



College student Senri embarks on a villainous quest after class. Teaching rhetoric isn't Kohaku's dream so he becomes a hero. When their teams collide, they must LARP their way to victory or lose everything for the man they each love.

Daisukidayo, Honey-Senpai!

By B. M. Valdez

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DAISUKIDAYO, HONEY-SENPAI!

B. M. valdez

Also by B. M. Valdez

Relapse

Countenance of a Hero

Faceless

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Chapter One

Senri Yuzuki

Outside the classroom windows, the sky darkened and mid-Février chill was sure to have set in. I only spared the window a glance because the most important man on campus was addressing me and something like sixty others. Unlike those others, I was all ears. Some juvenile delinquent behind me was folding a paper airplane loud enough like he wanted Honey-senpai to say something to stop him. The professor wasn't gonna. He never did, even when that paper airplane struck him square in the chest as he lectured on about the proper rhetoric of the twenty-first century.

I get it. Spring semester Rhetoric II is a required class. No one actually wanted to be there, especially not at seven thirty at night. I didn't mind the late class, you know. It meant I had the opportunity to have Honey-senpai's—that's a nickname, by the way—undivided attention. He was young for a professor, closer to my age than any of my others. I'd first met him through my best friend, Krispy, who was a year older than me.

"Remember to hand in your paper on your way by," Honey-senpai said, voice nearly drowned out by the scraping of chairs and rustling of belongings. No one else seemed to care when he opened his mouth.

That paper airplane I'd heard the production of whizzed over my head and sure enough met its mark dead center of the professor's chest.

"Hope you like it, Poofessor," the kid sneered on his way past me.

I jammed my foot into the aisle far too late to catch him on the ankle. Why must college freshmen be so immature?

Honey-senpai cleared his throat, mumbling something that sounded like a thanks to the kid on his way out the door. Then he bent to retrieve the paper airplane which I assumed contained that kid's essay. I grabbed the one good strap on my yellowed canvas backpack, scooping my own printed one off the desktop, and sauntered down the risers to the desk at the front of the room. He had unfolded the plane and was smoothing out its creases by the time I got there.

"Hey, Honey-senpai," I greeted, enjoying the way pink touched his ear tips at the nickname. "I can't wait to see what you think of my essay, sir."

The sad part was that he probably mistook my cute nickname for bullying him instead of the flirtatious teasing I was going for. After all, what college professor thought of his students in that way? I mean, don't get me wrong, I've heard plenty of stories about those coy young adults putting out just to pass a class. That wasn't what I had in mind for Honey-senpai. Not even close. He was like the man of my dreams stepped right out of the screen of my favorite Nanacury storyline—the only fandom that mattered—though much kinder than Trepedatious Nation ever was in his

glory days. Then again, Honey-senpai could be the hero in my very own Nanacury fanfic. It'd been a good long while since Hallowed Wanderer had a love interest. Most times I focus on writing plot driven stories these days. But that's beside the point.

Honey-senpai cleared his throat again and finally raised his green eyes to my face. The silence had stretched between us probably much longer than he'd found comfortable. It didn't bother me one bit. I could stare at his face all day. By the green eyes, I could only assume he was Japeshese-Weinadan like me instead of full blown Japeshese. My dad would approve of that relationship. Well, maybe if he wasn't currently my professor.

"Mister Yuzuki." Honey-senpai swallowed hard like he really needed a drink. "I told you before to call me Professor Hachimitsu." He held out his hand for the paper.

I highly doubted that any of his students ever called him *Professor Hachimitsu*—his last name is where I got the idea for the nickname, FYI—but none of the names they did call him were very nice.

The rest of the students had filed out of the room by that point, each leaving their own essay in a literal heap on the edge of the desk nearest the door. The one on top was actually a crumpled ball of paper. At least it hadn't been used as a projectile as the plane had. Most of the students thought it was ridiculous for him to require printed submissions. All of my other professors accepted assignment submissions through the learning management system only, so I imagine not many

students had their own printer. And what a pain it must be for them to go to the library to print a paper for one professor. By the way, the classroom Honey-senpai teaches on Mardi and Vendredi? It's in the library. So just show up to class five minutes early instead of ten minutes late and problem solved.

