “Of course you do.”

McCree made a little pained cry in the back of his throat. His chest swelled with air and he heaved as softly as he could.

Hanzo thought nothing less of him.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading, y’all.

(Heads up, this is now the beginning of the end; there’s only a chapter or two more I have in mind.)
Something New

Chapter Notes

Wow, the last chapter! I never thought I’d get this far, but I want to give my thanks to all the people who read this fic, you were all so kind to my fragile soul.

(Also, it turns out I’m great at writing slow burns, but writing actual romance/relationships is really hard.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Angela, bless her, said nothing when she found McCree curled up besides Hanzo in her infirmary. She even let him leave a day early, and then McCree got his first real shower in admittedly far too long. The days that followed were strange, changing, but oddly pleasant.

During breakfast, Hanzo referred to him by his last name, and McCree immediately found that it didn’t sound right anymore. It felt too formal. Later, he pulled Hanzo away from any eavesdroppers.

“Ya know, I feel like you an’ I are a little too close for you to still be callin’ me McCree.”

Hanzo smirked. “Then what do you propose, hm?”

The gunslinger chuckled. “I liked it when ya called me Jesse.”

Hanzo raised an eyebrow. “Is that so, Jesse?”

The gunslinger wasn’t afraid to use the extra height he had on Hanzo. He leaned down to eye-level, joking and cocky at the same time.

“It sure is, cupcake.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes, though not unkindly. There was a something just shy of a grin on his lips, “You and your names.”

-+-+-+

It had just slipped out. McCree really didn’t mean to do it, but now all eyes were on him. It was the aftermath of a successful outdoors training session and the sun was beginning to set over the horizon. Shadows were being thrown left and right, but it did nothing to hide the surprised look on Hanzo’s face. McCree only wanted to complement the archer on his success.

But he didn’t stop himself in time. He said, “Mighty fine with that bow as always, darling.”

He had said darling.

McCree knew that Hanzo was once not very fond of the name. It was especially embarrassing with Fareeha was grinning beneath her helmet and Lena snickering from behind her.

McCree scratched the back of his head shyly, “Uh, sorry there Hanzo. I know ya-”
“Do not worry about it.”

Hanzo was as composed as ever, but there was the tiniest sparkle in his eyes and he was far too breezy in brushing it off. Hanzo made to strut past McCree and head inside, but paused when they were shoulder to shoulder.

“I have perhaps had yet another change of heart, Jesse.”

McCree watched as Hanzo walked off, not believing his luck. He had half-expected an arrow up his ass for his slip-up. When Hanzo was out of earshot, the girls slid right up to him.

“So,” Fareeha snickered, “what was that about?”

Lena nudged his side, “Yeah, I think that was the first time I’d ever seen Hanzo so nonchalant.”

McCree tried to shake the two of them off. “Oh, come on. All’a y’all better not be gettin’ no ideas now.”

Fareeha laughed. “Oh yea, what could we possibly be getting ideas about, Jesse? Hm? Anything you’d like to share with us?”

McCree swore under his breath and tugged his hat over his eyes. “I ain’t tellin you chatty-cathies nothin’, thank ya very kindly.”

Both of them laughed, teasing him relentlessly until they got inside.

---

Hanzo noticed the shift between them after that night in the infirmary. That brief little period where he could not confront Jesse started to dissipate after Hanzo became the one that did the comforting. And the process would have been much slower if Hanzo had kept the image of Jesse as a feral creature, instead of meeting a man that was so remorseful and grief-stricken and so close to breaking, that he needed Hanzo of all people to console him.

And Jesse’s red eyes did not bother him, they were never the issue, but Hanzo wanted to overcome the phantom ache in his forearm whenever he saw those fangs. When he looked at the gunslinger, Hanzo didn’t want to see McCree or the beast, he wanted see Jesse.

Stemming from this new desire, among other things, their dynamic had altered considerably during missions. Jesse was more protective and watchful of both himself and Hanzo in order to keep Alaska from ever happening again. The archer himself would also not let himself falter as he had previously done. He left himself no room for indecision and fired with a more precise fury in his arrows.

If they were the perfect storm before, then Hanzo had no idea what they were doing now. He himself was now more like a tsunami, a nearly unstoppable wave raining his arrows down on the shore, flooding the mainland with his precision and bringing a swift end to those foolish enough to stand in his way. Jesse on the other hand, was like a tornado. He appeared over the horizon with terrifying speed and ripped right through the midst of battle, sweeping up the land and causing disaster wherever he saw fit. Those in his path were not likely to escape either.

