“Tell me about your past, Minato.” The red haired Miqo’te leaned onto the bar, her hand curling around a wine glass as she smiled at the Miqo’te standing behind it. “You never really talk about yourself and I’m sure there’s an amazing tale behind the owner of the Stray Sheep.”

Minato sighed, smiling weakly as he placed down his cleaning cloth, wondering where to begin. His story wasn’t something he talked about often, most of his friends had been through it with him after all and he had never had a reason to tell it. He looked towards Silvy, who was still beaming at him expectantly. She had only recently found her way into his life, and the two had become rather good friends in the short while. Minato figured he could share some secrets.

“I wasn’t born in Hingashi.” He began. “Despite the Kimura name, I was born in the Shroud.”

“Oh?” Silvy looked a little surprised, but interested. “How did you manage to get all the way to Doma?”

“Well...” Minato stepped around the bar and sat on a stool next to Silvy, pouring himself a glass from the Realm Reborn Red on the counter. “That is a long story.”

“I have all night.” The Miqo’te smiled again.

“Then I guess I do too.” Minato cleared his throat, and began to speak.

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Mina’to was excited for his first day hunting. He and his sister Mina had been looking forward to this for months as their mother had promised to take them, but only once Mina had turned seven. She iterated that seven was still far too young to be taken deep into the Shroud but Mina’to insisted she come with them. So with bow and arrow equipped, the Miqo’te mother took her two children out for an adventure, leaving their father behind as he insisted ‘she was the better hunter’.

Bright eyed and giddy, Mina was forced to hold Mina’to’s hand for the whole walk as she was prone to run off in excitement. Mina’to was more than happy to keep hold of her while their mother explained the basics, showing them how to load an arrow onto the bow, the correct stance to take when aiming it, and how to sneak through the woods as to not startle their prey. They approached an antelope, Mina almost screeching with glee until Mina’to covered her mouth shut.

“Shh,” He whispered to her. “You’ll scare it away.”

Mina sulked at him, but kept quiet. They both looked towards their mother, who was readying her bow and aiming to shoot. A silence befell the siblings as they watched in amazement as their mother drew back the string and released it, sending the arrow flying through the trees to hit the prey. The antelope stumbled and fell, and Mina jumped up and down in Mina’to’s grasp. Their mother stalked up to the antelope’s body, bending to inspect her handiwork. It was then that the family was ambushed.

In a matter of seconds, a gang of men had leapt from the bushes behind the antelope, pouncing the Miqo’te mother and bringing her to the ground. The children screamed, Mina’to leaving his sister’s side to rush forward towards his mother. He stopped in his tracks when he heard another cry from behind him, and turned to see his sister lifted in the air by one of the

attackers. He yelled, sprinting towards the man and trying to hit his legs, but he was small and the man was unharmed by his feeble punches.

“Leave them alone!” His mother screeched, before the men surrounding her pushed her face to the ground.

“Silence you, or we’ll kill them in front of your eyes!” One of the men, presumably the ring leader approached them, a gun pointed straight at Mina’to. Mina’to stopped trying to punch Mina’s captor, and stared in fear at the barrel of the weapon. The man sneered down at him, teeth blaring.

“You’ll be coming with us,” The man motioned the body of the gun towards a wagon that was rolling in. “Come on, get in!”

Mina, still being carried by the scruff of her neck, was sobbing as she was taken towards the wagon. Their mother had been bound by her arms, and was being roughly dragged along. Mina’to felt small, helpless as he slowly walked to the cart, the gun a constant reminder in his head. He fretted over what was going to become of them as he reluctantly climbed into the wagon. It was dark and uninviting, hard wooden crates were inside and there was nowhere to sit but the floor.

“You’re in for a long journey!” A voice called from outside the wagon as the door was locked and the family were blanketed in pitch black. Through the darkness Mina’to could hear the sniffles and sobs from his sister. He felt through the dark to reach her, pulling her into a tight hug.

