We've Only Just Begun

by MintChocolateLeaves

Summary

The world comes to a halt, everything torn apart, All-Might left as dust, Deku the last hero left standing. In this world the villains win. In a fit of desperation, Izuku turns the clocks back. In a fit of desperation, he rewrites everything.

---OR---

Izuku goes back in time to save the world and be a true hero. [The Time Travel AU that nobody asked for.]
I came up with this summary yesterday, and now this is my first step into the BnHA fandom!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

Izuku huddles around the fire, shudders in his blankets. It’d taken him hours to find enough fuel to keep the fire flowing, embers sparking around. Maybe he should be wiser, shouldn’t leave the fire burning in the middle of the street, but well… It’s cold.

And the smoke offers a suitable smokescreen for any villains that make their way toward him.

He should have picked up extra layers when he’d been inside the city, but well… the evacuation had begun, and he’d thought everything would be over quickly. He’d focused more on the innocent civilians – how couldn’t he? - and so the thought of staying warm had never crossed his mind.

He wishes Todoroki or Kacchan were here. They’d have been able to create fires quicker than him, would have created sparks and burned through fuel easily.

But they’re…

Izuku blinks until the word ‘gone’ fades from his mind. And he turns to the fire, holds his hands out until the fire licks against them, red welts forming on his already scarred hands. The pain doesn’t register, but he pulls his hands back regardless.

“All-Might…” Izuku mutters, rubbing his hands together. He massages his palms, resists a shiver. “I… I’m sorry.”

The street around him is silent.

And around him, the fire burns.

After

His coffee cup goes cold before Izuku even realises that it’s been placed in front of him. He’s been sat, staring out of the window for what feels like hours now, watching the streets as people stumble on their way to work and school.

Izuku looks down, wonders whether he should drink the coffee anyway, before tearing his gaze towards the waitress behind the counter. She’d given him an odd look when she’d arrived to see him sat outside the cafe, waiting for the shop to open, but hadn’t said a word.

He wonders whether this cafe gets a lot of ‘strays’ wandering in with a lost expression on their face. Izuku wonders whether she’s used to the coffee going cold, because when she notices his stare, she
leans forward across the counter and says, “there’s free refills, if you want more.”

“I’ve not drunk this one yet,” Izuku says, and he feels almost guilty as he stares back down at the coffee. “Is there a way you could warm it up?”

The waitress shakes her head, reaches her hand out across the table so her palm is facing his cup. Within a second, the cup is gone, disappearing within thin air. It reappears seconds later on the counter, coffee sloshing against the rim of the cup. Coffee stains the counter and Izuku tries not to think of blood.

“I’ll pour you a new one,” she says, and if Izuku squints, he can see the faint outline of kanji on her name tag. It sends signals down his brain, bringing up name after name, until eventually his eyes can read the kanji properly. Tanaka.

Unlike before, she makes her way around the counter, bringing the cup over. Her lips turn upwards in what appears to be a showman’s smile, but it doesn’t seem as accommodating as the other waitresses Izuku’s met in the past. It’s probably why she’s been given such an early shift – to others, it must seem off-putting.

Izuku finds it reassuring.

“Here you go,” Tanaka says, as she places the cup down on the table in front of her. “Make sure to drink it this time, okay?”

A smile – uncertain, but an attempt at least, makes it’s way to Izuku’s face. He says, “I just got a bit distracted. I’ll drink it this time, I promise.”

He doesn’t wait for Tanaka to leave before he reverts his gaze to the window frame. It’s rude, he knows, he should have thanked her for the refill, but his mind is too full, thoughts collapsing on one another like buildings falling into ruins.

Izuku slaps at his cheeks, shakes himself before his thoughts can take a darker turn and tells himself things will be different. Staring out of windows and being surprised at how… full… they are isn’t going to get him anywhere, so instead he tries to think on what he needs to do.

So.

Izuku doesn’t really know what exactly needs to be done. He’d not really had a plan when he’d found himself thrown back in time, hadn’t thought of anything other than an overwhelming desire for things to go back to the way they were. There’d been no plan, nothing concrete that he’d put together.