Together they were the sea and sky bringing the earth to its knees, and it was exhilarating.

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The two of them planned to celebrate their streak of victories with a nice dinner. They had picked their usual little spot on the roof, as always. McCree brought a pot full of chilli and two bread bowls. But even better, Hanzo had agreed to cook up steak for the occasion, and even though it was an odd pairing, it was some of the best damned food McCree had ever eaten.

He couldn’t help but let out a little hum. “Mh, dang Hanzo, yer bento boxes were one thing, but this is amazin’.”

Hanzo was quick to shrug off his compliment. “It is nothing, Jesse. Your chilli is better.”

McCree pointed the chopsticks that he could just barely use at Hanzo. “Food ain’t nothing, darling. Give yourself credit where credit is due.”

The corners of Hanzo’s lips quirked up, but he quickly looked away, still struggling with that habit of trying to hide his smile. McCree made a silent promise to himself that he’d get Hanzo to break that little habit.

Though for now, all McCree wanted to do was enjoy the food and company.

Eventually, McCree felt an itching in his throat. It wasn’t something that beer or water could quench, and McCree swore internally. He would ordinarily ignore it, but after the Incident, McCree was no longer inclined to put it off any longer than he had to.

But then again, how would Hanzo react?

McCree pulled the flask from his pocket. He tapped it with his index finger and cleared his throat hesitantly.

“Do ya… do ya mind if I had a drink? Would it bother ya too much?”

Hanzo stared at the metal flask for a moment. “Why would it bother me?”

McCree blinked at him. He started hesitantly, “Well, ‘cause, you know…”

The archer sighed.

“Jesse, I know you are still less than happy about what happened in Alaska, but I am not made of glass,” Hanzo kept his gaze on the flask as he gently touched McCree’s arm, making him jump ever so slightly in surprise, “this is a part of you that you cannot change, and I need to get used to it again.”

McCree couldn’t help the little bubbling feeling in his chest. “Ah, darling, yer too kind to me.”

Hanzo simply hummed in agreement.

---

Some time later, and McCree realized that his life had honestly gotten so much easier when he didn’t have to worry about the little things anymore. He used to wake up, kill some baddies for money, and go to bed. When the Overwatch recall happened he woke up, did some missions that often involved killing bad guys anyways, and went to bed.

And then when Hanzo became the integral part of his life that he was now, McCree woke up, had someone who easily helped keep track of how long he’s gone without blood, made training competitive again, constantly and faithfully watched his back on missions, served him up the
occasional delicious east-Asian dinner on the roof, and then went to bed.

He was so immersed in how his life was changing, this time for the better, that it completely flew over his head what was actually happening until-

McCree blinked, not believing his eyes. Hanzo’s cheeks were comically pink, and he was biting his lip furiously.

++++

Hanzo had never realized how pleasant life could be. He was the heir to a yakuza clan, then lived on his own as an assassin, and as a lone wolf when he had first joined Overwatch. Then Jesse had the audacity to waltz into his life and show him things he never thought possible.

And when Jesse became the core part of Hanzo’s life that he was now, the archer couldn’t believe it. Hanzo had gone to waking up (whenever he could actually sleep), killing some people, avoiding people looking to kill him, and trying to rest at night. Now, he went from more often than not waking up after improving nights of sleep, feeling the same adrenaline as when the sensations of life and death were still new to him, finding that he had the capacity to forgive himself, occasionally eating fascinating Southern American cooking on the roof, and then going to sleep.

It was no wonder that when on one of their rooftop dinners, Hanzo decided to try some of the expensive sake he had been saving, and that it gave him enough liquid courage to lean forward and-

Hanzo couldn’t believe it.

++++

McCree certainly couldn’t believe it. He stared wide-eyed at Hanzo, because McCree never thought that he wouldn’t be the one to make the first move. But when Hanzo tried to pull away, red in the face and averting his eyes in sudden apology, McCree’s lips followed. Hanzo tasted like victory, and McCree for the first time he realized just how sweet victory could be.

++++

For months their relationship wasn’t a secret per se, but somehow everyone just... knew?