“It’ll be alright Mina,” He spoke softly, trying to calm her without alerting the men.”Father will notice we’re gone and come save us!” Mina just nodded quietly, her crying turning to sniffing.

The journey *was* long, and uncomfortable. The family tried to rest in the bumpy wagon as it took them to their unknown destination. After what felt like several suns, they came to a stop. People came and went, looking into the cabin of the cart to inspect them, and talking in muffled voices to the kidnappers. Eventually the doors were opened and the family dragged outside. A different set of people were there to greet them, but they didn’t look any friendlier than the ones that ambushed them. They were hurried along, bundled onto a large ship which was filled with what looked like cargo. It seemed their journey had just begun as they were pushed into a hold in the bowels of the ship, into another darkened room. At this point the children were drained and exhausted, and managed to curl up together in a corner to sleep. Their mother had been deadly silent for hours, and Mina’to presumed she was too terrified to speak. They slept for a long while, until a bright light from the opened door woke them up.

Once again the family was dragged from their holding, onto the deck and then off the ship into the dock. One look around and Mina’to could tell they were very far from home. The city was bright, with red eastern looking fixtures to the buildings, and a tall tower loomed above them, welcoming them to the city. They were taken through back streets, down narrow paths until they reached a shadier looking district.

“Welcome to Sanjo Hanamachi,” one of the men extended his hand towards a building with a doorman stood outside holding a lantern. “Although it won’t be much of a ‘welcome’ to you. You’ll be staying here from now on.” The man spoke with a smirk on his face as he led the family inside.

The place was dimly lit, and dingy. Corridors led from the main entrance into suspicious rooms, one of which was blaring music and red lighting. The place smelled damp as well, and Mina'to turned up his nose as they walked through to a set of stairs near the back of the building. They led down to a cellar, with futons on the floor. This was where they would be living.

For many moons after, this was where the family stayed. Each day the owners of the establishment would wake them up, along with many other people they had living in the cellar. They would take the children, and force them to clean the rooms in the building. Many of the small rooms were simple and just contained a bed, but somehow over the course of a night they would get dirty enough to need a thorough clean. Then in the evening, their mother would be taken upstairs along with the other women in the cellar and the children wouldn't see them until the early hours of the morning. Their mother would always come back to them bedraggled, sometimes bruised, always silent. Mina'to had asked what happened when she was up there, but she would refuse to say. And this is how it stayed, for almost a year. Mina'to contemplated escape, but whenever he tried to leave the cellar during the night there would always be a guard by the door, kicking him back down the stairs.

Until one evening, Mina'to decided to crawl up the stairs a little way in order to eavesdrop on the men before they came to collect the women.

"...what about the red one then?"

"Gods no, she ain't old enough yet."

"What *is* old enough then? It's not worth it if we're waiting another 10 years when we can just get someone of age now."

"Give her five then, that should be enough. Maybe even less. She looks like she'll be pretty dolled up anyway."

Mina'to's ears pricked. The red one? Were they talking about Mina? She was the only child here with red hair after all. Five years… The men were making plans for when she was 13? Mina'to bolted back down the stairs.

"Mother!" He called over to her, taking care not to raise his voice. "The men upstairs were talking about Mina!" Mina looked up at the mention of her name, confused.

"What did they say?" She asked, her green eyes wide with worry.

"They said you weren't old enough but were making some sort of plan for five years time… What do they mean?" Mina'to turned towards his mother.

"It means we need to get you two out of here. Soon." Their mother hadn't spoke this many words in moons. It came as a bit of a shock to the siblings.

"But how will we-?" Mina'to was cut off by another voice from behind.

"I've been planning this for years," a Hyuran woman spoke, approaching the children for the first time. "But I've never had the opportunity to attempt it, or the guts."