"Here you go, sir," I said and pressed the paper into his waiting palm. My fingers lingered a little longer than necessary to make the exchange, causing that pink flush to stain his cheeks too.

"Um, I am sure I will appreciate it..." he said.

"I think it's my best one yet." I hiked the backpack higher on my shoulder, not wanting the interaction to end but knowing that all good things always do.

"You are easily the best writer in all of my classes," he murmured. He gathered the rest of the papers towards him and set about straightening them into a presentable pile.

I wanted to tell him about my fiction writing. And to gush about how I always put the most time into completing his homework. But before I could, my phone vibrated in my pocket with what I could only assume was an incoming text. So instead, I bowed formally and said, "thank you, sir," before hurrying out the door. At least I'd lingered long enough to make sure no other students were in the room with him. He'd been humiliated enough for one night.

As I started down the three flights of stairs to the library's first floor, I whipped my phone out of my jean pocket.

U coming to OV? Harcourt's text read.

The screen showed near to eight-thirty, so I was late to my squad's pre-con strategy session. But of course they had to have expected that to happen when we'd scheduled the meetup on a night I had Honey-senpai's class. I jostled into a woman climbing the stairs at the second floor landing as I pounded out "*b thr soon*" as my response.

This would be our year to win. Our squad, Keep the Lights On, would finally realize our full potential as the villain squad we were always supposed to be.

Once I pocketed my phone again, I took the stairs two at a time. I waved to the girl manning the circulation desk. She was a member of the Gloaming University NanaClub, a group dedicated to the fan-following of the Nanacury franchise. She saluted me in response.

As I crossed the campus, I was walking on cloud nine. Despite having wanted to get as far away from Louana as possible when I'd graduated high school and completed my gap year, it had been the best decision of my life to stay home and attend Gloaming. The gulf was warm, and I did like the beaches but even more so was the NanaCon that occurred every year right here. I'd been attending for eight years, ever since I was eleven, and started playing the quest game as soon as I was an eligible thirteen-year-old. It was a tradition I would've hated to break.

By the time I entered the student lounge, the three other members of my group were already gathered, relaxing on the comfiest couch and two of the

armchairs. I dropped onto the empty seat of the couch next to Harcourt.

“Bout time,” Harcourt said as he continued to scroll on his phone.

Krispy clenched a wig head between her thighs, styling long green synthetic hair. “You got our reg in, right?”

“Yeah, months ago,” I said. “I picked up our badges this morning. We gotta get our character submissions in by Mercredi. So I thought we could talk about that.”

Krispy gestured towards Harcourt with her scissors. “What do you think this is? Harcourt was planning on doing Fuzaisuke.”

“You might wanna reconsider the color of the that.” I grinned like a complete goof. Well, probably more like the derpy look present on all of the kona I’d ever seen in the franchise. “Because Keep the Lights On is a villain squad this year.”

Aiden gasped from the armchair across from Krispy. His fingers mashed buttons on a handheld gaming device. “KLO has finally gone to the dark side, rest our souls.”

“At least now we can finally go as the *Light the Way* villains,” I said. “I still have my Trey Nation outfit.”

Krispy frowned and shoved the wig head onto the coffee table. “Guess that means no Fuzai for you, Harcourt. It wouldn’t be canon,” she said and blew across her scissors like a smoking rocket launcher last generation’s main hero Slifer used to fight evil. “Since we’re talking *Light the Way*, I’m doing Flint.”

“You can’t be a kona,” Aiden said. “Do they even have stats for kona?”

“I don’t know.” Krispy started picking at a loose thread from a hole in her jeans. “But I always thought it would be cool to be a candle.” Her eyes glossed over the way they always did when she was building a cosplay in her head. Even if she only had, say, two full days to put it together, I knew she’d rock it.

“Seriously?” Harcourt looked up from his phone screen, which now showed an image search of *Light the Way* characters instead of the news articles he’d no doubt been doomscrolling. “Fine, but if she gets to be a kona, I want a character from *Henchmen*. I don’t like Trudge, and we all know Senri is taking Trey.”

Krispy puffed out her chest. Argument won.

“Long as it ain’t Koji. We don’t need a fire-based Aurunt character around with the damn candle.” Aiden dropped his gaze back to the video game. The faint lyrics playing through the device’s speakers indicated that he was working on one of the games in the *Mirror; Mirror* storyline. Everyone knew that *Mirror; Mirror* was basically an otome game with little business to begin with in the Nanacury franchise. The Yields were basically vampires with cults. I never understood why Shotaro Nakamura decided the franchise needed a vampire harem—or is it a reverse harem?—storyline.

“I was thinkin’ the ice-based Lish character Toya,” Harcourt said. He jabbed a finger towards the video game. “You aren’t embarrassing us by picking one of the MM characters neither. That’s worse than a goddamn candleman.”

“Candle-creature,” Krispy said, rejoining the conversation long enough to defend her character. “The kona are agendered.”

Harcourt swatted a hand in her direction. Not important.

I finally pulled my notebook and a pen from my backpack and flipped to the first blank page. “I’m Trey, Krispy is Flint, and Harcourt is Toya.” I scribbled down the names as I spoke. “Who are you going to be, Aiden? And I don’t care if it is *Mirror, Mirror*. You do you.”

“Does MM even have hero and villain status?” Harcourt grumbled, flicking his finger across his phone screen. The search switched over to cosplay photos of Toya Togainu.

Aiden shrugged, hunching lower into the armchair if that was even possible. “Whatever man,” he said. “I’ll just do Trudge. Trey and Flint need their sidekick.”

Krispy gagged, but Aiden didn’t seem to see her.

“You sure about that, Ai?” I let the pen hover above the blank spot by Aiden’s name. “I mean, you could count Kelsey as a villain, right?”

“He could, though Stoker is more the villain type. Really, Kelsey is just misunderstood. He wants what’s best for Vallis, that’s all,” Aiden said.

“Does it matter?” Harcourt grumbled, thumb scrolling through the image search results.

Aiden shot him a glare. “Anyway, Trudge is fine,” he said. “I have a light blue wig and some blue clothes that could work.”

Jotting the name down, I said, “Suit yourself.”

“Hey, you know this means we won’t have to go against those fucking Diluvacious punks this time, right?” Harcourt said. He shivered hard enough that it vibrated the couch between us. “I can’t believe they made it all the way to NanaCon Koiyo last year only to lose. At least if we’d made it that far, I’d hope to not be losing.”

Krispy’s hands balled into fists like she wanted to smack him in the face as all henchmen deserved at one point or another. “We have to win something first, dude,” she growled. “Six years of straight losses is not impressive at all.”

Harcourt enlarged one of the photos on his phone. He turned the screen to face me fully. “Think I could pull that off?”

I shrugged, barely glancing at it. “We were kids when we started, competing against adults who’ve probably been doing it longer than we’d been alive. You try concentrating on the best moves with your conservative mother hovering just over your shoulder.” My voice hitched on the last few words, and I tightened my grip on my pen. But I left the tear in my eye, unshed.

“Y’all think we have a shot this year?” Aiden asked, fingers flying over the buttons. How did he have so much button mashing in an otome game?

“Dilu-fucking-vacious won’t be a problem,” Harcourt said, “but whose to stop Senri from getting some grandiose idea in his head that he needs new content for his fanfic?”

I frowned but dipped my head in acknowledgement. Okay, so maybe I didn't always play the game to win. Sometimes, I'd latch onto one of the minor and often irrelevant details of the quest scenario and spin it into a grand adventure for Wanderer to conquer. But you don't keep a fanfic going for ten years straight without some way to get new content.

"Senri," Aiden said sternly. His fingers had stilled on the game device.