He lifts up his mug, and sips at the coffee. It scalds his tongue, but the heat wakes him up.

“I need to get a new notebook,” Izuku mutters to himself. He looks down at his uniform – U.A high’s, so at least he’s not gone back to middle school – and tries to think things over. He’ll need to form a timeline, things that he needs to change now he has another chance. A list of people to save.

But to form a timeline… well… doesn’t he need to know when exactly he is? From his reflection in the mirror, the distinct lack of scarring on his body, he can say it’s before his final year of high school. He’ll have to grab a newspaper on his way too school then, to see how much time he’s got before everything starts to go wrong.

“What else then…” Izuku mumbles, sipping at the rest of his coffee. He’s not sure. Even if he knows that there’s something he needs to figure out soon, he doesn’t quite know what.
Glancing at his phone, the clock signalling 7 o'clock, Izuku decides that he’ll formulate a plan after classes. For now, he just needs to survive a day of school without getting too overwhelmed.

By the time he steps into U.A high, Izuku realises he’s gone back to being fifteen.

He’s not thought of first year for a long time, but now that he does, it slowly comes to his attention that this is where it all started to go wrong. Bonds he should have been able to form, people he should have become heroes alongside…

Izuku shakes his head, looks at the date on the newspaper he’s picked up – alongside the notebook he’d found for a cheap enough price – and realises that it’s only the second day of the school year. He’s fortunate, he guesses, to have gone so far back, but at the same time…

Everyone already has some idea of what he’ll be like, don’t they?

And the test, God that test Aizawa-sensei had given them.

Brushing the thoughts from his head, Izuku steps forward, starts walking towards class 1-A. He bites on his lip as he goes, tries to keep any muttering to himself, but it’s practically impossible. Even if it’s technically only been a day since he’s set foot in U.A high, it’s been years since he watched it burn down.

The shudder that rises at the thought, is quickly suppressed.

He’s early when he opens the door to class, and there are only two people milling inside. Yaoyorozu sits at her desk readying herself for the day, and a few seats behind sits Iida. Both future class president and vice-president acting in a way that’s… so like them it hurts.

“Morning!” Izuku says, trading overwhelmed relief for cheery kindness. He’s glad he’s had the morning to prepare, somewhat, because he only has to blink away minimal tears at the sight of them. None fall though, which Izuku classes as win #1.

“Midoriya,” Iida turns at the sound of his voice, offers a nods in greeting. “You see the benefits to being early for class too, yes?”

Rubbing at the back of his neck is answer enough, through Izuku’s eyes. But, well, if he can remember Iida correctly, then he’d been a little dense when it had come to some things. Like people, and not exams.

“I woke up early,” Izuku admits after a brief hesitation, “and I guess being prepared doesn’t hurt.”

Iida nods, pushes the frame of his glasses up on his nose. The action is familiar, although it’s been tucked away in the far recesses of Izuku’s mind for years now. He says, “my sentiments exactly. Preparation is important for every task.”

Yes. And the lack of it got you killed.

Izuku offers a smile; It comes out wobbly, malformed, but still a smile all the same. It makes him think of how he’d been taught to smile in the face of fear – one of All-Might’s final lessons – because well, he’s sort of, almost terrified.

How couldn’t he be?

He knows what comes next.
Taking his seat, Izuku pulls out his blank notebook, grabs a pen from his bag, and starts to write. He mixes kanji with English, uses the code he and other heroes had once utilised to keep messages from falling into the hands of villains.

He writes of a world that ends.

The morning goes quickly. Izuku uses the morning classes to remind himself of the school curriculum. Mathematics and social studies seem easy, easier than the first time at least. Some elements of maths throws him off, because he’s not really needed to use algebra in recent years and - and really, why are they getting so in depth with algebra when it’s only the second day?

And then, it’s lunch, and Izuku blinks as he closes his class workbooks, glancing upwards. Uraraka stands in front of his desk, a nervous half-smile on her face. Her hair is short, as opposed to the long curls he remembers, and there is an innocence in her eyes that hadn’t been there when…

When…

“Hey Deku, Iida and I were wondering whether you wanted to sit with us at lunch?” Her carefree attitude is infectious, and within seconds, Izuku is nodding, standing from his chair and placing his notebook back into his bag.

