

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

A/N: The rest of the recruits are finalized.

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None of the ensuing interviews are particularly bland. Every single one of the villains who Izuku and Kaina are meeting with to recruit are... eccentric in their own way. Some are easier than others though... and some are stranger than others too.

Someone like Coupe, for instance, is easy enough to bring on side. The woman was already a contract killer after all, but she'd grown a bit weary of using her Quirk only for money. She wanted there to be more meaning to it... and Izuku and Kaina could offer that to her, even if she couldn't join the Phoenix Program. She would be a Lieutenant in the organization that Shroud and Lady Nagant were building instead, and together they would change society... one way or another.

The likes of Prism was somewhat similar. She just wanted to be popular and liked. She wanted another opportunity to make her music career pop off. Fortunately for her, she actually was somewhat talented, so it was easy for Izuku as Shroud to offer her more opportunities like that in exchange for her infiltrating the Phoenix Program for him.

Much like with Invisigal, he made it clear to Prism that she wasn't going to be tasked with any actual sabotage or anything that would see her sent to prison... no, she would only be reporting on what she saw happening, and in exchange he would set up a Record Label for her and get her tunes into the ears of as many people in Japan and the rest of the world as possible.

La Brava was also an easy sell... in fact, she might just be the easiest one to redeem, Izuku couldn't help thinking. She'd only really been a villain for the sake of her mentor and partner, 'Gentle Criminal'.

However, the way he'd died had left her adrift, no longer looking for villainy. In her case, what Izuku as Shroud was offering her was actually the assistance in joining the Phoenix Program in the first place. More than likely, she would be one of the first to 'betray' Shroud... preferably to himself once he proved trustworthy as her and the rest of her team's Dispatcher.

Then there were the others. Not more or less interesting... but certainly requiring a bit of adaptation on Izuku's part. After all... he certainly wasn't expecting two of his potential recruits to show up together.

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"So we basically get to fight each other! Like cops and robbers! Hehe, that sounds like fun, doesn't it Ochaco? Just like old times, really~"

Ochaco Uraraka and Himiko Toga were not supposed to show up to the same interview. However, it seemed like Himiko had caught wind of Ochaco's interview and once she found out it was with the same group as her own, she'd gone ahead and invited herself along.

The two had a bit more of a history than Izuku had known about from their files. Apparently, back in the day when they were both younger and Ochaco was still training to be a Pro Hero, Himiko had terrorized the brunette just a tad.

Of course, they were both adults now... and both villains beside, with Ochaco's Pro Hero aspirations ultimately falling through in her pursuit of financial gain. The brunette, who still uses the name 'Uravity' even as a villain, just huffs and rolls her eyes at Himiko's words.

"You need to take this more seriously, Himiko. Or else you're liable to blow my cover the first time we have to face off against one another! I'm the one taking the most risk here, you know!"

He'd been a little worried at first that explaining the situation to the two women together might cause... problems. Himiko's profile suggested she could be

emotionally unstable at times and knowing that she had been passed over for infiltrating the Phoenix Program could have upset her.

However, the trick here was that she still only knew Ochaco to be an infiltrator for his Shroud identity. She had no way of knowing that the rest of the Phoenix Program's members were also going to be infiltrating on his behalf. If she had, if any of them had known what was going on, they'd probably have been... less than thrilled.

As things stand, it seems like this can still be worked out... so letting none of his worries or concerns actually show in his voice, Izuku merely nods, hands clasped behind his back to keep from fidgeting.

“Uravity is right. And if we are going to hire you, Toga, we need to know you will be able to follow Lady Nagant’s orders above all else. She will be your direct superior. If you cannot accept that, this may not work out.”

Of course, there's an unspoken threat attached to that, given Himiko officially knows way too much to not be brought into the fold. She may not know enough to truly ruin Izuku's plans, but she definitely thinks she knows enough and that in and of itself is a problem.

Still, she shows none of that on her face as she grins toothily, flashing her fangs and giggling.

