

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

A/N: Invisigal is on the prowl!

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“Great work today, everyone! You’re all doing an excellent job! Visi, that takedown at the bank was really well done especially!”

Courtney flushes a little as Mandy calls her out specifically, smiling cheerily and shooting her a wink. The two of them had actually gotten to team up for the first time today, a week into the Phoenix Program’s launch... and frankly, they’d kicked ass.

But to be fair, Blonde Blazer probably could have handled the bank robbery all on her own. All Courtney did was use her as a distraction to sneak in and disarm the robbers before they could hurt any of the hostages. No big deal, really.

As everyone else disperses, Mandy comes over and tilts her head to the side.

“Hey... you okay?”

Immediately, Courtney straightens up and forces a smile on her face.

“Heh... yeah, why wouldn’t I be? Things are going great. I haven’t got any reason to complain.”

Immediately, Mandy is smiling brightly again, looking around the Phoenix Program’s offices with a proud grin.

“They really are, aren’t they? Everything is just... perfect. Hey, you want me to give you a ‘ride’ home? We could probably pick up dinner too on the way if you wanted. You’d just have to hold your breath for a bit to keep anyone from seeing you in my arms.”

Courtney blushes at that, fidgeting for a moment at the mental image. But in the end... she shakes her head.

“No. Thank you though. I’ve got other plans tonight, so I’ll probably be home late.”

That brings a frown to Mandy’s face, the big blonde amazonian looking a little put out. It’s obvious she wants to celebrate the week’s successes with someone, which only makes Courtney feel even guiltier for turning her down. But she has her reasons... and of course Mandy is way too good of a person to press.

“Well, alright then... I guess I’ll see you later?”

Courtney bobs her head up and down, still forcing herself to smile.

“Yeah... later, for sure.”

With that, they part ways. Courtney really wishes she could give Mandy the girls’ night in that she was asking for... but she can’t. For multiple reasons, really.

First and foremost was the fact that she was betraying Mandy each and every day that she was a part of the Phoenix Program. It didn’t matter how many people Courtney was helping or who she was saving... not when it was all tainted by her real association. She was Shroud’s agent within the Phoenix Program, his mole in the organization... and after seeing the full breadth of said organization through the Red Ring’s activities this past week, Courtney knew she was in over her head.

The worst part was... she was really starting to like her teammates. Everyone else in the Phoenix Program, unlike her lying fake ass, was legit. All of the women who had been villains but were now Pro Heroes working alongside Mandy... they were the real deal. The true redemption stories.

And sure, she didn’t get along with all of them... not by a long shot. But she’d found herself appreciating most of them and admiring each and every one of them for being what she wasn’t. Even if she didn’t like one or two on a personal

level, she could still acknowledge that they were better people than she was... full stop.

Secondly, of course, was the problem of Izuku Midoriya. Courtney had been trying unsuccessfully to follow the Phoenix Program's Dispatcher for the past week but he was constantly (and seemingly unknowingly) giving her the slip! Night after night he'd get away before she could figure out where he was going or what he was doing. Fuck, she didn't even know where the guy lived!

It was suspicious... super suspicious. What was some Quirkless accountant turned dispatcher doing with skills that allowed him to juke an invisible stalker? No, something was up about him... and tonight Courtney, or rather Invisigal, would find out what it was.

Frankly, she needed the distraction. Because if it wasn't for her investigation into Midoriya, she'd be forced to acknowledge that the man was a damn good dispatcher... and also forced to acknowledge that the Red Ring was a pretty big threat, all things considered.

This past week the Red Ring had made itself known to the people of Japan in a big way with escalating crimes taking place all across the country. It felt like there was a Red Ring Chapter in every major city and even most of the minor ones as well. They were popping up all over the place, stretching the Pro Heroes thin and leaving the Hero Commission and the agencies affiliated with them fumbling in the dark.

It wasn't ALL bad news for the heroes of course... they'd had some wins here and there against no-name Red Ring mooks. In fact, a couple of those wins had been the Phoenix Program's doing. However, the big names associated with the Red Ring... they were all getting away with it.

Any time Shroud or Lady Nagant took the field, it was a guaranteed loss for the heroes so far. And a few Red Ring Lieutenants, like that crazy bitch Toga, were really starting to make even bigger names for themselves under Shroud's leadership.

Maybe that should have made Courtney feel better about things. She was on the winning team after all! Yippee! But no, of course it didn't. She... she wanted to be on Mandy's team. Unfortunately, she wouldn't be half as successful as a hero if it weren't for Shroud's signing bonus.

If he hadn't somehow augmented her Quirk and healed her asthma, Courtney knew for a fact that she'd been the lowest ranked member of the Phoenix Program. Even below the likes of La Brava who had spent more time on a computer this past week counter-hacking criminals than she had out in the field.

That was why... she'd figure out what was going on with Midoriya. Both to repay Shroud in part, and also to make sure that *she* was the only person spying on the Phoenix Program from within. And so, after splitting up from Mandy, she leaves the building only to circle back around and slip in invisible through a back door she'd left unlocked earlier. Holding her breath, she creeps over to where Midoriya always winds up staying late and watches him with narrowed eyes.

Sitting back in his chair, the dispatcher winds his fingers behind his head before glancing over to the aforementioned La Brava with a smile.

"Good work again today. You're really knocking it out of the park, you know."

The short stack blushes and ducks her head.