“Sure,” he says, putting a hand into one of his pockets, fingers circling around one of the coins jingling in his pocket. Now that he thinks about it, he’s actually hungry, having only had the cup of coffee from this morning. Scratch hungry, Izuku’s starving.

“Great,” Uraraka says, grinning. She turns to Iida, tells him they’ve acquired a Deku – Iida scrunches his nose at that, doesn’t seem very happy that she’s transformed Bakugo’s insult into a nickname – and turns towards the door. “To the cafeteria!”

It almost seems normal.

They do get lost once, because Uraraka takes lead and they’ve only been students a day, but they do eventually find the school cafeteria, making their way towards the line of students all queueing for food. He glances at the day’s food, tries to keep up with the conversation without his mind whirring.

“I wonder what we’ll be doing for hero training today,” Iida says after a moment, and Izuku feels himself pause.

“I’m kinda curious about it too,” Uraraka says, taking a step further into the line. “What do you think Deku?”

Izu offers a smile, rubbing the back of his neck. He says, “something training our quirks… I’m not sure? Maybe some more tests like yesterday?”

It’s the best answer he can give. He can’t exactly openly say that they’re going to have battle training. That he and Uraraka are going to be paired together against Iida and Kacchan, of all people, where he will proceed to fight against Kacchan and lose.

Which, frankly, he’s not even the slightest bit ready for. Maybe physically he’s prepared, but emotionally… fighting against the allies he’d formed seems wrong, even for a training exercise. Fighting against the dead only makes him feel worse.

Still, he’ll have to, and even despite Izuku’s own feelings of awkwardness, he knows that it’s something he has to do. He’s going to fight against Kacchan, and he’s going to have to win this time,
if only to counteract his friend’s ego.

“Let’s hope it’s fun,” Uraraka grins.

After lunch, Izuku sits in class and briefly wonders whether he should have eaten at all.

He’s queasy, not that it’s something he hadn’t been expecting. He reckons it’s because he remembers who’s teaching this class, because while he wants to hear that voice, he can’t help but feel pain stab through him at the thought of it.

“I have–”

He’s here, Izuku thinks, and blinks away more tears. Happiness or sadness, he isn’t sure – the closest he can read into his own emotions is a merge of the two.

“–come through the door, like normal!”

All-Might.

He’s there. He’s… actually there. Izuku knows he shouldn’t be surprised, shouldn’t be this comforted at just the sight of the man, but he is. All-Might was the #1 hero for a reason, and as students chatter amongst themselves, Izuku finds himself wearing a grin.

It feels more real than all the other smiles he’s given so far today.

“Hero basic training,” All-Might says, once the chattering has died down. He glances out at the class, offers his signature smile, “the class that’ll put you through all sorts of special training to mould you into heroes!”

Heroes. Izuku will make sure they all live long enough to earn the titles. He looks down at his hands, clenches them into fists and steels himself. He can do this.

“No time to waste,” All-Might continues, oblivious to Izuku’s silent determination. If he notices any changes to his demeanour, then he doesn’t show even the faintest inkling – maybe he believes Izuku is readying himself for today’s training session. Or maybe he thinks that Izuku’s adamant about taking All-Might’s place as the #1 hero. “Today’s activity is this.”

That’s not quite it. Izuku doesn’t really care about stuff like that.

“Battle training.” All-Might declares.

The class seems animated with excitement. Eager.

I promise All-Might, Izuku thinks, this time I will save you.

Chapter End Notes

Come talk to me on tumblr at: http://mintchocolateleaves.tumblr.com/
OR you can just talk to me in the comments. Either's fine with me!
Do you ever go to write something, and have to split the chapter in half because it gets too long? Because same.

[[Also, I stepped out of a smaller fandom to be here, so the response I've gotten for this is overwhelming and you've all made me a very happy Mint. So thanks you guys.]]

