

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

A/N: Courtney slow rolls it.

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It was ridiculous... utterly ridiculous. Out of all of the possibilities Courtney had had running through her head, this was not one of them. Midoriya turning out to be Vigil was just... ugh!

And yet... she knew she couldn't react impulsively or recklessly here. Even if that was how Courtney usually did everything, she needed to keep herself under control and... gather more information. Yeah, that was it. That was why she wasn't racing off to tell Shroud about this immediately. Because obviously he would want more details...

Izuku, or rather Vigil, starts running again, leaping to another roof. Ducking behind an air conditioning unit to suck in a deep breath of air, Courtney follows after him. As she does so, her mind is going a mile a minute, trying to process this new revelation.

It... did sort of make a twisted kind of sense the more she thought about it. Izuku Midoriya definitely hadn't seemed like an accountant of all things, let alone a simple dispatcher. Those permanent bags under his eyes, the way his collared PDN shirt hugged his torso... and the way he talked about things gave away the lie of his true experience.

Not to mention he was irritatingly good at his job. An accountant wanting to change career tracks and do something 'worthwhile' with his life was one thing, but to go from accounting to being that good at dispatching... it hadn't made a lick of sense.

Of course, knowing now that the Phoenix Program's dispatcher was actually the vigilante known as Vigil, all of the missing puzzle pieces fell into place. Obviously Midoriya would be good at telling them all what to do... he'd been

doing their jobs in the dead of night for ten years. And to think, he'd survived a decade on the streets without a Quirk... that was insane.

Courtney twitches as she hears angry shouting off to the side. Vigil hears it too, because he immediately turns and begins sprinting in that direction. She follows after him as quickly as she can... but even then she only really arrives in time to witness what he does to the mugger trying to steal another man's wallet.

Descending the fire escape, Vigil plants his feet directly between the mugger's shoulderblades, taking the knife-wielding man to the ground in a brutal takedown complete with bones snapping. The mugger's would be victim's eyes are wide in disbelief as Vigil straightens up from his landing pose and looks at him.

"Go. You're good now."

"T-Thanks... thank you!"

The man doesn't need to be told twice, racing out of the alley and leaving Vigil and the mugger behind. Courtney watches on as Vigil confiscates the knife and then rifles through the mugger's pockets. The vigilante quickly finds the other man's phone, calls emergency services, and then drops the phone back on top of the other guy, leaving the call open so the authorities can find him.

A moment later and he's ascending to the rooftops again, with Courtney barely having time to pull back and suck in another expanded lungful of air before he flips back over the roof.

That was clean... so fucking clean. And honestly super impressive, even if the mugger was clearly nothing special. Whatever his Quirk had been, the mugger hadn't even been using it to threaten the would be victim, instead relying on the knife.

Even still, the takedown was amazing... it would have handled most threats, probably. As Vigil continues on his way and Courtney follows after him, she can't help but study him even more. She'd known there was something special about

Midoriya... but for the first time, she finds herself appreciating that rather than distrusting it.

Of course, that left her with a bit of a problem, didn't it? Something of a... dilemma. Shroud hadn't exactly ordered her to look into Midoriya... in fact, he'd explicitly ordered her NOT to look into the man. Instead, Shroud had been pretty clear that he was going to have other people look into Midoriya.

... But Courtney wasn't fooling herself. She knew that it wouldn't matter one lick what her orders had been, not if Shroud ever found out she'd known Midoriya was Vigil and hadn't told him. So by all accounts, that's exactly what she should do. Break away, contact Shroud, and admit that she uncovered Midoriya's secret before anyone else could.

Sure, Shroud might be angry that she'd disobeyed him... but information like this would probably keep him from being too mad. Indeed, knowing who Vigil really was... it was such a juicy piece of info that Shroud couldn't possibly be upset with her. He'd be happy to learn this, given how he might be able to use it for whatever his ultimate plans were.

... So why wasn't she doing that? Even as Courtney follows Vigil closely, even as she watches him deal with a dozen petty crimes as he patrols the rooftops of the city, Courtney finds herself caught up in a state of inner turmoil.

Her rational mind was telling her to report in to Shroud asap. Setting aside the guilt she felt over betraying Mandy, there was no denying that Courtney had a good thing going as part of Shroud's organization.

... Except that's just it, isn't it? She can't fully set aside that guilt of hers, no matter how hard she tries. Shroud's cure for her asthma had enabled her to be a far better Pro Hero than she ever could have been otherwise, but it also made it all a lie. She wasn't a real Pro Hero; she wasn't a real member of the Phoenix Program... she was a fraud. A plant.

Midoriya... Vigil was the real deal. In a way almost nobody else was. He was the genuine article, someone who put his all into helping them save people and take

down villains during the day, only to then turn around and save even more people himself at night.

Courtney wasn't really lying to herself... her fate was probably already sealed. But giving Midoriya's secret to Shroud felt like a step even further in that direction... and she couldn't quite bring herself to do it.

It's in the midst of all of this inner turmoil that they arrive at a proper inflection point. Courtney hears nothing... and yet, Vigil suddenly descends from the roof right in front of her, leaving her to rush after him with wide eyes to see where he's going.

When she finally catches up, it's to see him racing towards a bank across the street... a bank that should be closed at this point, but that she can see multiple flashlights moving around inside. It's a midnight bank robbery! And one that hasn't been caught yet, so nobody knows it's happening!

Quickly getting off the roof as well, Courtney approaches the bank carefully, watching as Vigil enters through a vent grating along the side of the building. She, meanwhile, heads around the back... where the robbers have a truck set up and a backdoor literally propped open so they can move quickly.

For a moment, Courtney is afraid she's going to see the telltale colors of the Red Ring on the robbers... after all, these days it feels like more and more crime is done under Shroud's umbrella or not at all. But thankfully, much to her relief, the men show no signs of being Red Ring... this is a completely independent operation.

That's good because as she slips in through the propped backdoor, Courtney sees an opportunity that she can't quite pass up. Even as she sneaks through the dark and quiet bank, looking to see where Vigil is and what he's doing, she figures she can definitely make a move here.

Finally, she manages to locate Vigil... just as he's taking down one of the robbers who wandered too far away from the others. Courtney watches from

invisibility as Vigil chokes out the robber and zip ties his arms behind his back before dragging him into a nearby office to hide the unconscious body.

Watching him work is honestly just amazing. He's like poetry in motion, like an action hero right out of all those old movies. Working mechanically and with precision, he separates more of the robbers from one another and continues to systematically incapacitate them one by one.

For a split second, Courtney honestly fears she's not going to be able to implement her plan because Vigil is just too competent. But then she sees her opportunity... one of the robbers turns a corner at exactly the wrong moment and sees Vigil dealing with one of his friends.

Luckily Courtney is perfectly positioned to bring the flat of her hand down in a surgical knife strike on the guy's neck before he can even finish raising his gun, sending him crumpling to the ground in a heap. Then and only then does she finally reveal herself, letting her invisibility end as she kicks the guy's gun away and gives Vigil a crooked smirk.

"Yo. Heads up, that one almost got the drop on you."

Heh, nailed it.

Meanwhile, Vigil pauses, staring at her for a long moment and Courtney can tell a little bit of what's going through his head. No doubt Midoriya is questioning how she got here and whether she knows the truth about his identity. Luckily, Courtney has the perfect excuse.

"Name's Invisigal by the way. I happened to be in the area... my favorite park is nearby."

It's even the truth. How many long, lonely nights has she spent sitting on a swing in that park, just pushing against the ground and rocking back and forth?

Vigil hesitates for a beat longer before letting out a disgruntled huff and pushing the unconscious robber he'd been taking down against the nearby wall to slump down it.

“... I've got this handled. You don't need to involve yourself in this, Invisigal.”

Wow, she'd already known he adopted a voice from when she'd heard him talking to the victims in all the crimes he'd stopped so far tonight but hearing it up close and personal... it's kind of comical, comparing his deep Vigil Voice to his tired and perpetually 'done with your shit' Midoriya Voice.

He sounds very... heroic as the former. Not so much with the latter, though Courtney would begrudgingly admit that he gave good speeches.

“Did you have it handled? Because from where I'm standing it looked like this guy was about to get the drop on you.”

Vigil just shakes his head.

“You can't be seen with me. If you are, it'll reflect poorly on you... I'm a vigilante, I operate outside the law. You're a Pro Hero... a member of that new Phoenix Program, right?”

Courtney pauses... because it's obvious he's trying not to make it too clear that they know each other. And she should almost certainly try to do the same, so she pretends to perk up, grinning slightly.

“Oh? Heard of me, have you?”

Vigil just gives a shrug at that, one of forced nonchalance. In the ensuing awkward silence, Courtney has to admit that he sort of has a point. Especially given she knows exactly who he is. If a member of the Phoenix Program is seen operating with an unsanctioned illegal vigilante that the Hero Commission has been trying to pin to the wall for a decade... it would reflect really, really poorly on the Phoenix Program, wouldn't it? To say nothing of how much trouble she would be in personally.

But then...

“You’re right, of course. I can’t be seen with you. Luckily for you... that’s what makes me the perfect backup.”

She holds her breath and goes invisible a moment later to prove her point, prompting Vigil’s eyes to slide left and right for a moment as if trying to track her. Finally, he simply narrows his gaze and growls.

“Fine. On your head be it.”

Courtney can’t respond, obviously, but she smiles all the same and follows him as he stalks off down the hall. She decidedly likes Vigil a lot more than Midoriya... and she even thinks she knows why.

Vigil might be his masked vigilante identity, but Izuku Midoriya IS the mask. You don’t spend a decade fighting against both sides for your own reasons without falling deep, deep into your vigilante identity. Midoriya the Dispatcher might be damn good at his job, but he’s not real... not in the way Vigil is. He’s just a cover for Vigil, a way to do some extra good during the day... because apparently it wasn’t enough for him to already be risking his life night after night.

Together, between the two of them, they take out the rest of the bank robbers without a single shot being fired. No muss, no fuss. Everyone is soon unconscious and restrained and Vigil once again uses one of their phones to call the authorities to the scene.

As he leaves, Courtney follows after him of course, right back up onto the nearby roof across the street, where Vigil stays and watches until the police arrive and discover the van behind the bank and the propped open door and all the unconscious robbers in a heap next to it.

As they’re taken into custody, Vigil sighs.

“You shouldn’t take risks like this. You and all the others have a chance to do some real good with the Phoenix Program... you just have to follow Blonde Blazer’s lead and stay out of trouble.”

Courtney stiffens as she reappears a few feet away, her eyes narrowed.

“How’d you know I followed you up here?”

Turning to her, Vigil offers a crooked smile.

“I guessed. You just confirmed it.”

O-Oh... that’s a little embarrassing. Deciding to set that aside, Courtney focuses on what he’d been saying.

“... Isn’t being a hero all about taking risks? How can I call myself a hero if I’m not doing my part?”

But Vigil just shakes his head.

“You are doing your part. I’ve seen you on the news... or rather, I’ve seen your work on the news. You’re doing a good job already. You don’t need to risk it by being tied to me.”

Courtney fidgets for a moment, not liking that one bit.

“... But what if I could gain more from you than I’d be risking?”

That gives Vigil pause and has him cocking his head to the side in confusion. Courtney wets her lips and gestures to him.

“You’re good... no, you’re better than good, you’re amazing. Your moves are seriously out of this world... and without even a Quirk backing you up. Imagine what I could do with my Quirk AND your training.”

Here she goes, being impulsive again. And yet... she really wants him to say yes...

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