"T-Thank you... I suppose I'll see you on Monday?"

"Yep, sounds like a plan."

Courtney scowls from her hiding place. From the look of things, Midoriya was already well on his way to seducing the attention starved woman. La Brava wasn't what she'd call a 'conventional' beauty, that's for sure. Rather, she was as close to a heteromorph as one could get without being outright labeled as one in Courtney's opinion.

That didn't mean La Brava was ugly or anything like that, but the way Midoriya was treating her was clearly having a greater impact because she was lonely. All part of the bastard's master plan!

As La Brava leaves and Midoriya busies himself tidying up for a bit, Courtney glares at the man's back from her hiding place and fantasizes about who he might be working for. Obviously he wasn't working for Shroud... she would have been told.

So maybe he was working for the Hero Commission or something? Mandy had mentioned quite a few times how much the Hero Commission seemed to have it in for PDN after all. Or maybe he was working for a corporation. Some of them apparently had it in for PDN as well.

No matter what though, she wouldn't let him get away from her tonight. Courtney was going to get to the bottom of this once and for all and then she was going to deal with Midoriya one way or another. There was only room for one mole in the Phoenix Program as far as she was concerned, no matter how good of a dispatcher he had so far proven to be!

Finally, Midoriya finishes up and heads out. He's the last one out of the building, turning off the lights as Courtney ducks behind a corner to take in another deep lungful of oxygen before holding her breath as she scurries after him.

It was those moments where she needed to hide and breathe for a second that she'd lost him in the past. Courtney was certain that Midoriya didn't know she was there... there was absolutely no way he was doing it on purpose. And yet, he had this uncanny ability for just disappearing the instant she ducked out of sight and got more air in her body.

Not this time though! This time, Courtney keeps her eye on the prize. Even as Izuku makes his way down the sidewalk, the sun setting in the distance, she follows closely behind him, making sure to match her steps to his steps so he doesn't hear her following in his wake.

She keeps only a dozen feet away this time around, less concerned about being caught than she is about losing her prey. As such, this time... she's witness to just how she probably lost Midoriya previously. He's walking along all casually, moving in a nonchalant fashion... and suddenly turns a corner into a dark alley.

This isn't the first time that he's disappeared into a dark alley on her watch, but it IS the first time that Courtney is close enough on his tail to reach the mouth of the alley and look up to see Midoriya scurrying over the roof's edge after climbing a fire escape.

Eyes widening, Courtney lunges for the same fire escape and quickly ascends it as well, her lungs burning only a little bit as she makes it onto the roof as soon as humanly possible. Fortunately Midoriya is still in line of sight when she does, already jumping to the next rooftop.

Getting a quick lungful of air without darting out of view, Courtney risks completely blowing her cover by Midoriya turning around to glance back behind him or something. Luckily that doesn't happen and she's able to sprint across the rooftop and jump to the next roof after him all while holding her breath.

She definitely wouldn't have been able to do that before Shroud's sign on bonus, that's for sure. Back before, she could barely hold her breath for a minute without suffering an asthma attack, let alone pull off daring physical stunts like this.

Her lungs are capable of holding so much more air now though, and all for the low price of a bigger appetite... and betraying her best friend and the person she was closest to in the whole world.

Still, it lets her keep up with Midoriya and in this moment, that's all Courtney cares about. She knew that he wasn't just some Quirkless accountant turned dispatcher. And now she had proof, because why would Hero Dispatcher be roof hopping like this for anything other than nefarious purposes?!

Finally, they seem to arrive at Midoriya's destination because the man opens the rooftop access door and descends into a nondescript apartment building. Only...

when Courtney goes to try to follow him down, disaster strikes... the door has locked itself behind him.

“Wha- no! Fuck!”

Courtney curses to herself as she tries the door a second and third time... but to no avail. She hadn't thought she needed to do anything as risky as catching the door before it closed... but clearly she'd fucked up. Damn it... what did she do now? She had this building marked, but what if this building was nothing? What if Midoriya had simply caught on to the fact that he was being followed and this was just his way of giving her the slip again?

Sucking in another lungful of air, Courtney darts over to the edge of the roof and looks down at the sidewalk below. Then, she darts to another edge of the roof, checking all four sides before frowning. As far as she can tell, this is just a normal, nondescript apartment building. But she also doesn't see Midoriya trying to sneak out on the ground level through any of the exits either.

... Surely this isn't just where he lives is it? There's no way that he was just some extremely fit guy without a Quirk who liked to keep in shape by running across roofs to get home every night. There was no way she'd been losing him each night completely on accident solely because *that* was what he'd been doing.

That would be ridiculous! And yet... what if?

Only, just as that thought is running through her brain, the locked rooftop access door comes swinging open again and Midoriya steps back out. Courtney freezes in place despite being invisible still, her eyes widening as she sees what he's changed into.

The look on Izuku Midoriya's face can only be described as filled with determination... before he slides down the mask of Vigil, the Quirkless Vigilante that's become something of a living legend over the past decade. Even Courtney has heard about him by this point, after all.

This was their dispatcher's big secret? That was why he was so fucking suspicious? It wasn't that he was spying for the Hero Commission or the Corporations, both of whom despised a vigilante like Vigil acting outside of the law. No, the real reason was that he was even *more* of a do-gooder than he already seemed!

... Courtney wanted a refund on this particular mystery. She'd prefer to go back to not knowing this because this... this was fucking bullshit!

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