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**Before**

*Embers from the fire crackle beneath his feet. Izuku stomps on them until all that remains is ashes, black soot staining the side of his shoes.*

“Jeez Deku,” the voice is feminine, and Izuku resists the urge to turn, instead leaning down to grasp at a single page that’s not burnt into embers. It crumbles beneath his fingers, joins the pile of ashes as if it’d not been holding on seconds before. “Reckless much?”

If lighting a fire in the hopes that anybody – hero or villain, as long as they’re alive it doesn’t matter who – will notice is reckless, Izuku supposes he’s the most reckless person alive.

“You’re back,” he says, deciding not to respond to the goad. He shifts, forces himself to turn away from the fire, the burnt remains of bloodied textbooks, “I was beginning to think you were dead.”

He receives a look that’s neither annoyed, nor particularly worried. Izuku thinks the look might be more exasperated than anything, but in an almost… fond way? He doesn’t know, it’s a lot more difficult than it used to be to read Uraraka Ochako’s expressions these days.

“You know, I’m starting to miss when the way you used to be so naïve.” Uraraka states, huffing as she jumps from some of the rubble. The street is a fairly open one, mainly because buildings have been levelled, leaving behind nothing short of ruins.

Izuku feels the same. He missed the smiles she’d worn once, the way they’d both been able to laugh when talking to their classmates. Now, most of their classmates are gone and they’ve lost the innocence they’d once worn like badges.

Now, Uraraka fights dirty.

They both do. It’s the only way to fight fair.

“We can’t afford to be naïve any more Uraraka–”

“I found it,” she interrupts before he can remind her that being naïve only gets everyone killed – (They’re living proof aren’t they? They know first hand). “I found Todoroki’s transmitter.”

They’ve been searching for it for weeks. Ever since they first heard word of the raids and linked them with Todoroki’s lack of response to radio transmissions. And now, finally, they’ve got it.
“Any sign of tampering?”

Uraraka shakes her head. The transmitter isn’t something easily found, a seemingly common object that any who don’t know it’s true purpose will overlook.

“Have you listened to it yet?”

She shakes her head again. Dropping the transmitted into Izuku’s hand, she says, “I didn’t want to listen to it alone.”

Understandable.

Izuku presses play.

**After**

Izuku refuses to wear the mask.

Maybe it had been cool the first time he’d been fifteen, for the thirty minutes it had lasted when he’d first worn it. But it’d quickly lost any cool-factor by the time it had been repaired and he’d been expected to wear it again. By the time he’d turned sixteen, it’d been cringe worthy.

Now, it’s just mortifying.

Instead of embarrassing himself – and by association *All-Might, (subtlety has never been Izuku’s strong point)* – he stuffs the mask into his back when he’s certain none of his classmates are watching. He zips up his bag with a hum to his voice, listening to his classmates gush over their costumes and kicks it under his desk just in time for All-Might to tell them which training area they’re going to for today’s class.

By the time Izuku has changed into his costume, racing towards training grounds, his mask is too far away for him to change his mind. He almost thinks that will be enough to stop people from commenting.

They still do though – comment, that is.

“Oh, Deku,” Uraraka says when she notices him jogging towards the group, readying himself with quick stretches. It’s odd moving in his costume again, the way it feels glued to his arms. It’s light, yes, but the colour scheme is too bright, almost as if it’s inviting trouble.

It is, but Izuku doesn’t need to be particularly happy about that.

Uraraka continues when she receives a small wave. “You don’t have a mask?”

Izuku rubs at the back of his neck, offers an almost awkward laugh. Shaking his head, he says, “I must have forgotten to put one in the design I put on my special request form…”

A smile. It’s almost refreshing to have one thrown his way, although the pat he receives on the shoulder is little more than alarming. Izuku freezes from the touch, attempts to override the instinct to grab Uraraka’s wrist and throw her to the ground.

Thankfully, they both remain rooted to the ground. After a second, Izuku’s shoulders loosen out. And Uraraka mentions nothing, which is nice, especially since she’s probably already noticed the way he’s stiffened at the touch.
Hopefully, she’ll weigh it up as the result of bullying. It’s the most plausible answer, after all.

“Either way, your costume looks really practical!” Uraraka says, her grin never once waverering. She looks down at her own suit, pulls a face. Izuku resists the urge to laugh, mainly because he doesn’t want her to think he’s laughing at her. “I kind of wish I’d been more specific on mine, you know?”