McCree had the suspicion that Genji and Fareeha, maybe even Ana, had to have something to do with it. No one else would spy on their love lives like those three, even when Hanzo kept their public affection to a strict minimum. Not that McCree blamed Hanzo for wanting to keep things private, he never would. Hanzo had simply told him at the very beginning that he grew up in a very strict and traditional household, and that public displays of affection beyond the occasional hand-holding were absolute no-no’s.

And McCree could see how uncomfortable public affection made Hanzo. He immediately grew more tense and guarded when McCree tried to hold his hand underneath the table at breakfast. McCree once tried to give him a quick peck on the cheek after a training session only to have Hanzo immediately leaning away, looking over his shoulder as if he expected someone to be watching, ready to mock them. So McCree learned pretty early on that Hanzo was not one for hugs and goodbye-kisses.

And that didn’t bother him because his mama (and Ana to a certain extent) didn't raise McCree to be a self-entitled jackass about his relationships. And behind closed doors, he still had the most amazing man in the world looking at him as if he were made of solid gold.
But still, how did everyone know?

They walked side by side in the hallways like usual, but whenever they passed someone, there was always some kind of knowing smile or a congratulatory nod. And then there was Lena, who once threw her arms around them and squealed with glee. And also Reinhardt, who shouted his congratulations and patted them both on the back so hard that McCree swore he saw stars.

Actually, now that McCree thought about it, the combined volume of those two alone could have easily alerted the rest of the Watchpoint, even without either McCree or Hanzo saying anything.

But he supposed they could always deal with that later. Because tonight, after a long, hard mission miles and miles away from Hanzo for days on end, McCree got to lay in bed with his darling dearest besides him. And who cared what anyone else thought or said when Hanzo was so comfortable with McCree that he was even using him as a pillow?

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Hanzo felt that one of the greatest advantages of dating Jesse was how safe he made him feel. Ironic given what happened only a few months ago, and before that, Hanzo had never thought in a thousand years that someone would love him, and that he would return their affections.

But there he was, in Jesse’s room late in the night, nestled snugly in the crook of his arm and basking in the other’s warmth. Hanzo’s hair spilled over his shoulders and Jesse was lazily twisting a lock around his finger.

Eventually, Hanzo tilted his head up and kissed Jesse’s jawline.

“Show them to me again.”

Jesse made a little sound in the back of his throat. “Are ya sure, darlin’? I don’ want cha gettin’ spooked or anything.”

Hanzo pouted. “Jesse, I told you I am not as fragile as you believe. And we are together now, are we not? I don’t want to be afraid of you. Of any part of you,” He pressed another little kiss to the corner of Jesse’s mouth, “Let me see.”

Jesse sighed, and Hanzo could feel the rise and fall of the other’s chest. Then, very slowly, he let his fangs grow past his other teeth until they reached their fullest extent. Hanzo remembered very vividly how easily those fangs pierced the armor and leather of his glove. They could pierce flesh even easier.

Hanzo closed his eyes and took a deep breath. When he opened his eyes, he refused to look away. Hanzo rolled onto his forearm and climbed gingerly on top of Jesse so he could look down at him face to face.

Jesse swallowed. “Darlin’? How do ya feel?”

Hanzo remained fixated on those fangs and searched for something admirable about them. If Jesse had taught him anything, it was that nothing could be exclusively wrong or inherently vile. He supposed those fangs could be elegant in a way. They had a nice, slight curve to them and were the same pearly white as polished ivory. Coupled Jesse’s ruby red eyes, the man was like a handsome, southern treasure trove on legs. However Hanzo must’ve been silent for longer than he thought. Jesse brought his hand to gently cup Hanzo’s face.

“Darlin’, you’re worryin’ me.”
Hanzo blinked. He smiled and put his hand on top of Jesse’s to soothe his worries.

“I am fine, Jesse. I promise.”

Hanzo could see the way Jesse’s breath caught in his throat. It wasn’t often that Hanzo was the one to grab Jesse’s hand, and it was admittedly cute to see him become flustered for once.

Jesse retracted his fangs before pulling Hanzo in for a kiss. It was languid and sweet and Jesse couldn’t stop smiling into it.

“You’re amazing, ya know that darlin’?”

Hanzo snickered and rested his forehead on top of Jesse’s. “Yes, dear, I know.”

Jesse’s robust laugh sounded enchanting as Hanzo was pulled into another kiss. Hanzo closed his eyes as he was truly, fully content for the first time in years.

Chapter End Notes

Is "The End" ever really the end?

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!