

well, love is never giving in

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by [knightswatch](#)

Summary

There's a tired grumble from his side that surprises him so much he nearly topples over. He regains himself quickly enough to flash Kunimi an unsteady smile, curling his fingers in the fabric of his blankets again. "Kunimi-kun?"

"Go 'sleep," his voice slurs, and Kindaichi tries not to laugh. It's the only time Kunimi sounds like this, and he can't help but find it adorable. Even with the time they've spent together here, Kunimi rarely opens himself up much.

"I had a bad dream," he pitches his voice low, aware that after him, Yahaba is the first to wake up. He wonders, for a moment, if that has to do with Kyoutani's nightmares. He shakes it off, shrugging his shoulder. "I might go sit in the store."

It's not a big surprise when Kunimi sighs and pushes himself so he's sitting upright, scrubbing an arm over his eyes and nodding with a grumble from the back of his throat. "Fine."

Kindaichi, apparently unlike the other members of his family, was a light sleeper. Part of it was his own anxiety-- sometimes his head would swirl full of thoughts he couldn't seem to let go of preventing him from getting any real sleep, and sometimes it was nightmares.

This time it's the latter, with the shrieking roar of a kaiju echoing in his head even as he starts into wakefulness, blinking his eyes rapidly and listening to the frantic sound of his own breathing. He digs his teeth slightly into his lower lip, balling his thin blanket in his fists and glancing down at Kunimi still asleep next to him. He's hesitant to reach out and shake him awake, not wanting to irritate his best friend before the sun even comes up. Usually, he's fairly sure that Kunimi doesn't really mind helping him out, but it's hard to chase away the thought entirely.

Instead, he balls his long legs up towards his chin, making the futon under him rustle with the movement, laying his chin on his knees and forcing his eyes wider open. He doesn't want to close his eyes, see the enormous inhuman eye looking down at him again, feel the rush of air trying to knock him over or the tremor that followed its next step. Despite his best efforts to block it out, July 10th creeps back into his mind over and over again like a weed.

He glances over at Yahaba and Kyoutani asleep on his other side, across the room. It barely leaves a few feet of space between the four of them and ends up with his futon crammed against Kunimi's. Sometimes he wakes up holding on to the older boy's shirt or sleeping between the two rather than on his own.

Yahaba and Kyoutani, unsurprisingly, treat both of theirs as one. He has insomnia frequently enough to know that their sleeping positions change frequently. Most often Yahaba lays behind Kyoutani, wrapping around him with his longer limbs and mumbling things that Kindaichi can't quite hear against the back of Kyoutani's neck. Tonight, however, they're face to face, with Yahaba's head tucked underneath Kyoutani's chin, both of his hands balled tightly in the back of Yahaba's weathered pajama shirt like he's terrified to let go.

Secretly, he's glad to see it. It's only been a few weeks since Kyoutani had a nightmare and vanished, and Kindaichi had been left alone to wonder if his new family was going to be torn apart so easily. He nuzzles his forehead against his knees, staring at the worn fleece of his pajama pants. They're old enough that when he bends his legs like this, they barely come halfway down his calves, and whatever the pattern used to be is long since gone, lost to age and in Kindaichi's memory.

Flowers maybe. His mom always loved them.

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"You can go back to sleep, Kunimi-kun," he offers it softly, pushing himself up and stretching his arms over his head. He could probably get back to sleep as well if he tried hard, but he still doesn't quite want to close his eyes. Even now, blinking burns at the back of them and he pushes his fingers through his hair, dismayed to finding it pushed vertical again already. Kunimi simply glares at him for the suggestion and follows him out into the store itself.

Rundown as it is, Kindaichi likes their strange home. There's faint sounds from outside, things he's gotten used to on the whole-- usually the sound of stray dogs barking or people walking home drunk and talking too loudly. When they first moved in with Yahaba and Kyoutani, the neighborhood was rougher than it is now, and sometimes there were even gunshots in the middle of the night. He's not sure exactly what's started to change it, but things do feel more peaceful now.

He hops onto the counter, letting his legs bang against it, leaning back on his palms and smiling as Kunimi sits next to him, mind wandering for something to talk about. He might as well since they're awake anyway. He lands on a curiosity in the back of his mind and glances over his shoulder at the dark office behind them.

"What do you think happened to Kyoutani-san?" He asks the question softly, looking over at Kunimi with a tilt to his head. Kunimi blinks twice, his face barely changing at the question.

"When he ran away Yahaba went looking for him at the military base," it seems like he has more of an answer than that, and his eyes drop slightly before he looks up again. "You know those Super Soldiers they just revealed?"

"Iwaizumi-san seems amazing," Kindaichi answers, probably too quickly. He's only seen snippets of the broadcasts since they don't have a television and Kunimi shrugs.