Izuku drops his arm, offers a grin. He says, “I kinda like it though, it reminds me of an astronaut.” He pauses, watches as her eyes sparkle. “I think it really fits your quirk.”

Uraraka scratches at her cheek, but Izuku can practically feel the happiness rolling off of her. It’s like waves – he hopes it’s infectious, because seriously, looking at some of his classmates they really need to just… chill out. “I didn’t think of that…”

She hadn’t the first time either. Her own lack of enthusiasm about her costume had lowered her own self esteem; To think that just a few words would make her happier. Izuku almost wants to punch ‘past him’ for not speaking the first time.

There’s not enough time for either of them to continue any further conversation – a small blessing, Izuku thinks – as All-Might’s voice booms from the front of the class. It doesn’t take long for him to explain the rules, indoor anti-personnel training is pretty straightforward after all. And soon they’re being sorted into their groups.

Like before, Izuku is teamed with Uraraka. They’re group A. The Heroes.

Nothing’s changed on that front. Izuku’s still got to fight Iida and Kacchan. They play the role of villain, get to go in five minutes before Team A.

As the others make their way towards the monitoring room, Kacchan and Iida making their way into the building, Izuku turns to Uraraka. They’ll have to take this five minutes to form a semi-coherent plan, in order to take both ‘villains’ down and steal away the fake nuclear weapon.

“Uraraka,” Izuku says, raking his mind for how it had gone the first time. It’d been years ago, and Izuku’s pretty sure the only reason he can still remember is because Kacchan hadn’t let him forget. It’d been embarrassing to lose against him the first time, and it had only been like that because he and Uraraka hadn’t worked together properly. “Let’s come up with a plan.”

Uraraka nods, passes him the building plans that they’d been given before hand. She says, “Yeah, we should memorise these right?”

“Yeah,” Izuku glances at the paper, memorises probable routes in and out of the building. The windows have reinforced glass, which while he could punch through them, he doesn’t quite want to risk making too much sound. “But really, we need to come up with a way to fight Kacchan.”

Uraraka glances up from the plans, offers him a grimace. “Bakugo’s the one who bullies you, right?”

“Yeah,” Izuku says, not that it bothers him much any more. It’s not really been at the forefront of his mind in recent years, sharing a bigger enemy and having to work together had kind of… forced Kacchan to mellow towards him. “But let’s focus on this…”

He receives a hesitant nod, which, is probably the best he’s going to get on Kacchan related matters amongst his classmates.

“Anyway,” Izuku says, “Kacchan’s probably going to leave Iida behind and seek me out to fight. So… let’s come up with a plan to fight him when he does.”
“You’re really serious about this Deku,” Uraraka laughs, but she seems excited. “I almost feel like we’re actual heroes.”

The infiltration into the building is quick. Instead of wearing themselves out by racing up the stairs to one of the open windows, they use Uraraka’s quirk to quickly float upwards. It’s a familiar feeling, but Uraraka gives him a grin after they enter the building.

“I’m surprised you don’t feel queasy,” she says, as they climb in through the window. Izuku sends her a strained smile – resists saying anti-gravity quirks are like roller-coasters, go on them enough and you become desensitised – and points forward.

“There’s lots of blind corners,” he says, bites into his lip, “so watch out for Kacchan, okay?”

Izuku isn’t completely sure how much of One for All he can use. Certainly not 100%, even with the mental understanding, he’ll need to strengthen his body before he can even risk it. With how tense he feels, and his own feeling of being mismatched – (his own balance seems slightly off, he’d been taller than this, more toned) – he can’t really use more than 15% without leaving himself injured.

Not that he’ll need 15% of his power though, inside a tight space like this one anything more than 10% will easily take a turn for the dangerous.

“Sure,” Uraraka responds, turning the corner behind him. Izuku feels almost guilty for taking the lead, but they’d quickly decided that if Kacchan was going to aim any ambush around him, then he needs to be in front as a form of bait.

(Izu hadn’t actually called it bait, there’s something about the word that he knows Uraraka won’t sit well with. Instead, he’s just… ‘diverting Kacchan’s attention.’)

They make their way up one flight of stairs before things become more… tense. Izuku wonders whether Uraraka feels it, the heaviness that seems to filter into the air, but by the continued spring to her step, she doesn’t.

He’d not been expecting her too – she’s not been weathered with many battles yet, doesn’t feel the slight shifts as they come across someone with malicious intent.

So while Kacchan’s attack isn’t so much a surprise to him, for Uraraka it seems to come out of nowhere. Izuku has to grab her arm and force them both out of the way of the explosion that follows from Kacchan throwing himself into the corridor.

“You okay?” Izuku asks as he glances down at Uraraka. The blast has thrown them both off of their feet, but while Izuku’s been quick to roll back onto his feet, she’s only just managing to pick herself up. She even takes a few seconds to brush dirt from her costume which – Izuku refuses to roll his eyes, but he certainly wants to.

“Nice dodging Deku,” Kacchan says, and it’s the first time he’s heard his voice today. Which means, it’s the first time hearing that almost-feral voice in months.

Okay, maybe not wearing the mask was a bit stupid. Izuku wishes he’d have worn it just to avoid the tears. Seriously, he tells himself, I should not be this emotional.

“I just knew that you’d come after me,” Izuku mutters, glances at Kacchan’s form. It’s not difficult to read into his muscles, but even without the insight to each of his movements, Izuku already knows how he’s going to move. Part of being a hero includes knowing how your teammates will act and reacting to make sure you can accommodate for their weaknesses, openings that villains might take
advantage of.

Sorry, Izuku thinks as Kacchan growls at him, rearing his right arm back, but I’m taking advantage of our friendship.

Izuku sidesteps, wraps both hands around Kacchan’s wrist. Jutting an elbow up, he swipes Kacchan’s feet out from beneath him, throws him over his shoulder.

As Kacchan lands, Izuku sidesteps him, so that he and Uraraka are on opposite sides. Not that Kacchan would ever consider running, but it gives them an advantage of sorts. Plus, if Izuku’s the sole focus of the fight, then it gives Uraraka a better chance at going undetected and helping him.

“I know your fighting style Kacchan,” Izuku says when his friend stands up, and maybe he’s goading him a little bit, but the more riled up he can get the other boy, the wilder his attacks will be. If he can break through any plan Kacchan has, forcing him to rely purely on instinct, Izuku will have the upper hand.

Or something like that.

Kacchan glares, “fucking shut up Deku. You’re pissing me off.”

Yes, Izuku thinks, that’s the plan.

Izuku blocks the next kick with both arms. Throws himself back into a roll at a following explosion, eyes flickering every so often back to Uraraka, floating above them waiting for just the right moment to turn her own gravity back on. She’s got her capture tape in her hands, pulled out, poised for an opening.

How much time do they have left of their original fifteen minutes? Still more than ten, Izuku’s certain of that much.

Another explosion – this one is weaker, there’s a lack of nitroglycerin stored back already – and instead of flinching away from the flames, Izuku throws himself towards it. It’s hot against his skin, but the heat dissipates as he flicks it away with a finger, using 1% of his quirk to brush the flames away so the fire fans out around him.

His finger still stings though, from the touch. He’ll need to make sure it doesn’t blister when they finish the training session, because while cuts and bruises are a pain, burns are always the worst.

This time, when he swipes Kacchan’s feet from beneath him, he grabs at his shoulders, using his momentum coming forward to tackle him to the floor. At this point, he calls Uraraka’s name, lets out a sigh of relief as she drops opposite him, holding one end of the tape and throwing the other end out to Izuku.

Izuku catches, stretches the tape out more, and by the time Kacchan’s risen to his feet, he’s entangled in capture tape. His face goes red, but Izuku glances at Uraraka with a smile, ignoring the swearing echoing the corridor.

“We caught a villain,” Izuku says, stepping towards Uraraka and glancing in the direction Kacchan had arrived in. “Let’s go steal that nuclear weapon, alright?”

Uraraka nods, and they leave Bakugo behind, captured as they race to the weapon room.

They use up more of their time simply making their way to the room where Iida stands protecting the
weapon’ but they still have roughly seven minutes by the time they get outside the room.

“We either need to capture Iida,” Izuku whispers to Uraraka as they peer around the corner into the room. There’s a distinct lack of objects, which means it’s going to be difficult for Uraraka to use her quirk. “Or we take the weapon.”

The weapon seems like the easier option. With Iida’s speed quirk, it’ll be nigh-impossible to corner him and capture him with tape. Izuku turns, ready to relay the plan to Uraraka when a large boom echoes through the corridor.

“Wha-” Uraraka glances up, just as Izuku glances over his shoulder.

Kacchan.

The second explosion is bigger. Fire doesn’t just explode, it engulfs the corridor. The shock of the boom leaves Izuku’s ears ringing, the explosion blasting through the walls. Izuku doesn’t have the time to throw himself into the room with Iida, and he is thrown backwards along with the blast, into the next room.

He hits his head on one of the walls, but the force isn’t enough to cause any more than a sharp pain. Maybe he’s concussed, but Izuku isn’t sure, there’s adrenaline pumping through his veins overriding everything else. No wait – Izuku’s pretty sure he’s got a burn on his shoulder, it’s numb.

Izuku stands up, glances around.

The world shimmers for a moment. And it’s not like Izuku wants to see red, but for a moment that’s all he can see. The walls are rubble and it’s like he’s back there, grey bricks stained with blood.

It splatters the walls, stains the floors. And there’s so much on Izuku’s hands that he’ll never be able to scrub it off, it’s under his nails and – and

Oh God there’s blood everywhere and – And –

And –

Where’s Uraraka?

“Deku, are you okay?” Uraraka’s voice echoes through the transmitter in his ear, worried. But it’s most certainly her voice.

When Izuku blinks, everything is back as it should be. Except, Kacchan stands in front of him, not glaring now. No, he’s glowering, eyes clouded with something akin to fury.

“What’s wrong Deku,” Kacchan growls, as Izuku glances up at him, trying to calm his own heartbeat, “you’re still alive aren’t you?”

“We caught you,” Izuku mutters. He’s quiet, but the sound carries, and Kacchan eye twitches. “This is just poor sportsmanship.”

“You think real fucking villains are just gonna step out when you fucking capture them?” Kacchan snarls stepping down from some of the rubble, “get real. You wanna be a fucking hero right? Act like one.”

Izuku clenches his teeth. Uraraka asks again whether he’s okay, but it’s impossible to find his words.

“ Fucking use your quirk this time,” Kacchan says, voice low and menacing as he takes another step toward him. “Because I’m going to beat you at your strongest, Deku.”
Chapter End Notes

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Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Sometimes, I look around and think, 'writing a fight scene will be a breeze' and then I spend hours distracting myself from writing so I don't have to realise it's not as easy as I pretend it'll be.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before

The message is scratchy, distorted like a disc that’s received to many chips – but the voice is indisputably Todoroki’s.

“February 19th XXXX,” crackles from the speaker, seven weeks before the current date. Just hearing the voice sends a sharp icy pain down the curve of Izuku’s spine. He bites his lip as it slowly gives way into a nauseating unease. “Bakugou and I have been travelling east for the last twelve days, en-route to Tokyo.”

Kacchan’s voice crackles from afar, and it hurts to hear him as well, mainly because his voice lacks it’s usual explosive acidity. Now, it’s just tired - “Just fucking get to it. We’ve got a lead, don’t drag it out.”

“I guess you’re right,” Todoroki says, “I’ll get straight to it. There’s someone living in Tokyo, and they have a time quirk.”

Uraraka takes a deep breath and glances at Izuku. He meets her eyes, offers a short nod – yes, this is bad, and the lead is something that’s going to quickly raise on their list of priorities. Any quirks related to time... The villains can’t get to them first, that would bring utter chaos.

“We’re uncertain as of yet what the quirk is,” Todoroki continues, and he seems distant, almost faraway, “but we’re currently tracking the quirk user. If the intel we’ve got is right, she’s staying above ground in the Shibuya ruins.”

There’s a loud blast in the background, followed shortly by curses. