(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Things are going well for Shroud~

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Japan was on fire.

The Hero Commission getting egg on its face was one thing, but government corruption was almost expected by the larger Japanese populace. Not to mention there wasn't any sort of real oversight for the Hero Public Safety Commission, so when it came to taking them to task and actually making progress there, it was always going to be slow.

That wasn't to say there weren't people currently working on enacting policies that would bring the Hero Commission to heel and stop the worst of their excesses in the wake of that info dump… but the average Japanese Citizen didn't know anything about all of that. They just heard that their government was as corrupt as they thought it was, shrugged, and went about their day.

The Number One Pro Hero losing control and going on a massive rampage, however? That was something altogether *different*. Endeavor's sins coming to light followed by him racing across the city to seemingly attack his wife, who he himself had committed to a psych ward against her will, had lit a fire under every single person in Japan. They were all engaged now, all starting to question the system that they'd taken for granted. The establishment had taken an undeniable blow today.

If this was what the Number One Pro Hero was getting up to in his personal life and if this was how he reacted to being exposed… what else were the

Pro Heroes of Japan hiding from them? Questions were being asked. Questions that the Hero Commission, dealing with their own problems, was in no position to quash.

And all it had taken was a slight tweaking of Endeavor's Quirk and mental state while hidden from the man's perception. Frankly, it was disturbingly easy to get close to the other man. To set him off in the first place. Really, it had been harder preparing the path ahead for his rampage than anything else.

After all, Izuku wasn't about to let any innocents get hurt. And so, the Red Ring had been extra busy recently in that area of the city, knocking over businesses and temporarily forcing them to shut down while insurance companies got involved with paying them out.

At the same time, some fights between his Red Ring Lieutenants and Pro Heroes had caused damage to the roads, just the right amount to not deter Endeavor from charging down them but still close them to all other access until they could be fixed. And would you look at that, the road repair crews were scheduled to get started the day after Endeavor's rampage. How… serendipitous.

Yes, everything had gone according to plan this time. No surprises, no unexpected variables… it had actually all worked out just as Izuku wanted it to. Even Endeavor's survival had been preferable over his death at his daughter's hands, as a matter of fact. While Izuku didn't care that much if Enji Todoroki lived or died, he did care about what it might do to Fuyumi to have killed her own father.

He wanted her to eventually take the path towards the light, after all. That was part of why he'd made sure to help her as Izuku Midoriya. She owed Shroud a lot right now, but hopefully soon she would see how he'd

manipulated her, how everything that had happened was part of his machinations. She would turn away from him… he hoped.

For the time being though, Izuku isn't surprised when Fuyumi asks for a meeting within a day of apprehending her father and seeing him sent off to Tartarus. Specifically, a meeting with Shroud. He would have preferred to meet her as himself perhaps, but Shroud was fine too… anything to help her eventually step into the light.

That said, as he steps out of the swirling portal and into the hotel room wearing his full Shroud regalia, Izuku has to admit, this is a bit different from the usual places he meets people. Fuyumi is seated on the edge of the bed when he arrives and immediately hops to her feet upon seeing him.

"Shroud. Thank you for meeting with me. Thank you… for everything."

They liked to say revenge was a bad thing. Stuff like 'revenge is a dish best served cold' or 'if you're going to take revenge, dig two graves' with the implication being one is for yourself. But Izuku? Izuku didn't quite agree. There was room for a healthy amount of revenge in the world… and vengeance could sometimes line up with justice in the best way possible.

He didn't regret hunting down and killing All For One, after all. Not one bit. The man needed to die, not just for what he did to All Might and all the harm he'd done to Japan over the centuries, but also because of what he might do in the future.

Izuku can immediately tell that revenge suits Fuyumi as well. She looks as though a massive weight has been taken off her shoulders. She looks free, in a way. In fact, she's even smiling a bit, though it's a small and tentative thing.

Dipping his head, Izuku nods.

“I’m glad I could help you, Killer Frost.”

Biting her lower lip, Fuyumi shakes her head.

“Please… just call me Fuyumi. You’ve earned that much, haven’t you?”

Izuku blinks behind his skull mask.

“No… you’ve earned so much more than that from me. My brothers can rest easier now because of you.”

Fuyumi takes a step forward even as Izuku stands still, staring at her.

“I… I wanted to meet you here to let you know I don’t care what your grander plans are. I don’t care what you’re going to do next. Take over Japan? Expand your criminal empire to the continent? Whatever it is… you have my full support. I will stop at nothing to help you achieve your goals, Shroud.”

She takes another step forward, invading his personal space. She stares into the glowing eyes of his mask for a long moment before letting out a breathy sigh.

“I could kiss you, you know. But instead… allow me to show you my appreciation in another way~”

And then she drops down to her knees and starts *fiddling with his pants*.

Izuku is so caught off guard he almost forgets to stop her. Fortunately, he recovers quickly enough to reach down and grab her by the shoulder.

“Frost… *Fuyumi*. What do you think you’re doing?”

Pausing, Fuyumi looks up at him with an eagerness in her eyes that’s honestly a little frightening. The ice queen has been replaced with a fanatical zealot, her gaze so intense that he thinks she might be ready to do just about anything he tells her to… and probably some things he doesn’t tell her to.

Such as trying to take out his cock, presumably to suck on it.

“I… I just want to celebrate with you. I want you to see how devoted I am to you, Shroud. Let me show my *loyalty*.”

… Alright, so maybe the plan hadn’t gone off without a hitch after all. Everything had gone as he’d foreseen… except for this. Sure, Izuku had accounted for Fuyumi likely being a bit more beholden to his villainous alter ego for a bit, but he hadn’t thought she’d become this sycophantic this quickly.

She’d always been focused and driven, but that was because her father had taken two of her brothers from her and driven her mother mad in the process. Knowing her full story, Izuku could understand why she was so emotionally closed off and cold to everyone she interacted with. Being close to people had only hurt her in the past.

Now though… now that Endeavor had been taken down and removed from the picture, it was like a dam had broken. All of the emotions that Fuyumi had been suppressing for who knows how long… were coming out at once.

And that meant she was trying to fuck him. Apparently. But obviously the last thing Izuku wanted was for Fuyumi to grow even more emotionally

attached to Shroud. He already had that issue with Himiko of all people and he still wasn't entirely sure he'd handled that situation right.

… Kaina's words come back to him in that moment as he stares down into Fuyumi's reverent eyes. He still stands by his belief that telling Himiko the truth and bringing her into his inner circle was too risky. But… what about Fuyumi? If she was already devoted to him for things he'd done as both Shroud and Izuku…

"Please stand up, Fuyumi. There's something you need to know."

Looking disappointed, Fuyumi nevertheless rises back to her feet. She frowns at him, even as Izuku hesitates for a moment longer. Was he really going to do this?

… Yes. Yes, he was. Reaching up, Izuku does something he hasn't done in front of anyone save for Mei and Kaina so far. He… takes his mask off in front of Fuyumi, pulling it down while at the same time turning off the numerous Quirks that would have protected his identity even if the skull mask had somehow been destroyed or forcibly removed against his will.

"I am Izuku Midoriya."

Fuyumi's eyes widen as she takes in his features, framed by the hood of his trenchcoat. Izuku pulls the hood back with one hand while setting the Shroud mask down on a nearby table with the other. Then, he looks back to Fuyumi, pursing his lips together as he waits for her response.

Fortunately he doesn't have to wait long… she recovers quickly enough.

"You… you're the Phoenix Program's Dispatcher? You helped me twice today then… both as Shroud and as Midoriya."

Izuku inclines his head, acknowledging that fact. Fuyumi, meanwhile, licks her lips.

“I… I don’t understand. Why is the Phoenix Program so important to you? Why send me if you were just going to infiltrate it yourself?”

Izuku hesitates, trying to decide how much he’s going to tell her. But in the end… a half-measure here would be worse than her knowing everything truth be told.

“It’s not just you and me. Every member of the Phoenix Program aside from Blonde Blazer and Mirko… was planted by me as Shroud.”

Fuyumi chokes on her own spit at that, her eyes bulging out of her head in the most expressive he’s seen her yet.

“W-What?! Even *Prism*?!”

Izuku nods solemnly.

“Yes. Even her. To be clear, I’ve given her no orders… her actions as a member of the Phoenix Program, including trying so hard to befriend you, have been her own. As well you should know considering I’ve given you no orders either and you’ve still found yourself enjoying her company more and more.”

Fuyumi flushes at being called out, averting her gaze to the side for a moment. But only a moment because of course she has questions. So, so many questions. Or rather, one big question that she keeps coming back around to.

“What… what is the point of all of this?”

Smiling slightly, Izuku shrugs.

“The Phoenix Program *is* the point, Fuyumi. Shroud, the Red Ring… those are just means to an end. Useful tools in pursuit of my true goal… a better Japan and a better sort of Pro Hero.”

Fuyumi just stares at him so Izuku continues explaining.

“I believe that the Pro Hero Defense Network, headed by Momo Yaoyorozu, is the best example of Pro Hero work we have in the modern day. It’s Pro Heroes and your average Japanese citizen coming together to help people and save lives. What’s not to love about that?”

Gesturing expansively, he continues on, his voice raising a little bit as he grows more impassioned.

“Meanwhile, you have corruption in the Hero Commission and the traditional Hero Agencies. Monsters like Endeavor are allowed to get away with things they shouldn’t be allowed to get away with, all because of their position in the rankings. At the same time, young women like you and Alice are tossed to the wayside and forced into villainy by the Hero Commission’s cover ups.”

Staring Fuyumi down, Izuku tries to impress upon her just how much he believes what he’s saying.

“The Phoenix Program is the key to showing that there is a path of redemption to people like you and Alice and all the others, Fuyumi. At the same time, we can use Shroud and the Red Ring to expose the corruption

at the heart of Japan… while eventually doing away with both once neither is necessary anymore."

Finally, he shrugs one last time.

"Shroud is the mask. This is who I really am."

And then he waits… because now he finds out one way or another whether it was a mistake to take Kaina's advice and tell Fuyumi the truth.

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A/N: Throw me a comment if you can but please leave a Like if you don't want to, it's the main metric I use to track whether a story is doing well or not!