"I think Kyoutani was the prototype," he says it like it's nothing to be surprised at or amazed by, even though the thought makes Kindaichi's heart pound faster. He doesn't like the idea of Kyoutani going toe-to-toe with a kaiju the way the Soldiers are supposed to. He swallows a shallow breath, squeezing his hands again.

"I hope they don't call him back to the military," he says after a moment, trying to alleviate the trembling feeling in his chest.

"I don't think they'd do that. I think he was kicked out," Kunimi shrugs, shifting so he's stretched out over the counter, his head laying a few millimeters from Kindaichi's leg. He makes sure not to tense at the sudden warmth, or shift to try and touch Kunimi at all. "You've seen how mad Yahaba gets whenever the military is around."

“Yeah,” he answers softly, shaking his head and looking over at Kunimi's half-open eyes with a soft chuckle. “Do you wanna go back to bed?”

“You don't,” Kunimi answers, shrugging his shoulders and turning his face away. “It's fine, Kindaichi.”

“Okay,” he gives in easily, even as he resorts to drumming his fingers on the counter top nervously, still full of jittery energy.

It hasn't gone away later after he's changed out of his pajamas already when Yahaba and then Kyoutani wake up. Yahaba must notice that the two of them aren't in the office, and rather than searching around in a panic like he did when he woke up without Kyoutani, he takes the moment to press soft words against Kyoutani's chest.

They're just loud enough for Kindaichi to get the idea of what they're saying, the gentle lilt of Yahaba's voice over *my love*, Kyoutani's soft snort that follows, telling Yahaba softly to *shut up, Shigeru*. It's enough to make the tips of his ears burn. He's glad that Kunimi has dozed off again, even if he will wake up complaining about his back being sore from laying on the counter. At least he can endure this without Kunimi calling them gross or making a fuss.

He doesn't mind it, really. Even if it is embarrassing overhearing your dads practically make-out in the morning. He kicks his legs against the counter again, making a sound just loud enough to hopefully alert them that he's sitting *right there*. Yahaba laughs.

“Good morning, Kindaichi,” he hums, still sounding amused even as he sits up as much as he can without untangling himself from Kyoutani's arms. Kyoutani gives a small, sleepy grumble and continues with refusing to let go. “Do you want to make some deliveries for me this morning?”

Kindaichi glances down at Kunimi sleeping next to him before shrugging his shoulders and nodding, pushing off the counter. Walking around a little probably isn't a bad idea, and sometimes people give them things in return for the deliveries. Really, he just likes seeing them happy over whatever Yahaba gives them. He grabs the bag that sits in the corner of the store, emptied of the supplies Kunimi used to keep inside it and now packed full of small packages with names and address printed on them in Kyoutani's surprisingly neat handwriting.

Yahaba defends his by saying in his profession, no one writes neatly. But he's never said what that profession used to be (and Kindaichi doesn't ask anymore). Kyoutani's are always tight and neat, almost painstakingly printed. He shuffles the bag in his hands, glancing at how many packets are inside before zipping it shut and tossing it over his shoulder. He gives Yahaba a small wave, feeling heat creep up his ears when Kyoutani huffs softly in response and pulls Yahaba back down next to him. He lands with a laugh, followed by the sounds of more kissing when Kindaichi turns his back.

He doesn't think to grab Kunimi's switchblade in his haste to escape, the cool air of the morning breaking over his bare arms. His clothes are worn, but at least, unlike his pajamas,

his jeans fall around his ankles comfortably and his shirt only rides up his stomach a little bit when he lifts his arms. He's surprised by the fact he's still getting taller, and a little bit dismayed. It's not that he minds the height, really, but it's already so hard for them to find clothes, in general, growing out of the ones he's already got doesn't make him feel any better.

Still, for today they're good enough, and he roots around in the bag for the closest buildings to visit first. Some of them have sort of vague descriptions, owing to Kyoutani's terrible sense of direction, but he manages to figure them out at least.

After visiting the first few places, being thanked enough that his face feels like it won't ever cool down again, and being *forced* to take several cans of food and a couple of battered books as thank you's, he digs out another package from his bag with a hum. This one is mostly medications and a few rolls of gauze with some tape to go with it. It's addressed simply to Aone, and it takes a moment for Kindaichi to recognize the address as the bar on the other side of the open air market. He's only met the bartender once, and would have found him scarier if he didn't already know Kyoutani. They have the same permanent glare, but he's learned to trust whoever Kyoutani and Yahaba trust without much question. Kyoutani's sense of people seems almost unnatural, and he comes to conclusions that Kindaichi doesn't really understand.

Like the tiny policeman that Kyoutani seems to pay an inordinate amount of respect to whenever they cross paths or the young man with the pierced tongue that he doesn't leave alone with Yahaba. Yahaba doesn't seem to question him much either, placing a lot of faith in most of the things that Kyoutani does, at least as far as Kindaichi can tell.

He hums softly to himself as he walks, snippets of a song that he's mostly forgotten. He wonders if Kunimi is up yet, or if there will be something warm for breakfast or not when he gets back when a pair of hands shoves him hard from behind and knocks him stumbling into the alleyway to his right. He blinks, turning around and cocking his head slightly in confusion. He doesn't recognize the pair of boys blocking the entrance off and grinning at him, but he recognizes the meaning behind their smirks and hugs the package for Aone close to his chest, frowning. He doesn't know what to say, so instead he tries to focus on not curling into himself.

"What've you got, kid? Somethin' good?" The taller one, with a spray of unkempt hair and a nasty look in his eye asks, leaning over. He's not quite taller than Kindaichi, but he still falls back a step and frowns. The other, slightly smaller and almost bored-looking, rolls his eyes.

"Just go take the bag, Kazuma," he snaps, sounding like he's frustrated even having to deal with Kindaichi. Kazuma snorts, crossing his arms even as he sidles a step toward Kindaichi.

"Izaka-kun is no fun," it's a tease thrown over his shoulder and met with another frown. Kindaichi struggles to find his voice, clears his throat and gapes his mouth open and closed for a moment until he can make his words come out.

"I- I'm in the Mad Dog gang," his voice cracks around his nerves, and he curses himself for it. They, as expected, don't seem to believe him. He swallows, shifting to push Aone's package back into his bag, zipping it tightly and trying to imitate the fighting stance that Kunimi takes when people bother the two of them. He tells himself not to wish that he had

Kunimi or Kyoutani with him-- he can be strong too if he needs to be. Kazuma laughs at him, shaking his head.

“*You’re* one of the Mad Dogs? I don’t think so,” he grins, advancing further, and Kindaichi can see the silver flash of a knife in his hand, almost entirely concealed by his palm. “If you’re gonna lie, at least make it something believable, kid. Hand over the bag.”

“No,” he tries to growl, ends up whimpering instead. He hasn’t ever been in a fight, not really. He’s *seen* fights, but all of them left him terrified. He’s reminded, painfully, of watching Kunimi get stabbed over his suitcase and his stomach roils. He wants Kunimi here to help him, wants to be strong enough to take care of himself, really wants a way to not end up getting stabbed.

The thought in his head before the first fist strikes across his jaw is that he feels bad having to use some of Yahaba’s supplies over a stupid fight. He stumbles from the force of the blow and tries to tighten his stance and swing back. It’s an imitation of the way Kunimi fights when he has to, but a poor one, and he barely grazes his knuckles against the edge of Kazuma’s jacket. His arm flails too wide, and instead of landing a hit at all he ends up with a kick to the stomach, doubled over and coughing. As soon as he feels a tug on the bag he grabs at the straps with his hands, refusing to let go of it. It’s probably a mistake, but if he lets go so easily it’ll take them weeks to collect all the things that people need again, and Yahaba will probably have to go see whatever source he uses for medical supplies early and the last thing Kindaichi wants to do is be an even bigger burden on his family.

He pitches onto his knees when a fist hits his ribs, hard enough that he coughs for air even as the concrete bites into his skin. He grips the straps tighter and curls his legs in an instinctive effort to protect his stomach, fighting the tremble in his fingers more than the person attacking him. There’s still laughter, a cruel and jeering sound that falls around him and lingers, littering the pavement. He doesn’t curl himself up fast or tight enough because the toe of Kazuma’s shoe catches his stomach and drives kicks against it relentlessly until he spits blood out.

“Just grab the fucking bag, Kazuma,” Izaka doesn’t sound sympathetic, he sounds *bored*. Kazuma stops, foot lifted in mid-air, looking over his shoulder with a small frown. Izaka rolls his eyes and nods at the bag. Kindaichi curls his grip around it again, but even that turns out to be useless because Kazuma simply leans over and slices through both straps with barely any effort, reeling it out of Kindaichi’s desperate grip. He laughs, nudging his foot against one of Kindaichi’s shin, holding it up.

“Thanks for this, Mad Dog,” he laughs, turning and following his friend out of the alley, leaving Kindaichi there in the smallest ball he can make out of his gangly limbs.

It takes a long, long moment for him to pick himself up and face the fact that he has to drag himself home now. The knees of his jeans are ripped and stained, and he wipes the blood away from his mouth and tries not to think about how badly everything hurts. He can’t quite straighten all the way with the pain in his stomach, and he wraps both arms around it to shuffle his way home.