Mina'to and Mina listened as the woman explained that one of the rooms upstairs would have a back door, leading into the sewers. If the family were able to reach it, they could escape from there and would be able to put enough distance from the brothel that they wouldn't be found quickly and could make their way through the other side of the city. All they needed was a distraction, and fast. The men would be coming for their mother and the rest of the women soon and the children wouldn't be able to escape alone.

And so their plan was put into action. As two men made their way down the cellar steps to collect the ladies, the siblings' mother launched herself at them, claws and teeth bared in an attempt to knock them down. In the commotion, Mina'to grabbed his sister's hand and ducked beneath the men, scrambling up the stairs. One of the men swung at them with a knife, catching Mina'to's cheek but not causing any worse damage. They bolted for the door, remembering from their times cleaning the rooms which one had a dusty old door in the back. Hoping it wasn't locked, Mina'to reached for the handle, breathing a sigh of relief when it opened with a heavy push. The door literally did lead down to the sewers, a drain cover over the entrance. Lifting it away, he helped Mina down into the hole and watched as she began to climb the ladder. He looked up and saw his mother, breaking free from the grasp of the man holding her down. Mina'to's eyes lit up when he saw her, holding out his hand to help her down the ladder. As she reached the door, a wooden plank swung at her from behind as another man entered the room. The sibling's mother crashed to the ground once more.

"Go!" She managed to shout. "Get away from here without me!"

Mina'to stared in horror. It wasn't fair! He wanted his mother to escape with them! But as she was being dragged away, and other men were appearing to capture the children, he knew he had to escape with his sister. Biting back tears, he lowered himself down the ladder and joined his sister in the pipe.

"Is she coming too?" Mina looked expectantly at her brother, but received no reply. Quickly and quietly they climbed down the ladder, reaching the bottom and the beginning of the pipes. Taking his sister's hand, Mina'to lead the way through the tunnels, looking for any kind of exit. Eventually they came across a grate, and peering through they were able to see lanterns and boxes in an open room. It seemed they had come across some kind of hideaway, and would need to be cautious in case unsavoury people were using the area. Mina'to pushed against the grate, hoping it would budge, and was caught by surprise as it swung open easily and he fell into the room. Wincing, he looked around the room, hoping it wasn't going to be full of yet more danger. To his relief, the room was empty save for the boxes and lamps they had already seen. He beckoned to Mina, and helped her climb down from the pipe. There appeared to be a way out through this room, following running water out into the river. Out in the open, they could see the streets of Kugane above them as they snuck around the sides of the walls around the water. Following the paths, they were able to find stairs back to the main district of the city, back to the sounds and smells of the markets.

Unsure what more they could do now, Mina'to and Mina sat themselves down for a rest, curling up together. Mina tried talking to her brother, but when she didn't receive much of an answer she soon fell silent. Eventually, they both fell asleep right there in the street, as people all around looked upon the strange Miqo'te disdainfully. After many hours, the two were woken by a light tapping on their shoulders. A concerned looking Hyur couple were smiling down at them. They spoke with kind voices, however the siblings had no idea what they were saying. They were afraid, and tried backing away from the Doman couple.

"Not from around here?" The man finally spoke a language they could understand. Mina'to shook his head, keeping a tight hold on his sister.

"We're sorry dears, we didn't realise you only knew Eorzean," The woman smiled gently. "We were asking if you two were alright."

Mina'to looked away, rubbing at the cut on his face and bruised arms. Mina began to cry again, alarming the couple.

"You look like you've been through a lot, come with us." The man extended his hand to Mina'to, offering help.

"You're not one of them, are you?" Mina'to furrowed his brow, unwilling to take the hand. The man was taken aback.

"Whatever do you mean..?"

"The bad people that took us away from the Shroud." Mina'to gripped his sister's hand even tighter.

The couple lowered their heads, realising what the young Miqo'te was talking about. They had heard many stories of families being taken from their homes like this, but it was unheard of that they were able to escape.

"You'll be safer if you come with us," The woman knelt down next to them. "We can look after you and make sure that they can't come looking for you again."