“Sure boss man! You and the Sniper Lady can count on me! I won't let you down... and neither will Ochaco here either, heh~”

Ochaco just huffs at that, crossing her arms over her chest and rolling her eyes. Still... she's onboard too, of course.

Funnily enough, they're still not the strangest conversation he has that day...

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“You are truly insistent on this façade about being a half-demon then?”

“S’not a façade, I’m afraid. I’m half-demon, half-Australian. Malevola Gibbs, at your service. Though, why the fuck you want me to infiltrate anything, I dunno. Refuge in audacity, maybe?”

Izuku had to admit, he’d assumed that Malevola would drop the act given this was an interview with what she believed to be a criminal mastermind. After all, what was the point in lying to him of all people? And yet... she seemed intent on making herself out as a half-demon instead of a heteromorph. Insistent on it, in fact.

Now, Izuku didn’t believe Hell was real or anything like that... surely they would have known by now if it was. However, he had to admit that Malevola’s file WAS depressingly sparse... and on top of that, All For One’s own intel gathering had painted the six-and-a-half foot tall red skinned, devil horned woman as being older than she looks. Almost as old as All For One himself, in fact.

Sooo... she was either telling the truth, or she’d been around long enough that it really didn’t matter. And yet, despite her long life, she hadn’t been nearly as nasty as All For One himself. Instead, the worst of her crimes had been things like theft, forgery, extortion, and at worst assault.

She was effectively a transient, someone who had never settled down long enough in one place to really prove herself a possible productive member of society. Whether that was just because it was in her nature or because she was chased out everywhere she went due to her appearance, Izuku didn’t know. But they would certainly find out.

Regardless, in answer to her question...

“Refuge in audacity is exactly right. Your appearance marks you as too ‘obviously evil’ for anyone to actually think you a spy. Working alongside Blonde Blazer of all women, you will come across as someone truly trying your best to change and become a better person. It is the perfect cover.”

Malevola makes a curious noise in the back of her throat and scratches her cheek for a moment before slowly nodding.

“Alright, sure... I can sort of see it. And Blonde Blazer is a sweet gal, wouldn't mind working with her. Wonder if she's as vanilla in the sheets as she is on the streets though, you know what I mean? Could find out for you boss... if you're interested.”

The lascivious leer and wiggled eyebrows reminds Izuku of the other crime that Malevola has on her record... multiple counts of public indecency, usually because she got too drunk and wound up naked and sprawled out in her sleep somewhere out in the open. But also because she'd been caught having public sex a few times as well.

“I'm not interested in Blonde Blazer's sexual preferences, no. And you are not to risk your position on the Phoenix Program by propositioning the one woman who I will not be able to stop from removing you from it.”

That last part wasn't entirely true... Izuku was in charge of the Phoenix Program after all, at least technically. However, if any of his recruits proved to be too much, he would be hard pressed to explain to both Blazer and Momo why they should stay on. That was partially why he was recruiting them as Shroud to be his spies within the program... to incentivize them all to actually do a good job to cover up for their 'true nature'.

Malevola crosses her arms over her substantial bust and pouts at that.

“Hmph. You're no fun. But I guess I don't know what I expected... fine! I'm in! Make me a hero, Mask Daddy!”

... Malevola was going to be a handful, he could tell already. And yet, she still had nothing on the final interview of the day...

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“I want to kill my father.”

Fuyumi Todoroki, aka Killer Frost. Aka the daughter of Japan's Number One Pro Hero, a woman who had ultimately turned villain and then been kept out of prison by the very same man who had caused her to turn villain in the first place.

She stands before Izuku and Kaina now in her costume, which consists of a sleeveless black leather vest that leaves her belly exposed, and a set of black leather pants that extend down into big black boots. Her lips are a bright blue while her hair is white with red tips.

Arms crossed over her chest; she looks at them both as if she didn't just admit to wanting to commit patricide.

"If you can arrange that, you'll have my undying loyalty. Otherwise, I don't know that we have much to talk about."

Izuku takes a moment to collect his thoughts. When he speaks, every word is measured and considered.

"The death of the Number One Pro Hero is not something to be done lightly, Killer Frost."

Her lips purse and her eyes narrow before she glances over at Kaina.

"Neither is breaking into Tartarus. You've already proven you don't do anything 'lightly', Shroud. And that you're more of a player than any of the so-called criminal masterminds that came before you. I want to watch the life leave Endeavor's eyes. I want to extinguish his flames myself. I'll accept nothing less."

The temperature in the warehouse, the last of many warehouses they'd used for their interviews today, is downright frigid at this point. But Izuku doesn't let the cold show, his body carefully kept still as he stares Fuyumi down.

He doesn't bother asking her why she wants her father dead so badly... he already knows and she clearly suspects as much. It's not exactly a public story,

but there are plenty of people who know what Endeavor did... and have helped cover it up.

Technically, it was labeled as a 'training accident'. A simple mistake, one might argue. However, if it had really been that simple... then Fuyumi Todoroki wouldn't have already tried to kill her father for it and caused untold amounts of property damage in the process.

Her younger brother, Shoto Todoroki, was dead because of Endeavor. Dead because the Number One Pro Hero pushed too far, went too hard, and caused the death of his own son. And her older brother, Toya Todoroki, was missing and presumed dead long before that.

It was the younger one's death that had caused Fuyumi to snap, however. It was mere weeks after Shoto died that Fuyumi had shown up for the first time as Killer Frost and attacked Endeavor with everything she had. It would be months later before he finally defeated her and unmasked her, successfully capturing her.

The scandal had quickly been hushed up. Fuyumi had been remanded to a mental facility instead of a prison, the criminal record she should have gotten practically expunged by Endeavor pulling an ungodly amount of strings. And ultimately, years later now, everyone had all but forgotten the rampages of 'Killer Frost'.

Fuyumi wasn't crazy though. She wasn't insane or broken or even mentally ill. She was actually very much in her right mind... and simply trying to avenge her younger brother. In the end, she'd bided her time, managed to secure her release from the mental hospital, and seemingly gone back to living a 'normal life'.

However... All For One's file on her had made it clear she was still planning Endeavor's death. She was just being more calculating about it this time.

"I can offer you the power you would need to defeat Endeavor once and for all, Killer Frost. I can make you strong enough to kill your father.

However, before that happens... you'll help me by infiltrating the Phoenix Program."

Fuyumi's eyes narrow as he explains the rest of the details. Her blue lips purse and she's clearly not all that happy with the idea. But then, that's kind of the point. Even if she's not happy, she'll accept anyways because he offers her the best chance she's gotten so far.

However, Fuyumi Todoroki is not a bad person. She's no monster. In all her attacks on Endeavor, despite destroying their surroundings each time with her ice and his flames, she never once hurt a civilian in pursuit of her revenge.

Likewise, Izuku doubts she'll truly feel good about betraying the likes of Blonde Blazer and the rest of the Phoenix Program to Shroud. Giving up people seemingly trying to do good things and better themselves... it should hopefully eat at her. Make her feel guilty. Make her eventually rethink her alliance with him, even if it means she doesn't get to kill her father.

To be fair, Izuku has his own plans for Endeavor and the other heroes at the top of the Rankings that he believes to be corrupt and unworthy of their fame. But that's for the future. Right here and now, Izuku just needs Fuyumi to agree... so he can begin saving her from herself just like all of the others.

"... Fine. But don't you dare string me along, you got it? I'll play your games, I'll tell you what you want to know about the Phoenix Program, but when the time comes... you WILL help me kill my father. Or I'll show you the meaning of cold."

Good grief, did she practice those lines in the mirror? Izuku simply nods in the end though, offering Fuyumi his hand, still gloved unlike with Courtney. After a moment and one final disgruntled huff, she takes it.

"Welcome aboard, Killer Frost."

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!