There's a sign on the boarded up door saying that the doctor is in, and Kindaichi isn't sure if he's glad for that or not. He doesn't want to explain to them what happened, even if he will have to have Yahaba check him over, and it's with a coil of apprehension in his stomach that he raps his knuckles weakly against the door.

It takes a moment before the small window in it slides open, revealing only Kunimi's eyes. He blinks twice before yanking it open and frowning up at Kindaichi. He probably doesn't notice the blood or the stooped posture right away, because he frowns and tilts his body to let Kindaichi inside. "That took forever."

It's not until Kindaichi mumbles an apology and shuffles through the door that he picks up on something wrong, tapping Kindaichi's back as he passes. "Where's the bag?"

"Got stolen," he answers miserably, keeping his head down. He knows Kunimi isn't going to be happy with that-- it was *his* bag, even. He doesn't really want to turn and face his best friend being mad at him yet, and instead he makes his way toward one of the clean jugs of water they keep behind the counter. At least he needs to wash the smear of blood away from his face and hope Kunimi and Kyoutani don't notice the bruise on his jaw.

He should know better, of course, than to expect Kyoutani not to notice something. He's sitting in front of the counter when Kindaichi approaches, in his favorite spot, legs stretched out and head tilted to the side. Usually, Yahaba is only a few feet away when Kyoutani settles himself into one spot, so Kindaichi figures he's probably getting something quickly. Kyoutani looks up at him, even as he tries to keep his face turned away and ignore Kunimi now chasing after him. It doesn't work, and Kyoutani's head tilts, his usually gruff voice only deepened and rattled by the *growl* that slides through his teeth. "What happened?"

"I got jumped," his voice cracks and he slowly lifts a hand away from his stomach, swallowing down the groan of pain that wants to slide out of his mouth, rubbing the back of his neck slowly. "They stole the bag and a bunch of the delivery stuff."

Kunimi caught up with him now after locking the door again, circles around until they're face-to-face. Kindaichi can feel his ears heating up when Kunimi's eyes go wide, reaching up and rubbing at the smear of partially dried blood on the side of his mouth. His tongue still tastes metallic, even as his body freezes in surprise. It's not that he and Kunimi never touch each other, but it seems different with the angry look flaring to life in Kunimi's eyes. He's seen it before, like when his suitcase was stolen and Kunimi went chasing after it when Kyoutani had his first nightmare with them around. "Kindaichi, what the *fuck*?"

He cringes back at the tone, frowning and feeling his shoulders flinch inwards. "I'm sorry!"

"Why didn't you just *give* it to them?" He snaps, and Kindaichi opens his mouth to answer only to find that's not the question he was expecting to be asked. It seems obvious why he wouldn't just give the bag up-- it was Kunimi's bag, and the things in it were *important*. Kyoutani and Kunimi would have both fought for it, of course, he was supposed to too.

The angry tone of Kunimi's voice drags Yahaba out of the back room with a confused look on his face, frowning when he looks at Kindaichi, a hand coming to rest on his chin, tilting it to the side to look at the bruise more closely. "Did you get hit anywhere else?"

“Yahaba-san!” Kunimi snaps, obviously not pleased with the direct response. Yahaba gives him a fleeting glance over his shoulder, looking back as Kindaichi pulls his shirt up enough to reveal the bruises littering his stomach and his ribs, grimacing slightly. He can't ignore Kunimi's sharp pull of breath, and he tilts his chin down toward his chest, squeezing his eyes closed. “You shouldn't have sent him out *alone*.”

Yahaba, at least for the moment, ignores Kunimi, patting his palm against the counter and watching Kindaichi's small cringe as he lifts himself up. He gives Kyoutani a glance as he starts to push up to his feet, sighing slightly and turning to face the both of them, crossing his arms. “Please calm down.”

Kyoutani seems to flinch slightly at the words, but Kindaichi isn't sure why, and Kunimi only heats up further at the admonition, shaking his head and clenching his hands into tight fists, glaring between Yahaba and Kindaichi. “I should've gone *with* him.”

Kindaichi feels like an even bigger idiot than before, and he lifts a hand to scrub the tears off his face in the hope that it won't be obvious. He *should* have asked Kunimi to come, but more than that he *should* be able to handle such simple things by himself. He flinches when Yahaba's fingers press gently against his ribs, the other hand rubs at his leg in a comforting way. “Nothing seems broken. I think you're alright.”

Kunimi continues fuming as Kindaichi tugs his shirt down with a small nod, still trying to quietly rub his tears away before they get noticed. Kyoutani doesn't say anything, but one of his hands rests warm and soft on Kindaichi's shoulder and he leans slightly into it. Yahaba looks back at them with a small smile on his face, giving in with a nod. “You'll both go next time, then.”

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