Mina'to looked at his sister, who was still sobbing, and nodded. He stood up, helping Mina to her feet and took the woman's hand.

"We'll take care of you both, don't worry," She beamed as they walked away from the markets and towards the housing district. "What are your names?"

"Mina'to and Mina"

"Minato?" The man looked back at him. "A good strong name. I'm Kimura Shinzo, and this is Rie."

"Welcome to the family." Rie smiled.

***

"Wait, so that's why people call you Minato? Because your adoptive father couldn't pronounce Mina'to?" Silvy chuckled.

"Well there were a lot of things we couldn't pronounce either," Minato smirked. "But they taught us a lot of Doman that we still know today. They looked after us well."

"Still though…" Silvy looked down. "Such a tragic story I didn't expect!"

Minato nodded. "It doesn't really end there either. Did you ever meet Kinniku?"

"Is this your husband?"

"Well, he *was* my husband." Minato paused, not really sure if he was ready to tell this story.

"Take your time." Silvy smiled, taking another drink. Minato took a breath, and nodded.

***

Mina left the home when she turned 18. Minato wasn't happy, he didn't want her to be venturing out by herself, especially concerning the dangers that presented themselves in the open world. They had been living happily in Kugane with the Kimura family, their adoptive parents, learning the language and customs and overcoming the tragedies of their early life eleven years prior. However, Mina had been yearning to leave, wishing to travel back to Aldenard and the Shroud, wanting to find their father again.

During the fall of Dalamud

Kigoh'a ran. His father had yelled at him, not for the first time, to just get away. Run as far as he can. Be safe.

Promise me.

So he did. His legs were strong, as many Miqo'te are, and would carry him fast through the trees, away from the flames. He tripped often on the roots underfoot, almost sending him careering into the dirt below, but he kept going. He would not stop until he was safe, as he promised.

***

Mina curled herself up below deck. Every ounce of her was regretting leaving their adoptive home without her brother but it was too late to turn back now. She was already a month and a half into a two month trip back to Aldenard and wasn't about to give up on her plan to find her family. Mina'to had protested, refusing to come with her, but she was stubborn. Even so, she felt the prang of guilt in her chest because she didn't stay with him.

The rocking of the boat caused her to stand up, with great difficulty. There was shouting from above, and her curious nature got the better of her. She ventured, crawled more accurately, up the steps, poking her head through the door and stared in horror.

The sky was falling.

***

Mina'to sat on the dock, staring out into the sea where he'd last seen his sister. It had been weeks since she left but still he cursed himself for not going with her. It would be nice to reunite with the family, wouldn't it? Of course, he couldn't shake the feeling that the tribe just didn't care about them after all. No one ever did try and rescue them when they were taken to Kugane. Mina'to knew it was a ridiculous thing to ask of them, to track them down when their kidnappers were so skilled at swiping people and leaving no trace. But it still hurt to think that their father and brother didn't even try.

He closed his eyes, hoping his sister would be okay. He'd made her promise to keep herself safe. Of course she'd just brushed him off, telling him she'd be fine and he had nothing to worry about. She did, however, ask him to keep himself safe too. And their family. The family they grew up with, who rescued them from the streets of Kugane. Mina'to nodded. He would do his best.

A flash of light caught his eye. He looked up and smiled as a hundred dazzling stars flickered through the sky. A star shower. It was beautiful.

***

Kigoh'a slumped against a tree, panting heavily. He couldn't keep running, he needed to stop. He looked back, the flames had receded and he was safe for now, but his concerns turned to his father. The red moon in the sky had been terrifying enough, but the unfurling of great wings that had soon followed was the reason why his father had been so insistent on him running. Now that he was in safety, he realised that his father was not. He contemplated running back, but that would undo everything his father had made him promise. He pulled his knees up to this chin and stared forlornly into the trees. He couldn't do it. He couldn't save him. He couldn't save anyone. He was hopeless, useless, weak.

Kigoh'a pushed his face into his legs and sobbed. He couldn't even save his siblings.

***

Mina screamed as the boat rocked heavily to one side. The waves were kicking up higher, splashing salt water over the deck, some of it reaching the doorway to the cabin and hitting Mina in the face. The shouting on deck continued, it sounded as if someone had fallen overboard. Mina gripped the door, torn between trying to help and retreating. She had promised her brother she would stay safe, but this was out of her control. The moon was looming, bright red and bloody. Around it in the sky, the stars looked like they were falling. Perhaps they were. Mina couldn't appreciate the starshower, whether she could even see it happening as the boat rocked side to side in the rough waves. A particularly heavy knock against the boat threw her backwards, down the steps of the cabin and rolling against the wall. She lay there for a while in pain, too terrified to try and reach the deck. It would be better to stay here after all, until the storm died down. She curled her legs up and her head in, holding her tail for comfort to ride it out.

***

Mina'to knew there was something wrong with the moon. It was… falling? Maybe he was dreaming. Moons don't just fall. Do they?

His thoughts turned to his sister. She would still be travelling. Would she be okay?

He stood up. The fall of the lesser moon would be the exact kick in the arse he needed to go after her. Take up a weapon perhaps. He needed to do something. He needed to protect her.

I promise.

Minato's Story

- At 18, right before the calamity Mina leaves the home to seek adventure, and to search for her father. Minato is 20 at the time. He argued with her but couldn't stop her leaving.
- Minato remains at home for a year until he leaves the home to search for his sister - this was during the time of the calamity and he was concerned
- At 21, Minato arrives in Aldenard and ends up becoming a gladiator to earn money after picking up a sword and shield.
- Finds he has an affinity for white magic while visiting home at the Shroud, and becomes paladin and is hired by the Sultansword
- Makes friends and joins the Stray Sheep, as they begin to form their bar.
- Marries Kinniku, the FC leader, and they go on many adventures.
- Kinniku dies in airship accident when they were taking a trip, Minato withdraws to mourn in the bar

Mina's Story

- Mina returns, showing up at the Stray Sheep bar after hearing Minato was there and hearing about the death of his husband.
- Because of Kinniku's death, ownership of the FC was up in the air for a time
- Mina takes up the gunblade after seeing her brother with sword and shield

At Present

- Minato and Mina were given joint ownership of the FC and its bar
- Mina is the main event organiser, Minato is more reserved and prefers to serve behind the bar
- Minato is 24, Mina is 22

The lost brother

- Kigoh'a Mhezra
- Hunter of the Bronzetooth Keepers - the tribe Mina and Minato were taken from
- 27 years old, last saw the siblings when he was 13
- Has lots of scars and recent injuries over his body
- Accidentally got caught up in cult activities and has been tasked with spying on his siblings - Is only doing this to save his butt ((may remove this part??))

Family Tree:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZBDl97Ctj2hmI5WeNo97UEGOW-LbSnHVHcnQLpzD_Uk/edit

Family backstory

- Kigoh took Mina'a into their family when his mother Mina died when he was only 1. She changed his name to Mina'to so he could be a younger brother for Kigoh'a when he was 4. Minato became Mina'to Mhezra and part of the family.
- When Kigoh gave birth to a daughter, she named her Mina in memory of Minato's birth mother.
- Mina and Kigoh'a are siblings by birth, Minato was adopted into the family but has no knowledge of it. Kigoh'a is the only person who knows this.
- It was Kigoh that was kidnapped along with Mina and Minato and taken to Kugane. At this time Kigoh'a was out hunting with his father and had no knowledge of this until it was too late. It is his biggest regret that he didn't try and convince their father to go searching for them.
- It is rumoured that Nehza'a disliked the siblings Minato and Mina and this is the reason why he didn't go after them. It is also rumoured he was cheating on Kigoh. An even worse rumour is that he organised the kidnapping, but he fled the tribe before any of this could be investigated. His whereabouts are unknown.