I lifted my head to find all three of them staring at me intently much like I was a washed up henchman who spilled ecto-slime all over the floor he'd just finished polishing. And subsequently the most powerful Legerit, Antediluvian, had slipped right on it and faceplanted. Our record of six straight losses sure felt like a faceplant right then.

"Alright, alright," I said, holding up my hands in surrender. "I promise that I will focus on the scenario this year."

"And?" Aiden prompted.

"And that I won't think about Wanderer or anything else at all when we're in game mode," I said. "I will be Trepidatious Nation and no one else."

My three friends nodded at this promise, so I sighed heavily. This was going to be a challenging year.

"Here's to hoping we get paired with a rookie squad!" Krispy added, hefting her ever present vanilla latte in toast.

I raised my pen in solidarity while Harcourt offered his phone and Aiden his gaming device. We clicked

them together, and Krispy tossed back the rest of her latte. Aiden and Harcourt returned to their devices, leaving me to stare down at the notes I'd scribbled. I hated to think what would've become of KLO had I actually followed through with my plan to skip town for college. Sure, there were plenty of suitable students among the members of Gloaming's NanaClub. Even our faculty advisor, who was a graduate professor in the language arts college, would've gladly taken up my mantle the way Swiftstrike Symphony had gracefully accepted the leading hero role when Slifer'd been retired. He'd told me once that he'd taken a squad years before. But it was hard to imagine this group pulling anything off, let alone a victory, without me to guide them. If I could just stay focused for once.

After slamming the notebook closed, I tucked it back into my backpack. Krispy was the only one paying any attention to me now. She smiled as she watched me stroke the worn cream-colored canvas nearby where I'd drawn a purple, pink, and red rainbow with permanent markers. I returned the smile and stood, slinging the backpack over my shoulder. I had to get home and email our selections to the con staff.

We wouldn't be able to see the scenario until the first session so there was nothing more to be done. I quietly bid my friends good night and trekked home.

Chapter Two

Kohaku Hachimitsu

The light was already off in the classroom as I fumbled my laptop and a stack of student essays into my leather briefcase. One of the freshmen passing by in the hallway had thought it'd be hilarious to leave me in the dark. At least the only thing I had dropped was my pen. By the time I managed to cram that into my bag too, hunger gnawed at my stomach. Lunch had been long before the miserable three hours I had spent instructing my Rhetoric II class.

Earning a teaching fellowship was supposed to have made my life easier, providing me with housing and income while I finished my graduate thesis. Shaking my head, I gathered my briefcase off the floor and hurried out of the room. The hallway was empty, and thankfully Senri was long gone. Still, I could not scrub the freshman's eager expression or warm tone from my mind.

Senri was the only redeeming quality of the fellowship, with his tight t-shirts, dark brown almost black hair, and green-blue eyes.

Quiet chatter echoed down the corridor from a cracked doorway. Not wanting to disturb a private conversation, I turned towards the opposite end of the hallway and walked around the long route to the elevator. The car was already waiting on the third floor, and so no sooner had I pushed the down arrow, the door

opened. As soon as I climbed on, I jabbed the “door close” button, not in any way inclined to share the ride with a stranger or, more frighteningly, one of my students.

A few hours remained before the cafeteria closed and I had no more classes for the day—but not the week—so I figured I could grab some dinner before forcing myself to concentrate on researching the role of the tragic hero throughout pre-modern literature for my thesis. When I exited the elevator, I kept my head tucked low to stare at the floor in front of me all the way to the library door. It sounded like the woman at the circulation desk called out to me, perhaps just to say good evening, but I pretended not to hear and pushed into the warm evening breeze.

As I started across campus, one of the history professors from the nearby archival building materialized from the darkness and fell into step beside me. Most nights the sky cast enough light on the deep shadows on this part of campus, but when a bit of clouds blocked the moon like tonight it was difficult to see.

Raver encircled my shoulders with a languid arm. “Long day?” he asked, steering our footsteps towards the cafeteria.

I allowed him to guide me like a newborn calf. “I just do not understand how professors handle freshmen all day.” Raver was not quite a friend, but being one of only a handful of professors whose hair was not as silver as the car they drove made him worth sticking near to.

“Most of us have a mixture of ages in our classes.” He pulled the door to Dusk Hall open and ushered me inside. “Either that, or we’re adjuncts. One to two classes a week is tolerable.”

“Adjuncts, right.” I followed Raver up the stairs, Gloaming University’s gym encircling us with glass that overlooked a row of weightlifting machines. The only reason my parents agreed to my pursuing a literary degree to begin with was due to the idea that a college professor shined favorably on our family name.

By the time we reached the top of the stairs, I was panting and huffing. The cafeteria doors hung open on the left, which Raver charged towards, and the student Ocean View lounge sprawled out on the right. Any remaining sunlight had faded outside the panoramic glass panes, sun dipping below the lapping ocean waves, but a few students still occupied the plush couches or the tables and chairs. Before I had managed to catch my breath completely, Raver swept back up to me, grabbed my arm, and dragged me over the threshold into the cafeteria.

“Good evening, professors,” the student employee greeted. She hid a snicker behind the computer screen.

Raver already had his wallet in hand and offered her a few bills. When I started to fish for my own, he produced another bill. “It’s on me today,” he said.

Mumbling my thanks, I trailed after Raver, nodding politely to the student. He wove through the scattered tables and excited students to the wall opposite the door. This side also had panoramic windows, but it overlooked the Fainweal city center opposed to the

beaches on the gulf. Mostly it had a clear view of the tallest skyscrapers and their mirrored windows. Large, green-lighted letters at the top of the nearest one spelled Valet Hotel.

As we neared the windows and the line of crescent shaped booths there, a woman poked her head out of one and waved to Raver. He stuck up a hand and changed course. "Care to join us?" he asked over his shoulder.

I scanned the nearest tables as we passed. If they were not crammed with students, they were covered with messes that the cafeteria staff had not managed to clean up yet. Sitting with a few professors seemed far preferable, though I had been looking forward to a quiet dinner after the disaster that had been my last class. Besides, Raver had paid my way, so it would have been too rude to refuse.

"Sure," I said as we circled around to the front of the booth. Two women were already seated there, mostly empty plates resting on the table before them.

Raver shoved me towards the booth. One of the women shifted closer to the other to make room. I slid in next to her, placing my briefcase on the bench between us.

"I'll grab us something," Raver proclaimed before walking away.

"Wait, I—" I started but Raver kept going.

"Hey," one of the women said. "I've seen you around campus. You an adjunct?"

No, and I never intended to be, family name be damned. Shaking my head, I said, “No, I am a graduate student teacher. My name is Kohaku.”

“Bethany,” the farthest woman said. “I’m in the history department with Raver. This is Carroll. She teaches psych classes.”

“Pleased to meet you,” I said because I did not know what else to say.

Thankfully Raver returned with two plates before the conversation needed to go farther. He scooted in on my other side, dropping a cheeseburger and fries in front of me. The plate he kept for himself boasted a hotdog and chips. He did not bring drinks.

“Now that you’re all best of friends,” Raver said, “let’s get down to business.”

The two women chuckled. I bent over my briefcase to pull out my water bottle. At least I had filled it before my last class, so it still had plenty in it. Setting it on the table next to my plate, I eyed the burger. He was lucky I am not a vegetarian.

“What are we going to do about this weekend?” Carroll asked. She picked at what remained of her salad, pushing lettuce around with her fork. When she found a cherry tomato, she speared it and shoved it into her mouth.

Raver took a bite of his hotdog. “Gator’s not in *that* poor of condition, right?” he asked without bothering to swallow. Or chew, really.

My ears burned at the sound of my thesis advisor’s name, so I continued to stare at the cheeseburger instead of trying to eye any of my strange dinner

companions. With a less than humble growl, my stomach demanded the carbs so I popped a fry in my mouth. The burger would have been too distracting to the conversation I had no business being a part of. As much as I wanted to know how these three knew Gator, I did not dare venture to ask.

Bethany gave an airy laugh. “I was texting him this morning,” she said. Though her blond hair could have been dyed, the taut skin around her mouth and eyes told the story that she was nowhere near Gator’s class in age. I had thought all tenure type professors looked down their noses at adjuncts and student teachers like us. “He’s definitely not going to make it to the opening ceremony. If we don’t have a fourth before then, we’ll forfeit our registration.”

“Lord knows there’s plenty of groups on the waiting list,” Carroll added as she put her fork down, apparently deciding nothing left on the plate was worth consuming. Most of her green hair was up in twin pigtails on either side of her head; coupled with her pudgy face, she could have passed for a middle schooler in the right setting. Definitely not a curmudgeonly tenure-type either.

“I figured as much.” Raver clapped me on the back with his broad hand. His dark hair was long, framing his sharp bronze cheeks and hooked nose. “That’s why I brought this guy over.”

“Excuse me?” I nearly choked on the fry I was swallowing. Gator and his gray hair most certainly looked down his nose at fellowship professors like me. Whatever a man like that had left behind in favor of hip

replacement surgery was certainly not anything I wanted—or needed—to be a part of.

Bethany leaned over the table to eye me, plunging neckline showing more cleavage than was polite. She was probably the woman of most men's dreams. "You know Nanacury, right?"

It was hard not to. A lot of the students had been parading the fandom around since I had first walked into a classroom as a freshman myself. From what I could tell, it was a classic good-versus-evil collection of books, video games, movies, anime, and manga featuring brightly colored characters and secret identities. When I had first seen that its creator had hailed from Japesh, I had taken a passing interest in it, but once my first semester of college was off and running, I became too buried in being a good student—and now grading papers along with Gator's lashing tongue—to pay any more mind to it.

"I have a... cursory knowledge of it," I said slowly. Then I decided that this would be a good time to please my stomach, so I grabbed the burger and took a bite too large to speak through.

The answer seemed good enough for the group. "NanaCon starts on Jeudi and we registered for one of the quest game slots," Bethany said. "It's like super hard to get in, and you must have a team of four to participate. So with Gator laid up, we're down a player."

I continued to chew my burger, so Raver spoke before I could respond. "I checked your schedule. None of your classes overlap with the opening ceremony or

the session times,” he said. “And you have a couple of days to put some kind of cosplay together. It doesn’t have to be extensive. A wig and some clothes from the thrift store would be fine. Masks are optional so you don’t have to worry about that if you don’t want to.”

Cosplay? I would rather bury my head in the sand in a desert with no one around to see me do it than put on a costume in public. Heat flared up in my cheeks as I swallowed. I did have to admit that the idea of this quest game was too interesting to ignore. Would it be a live action story that we would have the opportunity to spin? Though I had heard of tabletop roleplaying games—one of my old undergraduate roommates had been running a long distance campaign over video call—and had often been intrigued by the idea of assuming a persona to conquer the world or whatever it was the heroes quested after, it wasn’t something I had ever been able to try myself. My parents’ Japeshese honor prevented me from exploring it, assuming it would do nothing but bring shame on the family name. This was the state of Louana, however, and my parents were tucked safely away in Iohna, a state one thousand miles away.

“Well, what do ya think?” Carroll leaned forward now too from Bethany’s other side. Her overlarge bosom rested in the remnant of her salad but she did not seem to notice.

I wrenched my eyes to her face, instead of concentrating on the area of her blouse collecting salad dressing stain. “What is the scope?” I did so hope that

Carroll knew how to properly treat the stain so as to not ruin the garment.

Raver was quick to answer. "We registered as a hero squad, so we'll be pitted against a villain squad. We're all given the same scenario and then a series of actions to pick from that will change the course of the game," he said.

"Like a live action video game," Bethany added, giving Carroll a nudge. Both women stood before Carroll sat back down. Bethany stretched, arching her back in a way that lifted her shirt and accentuated her jewelry studded stomach. "We're meeting at the coffeehouse next to Crescent Hall tomorrow morning to do the final hashing out of characters and go thrift shopping for cosplay afterwards. I hope to see you there." She winked and grabbed her purse from the bench next to Carroll. "Right now, I need to teach a class."

Well, I could have had *her* schedule.

As Bethany left the table in silence, I took another bite of my cheeseburger. Before studies had consumed my life, which would be about middle school age, I had enjoyed video games once in a while. Despite what my parents wanted to believe, I was drawn to the study of literature due to my love of stories. This quest game sounded like a real live story that I could become immersed in. I could be that someone else, someone likely worlds more interesting than Kohaku Hachimitsu.

Right then, that sounded like the best thing that could possibly happen.

“So what do ya think?” Carroll asked again.

“No one will know it is me right?” The last thing I needed was to run into one of my freshmen. The relentless buggers would taunt me with it for the rest of spring semester.

“You can write whatever name you want on your con badge,” Raver said through his last bite of hotdog. “The game moderators will address you by your character’s name.”

Swallowing, I took a chug from my water bottle. I glanced first at Carroll and then at Raver before focusing on the brightening moonlight reflecting off the Valet. “What time is the meeting tomorrow?”

“We go at nine o’clock because most of these college bums don’t roll out of bed that early,” Carroll said. “So we get the space to ourselves.”

“Guess I will see you there.” I wanted to get up with the words, dump my plate, and leave, but I had no viable excuse to provide as to why I needed to rush off like Bethany. Not that Carroll or Raver made any move to stand up either.

Instead, Raver clapped me on the back again. We spent the next hour or so reminiscing and telling stories about the last time Gator had organized the group to attend the convention’s quest game. I was shocked that it had been the old man’s idea to begin with. The stories were interesting to listen to and gave me some idea, at least—albeit not much—of what I could expect from this adventure. It was hard to picture a group of costumed college professors running around town

trying to attack the bad guys and beat them...to what, I was not sure.

The remaining half of my cheeseburger and the rest of my fries were cold by the time my watch beeped at me, signaling that I had only five minutes left before my self-imposed weeknight bedtime.

“Oh Lord!” Carroll jumped in surprise. “What on Colistro is that?”

I tapped the watch to silence the alarm. “I should go,” I said. “It is late.”

Carroll hit the button on the side of her phone, illuminating the screen to show the time was nearly ten. “Guess it is late.”

Pushing on Raver’s ribs, I said again, “I have to go.”

Raver stood and picked up both of our plates. “Get going then,” he said. “I’ll clean up here.”

Nodding appreciatively, I seized my briefcase and hurried out of the cafeteria. Eyes glued to the floor and my feet, I descended the stairs of Dusk Hall, not wanting to take the time to wait for the elevator, and flew across the quad toward my off-campus apartment.

About the Author

B. M. Valdez has been writing since they were a child in elementary school. Though they write a broad range of genres, including everything from dark fantasy to science fiction and even contemporary romance, Valdez considers themselves an author of queer stories above all else. Valdez is passionate about the LGBTQIA+ community, and their work always features a diverse cast of characters representing this community. *Relapse* is their first published novel.

When they aren't writing, Valdez enjoys spending time with their sibling playing video games, watching movies, or just generally having a good time. They can often be found covered in pet hair from their two dogs and two cats. They live in the Washington D. C. region of the east coast, though will always remember growing up on the Oregon Coast.

Without readers, B. M. Valdez would not have the opportunity to continue sharing their stories! They would love to connect with readers and can be found on the various sites below. You can find exclusive rough excerpts of other projects, short stories and chapbooks, character concept art, and more through these channels.

- bmvaldez.com
- [@b-m-valdez.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@b-m-valdez) on Bluesky
- B. M. Valdez on [Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/BM_Valdez)
- B. M. Valdez on vocal.media
- BMValdez on toyhou.se
- [bmvaldez.author](https://www.instagram.com/bmvaldez.author) on Instagram



College student Senri embarks on a villainous quest after class. Teaching rhetoric isn't Kohaku's dream so he becomes a hero. When their teams collide, they must LARP their way to victory or lose everything for the man they each love.

Daisukidayo, Honey-Senpai!

By B. M. Valdez

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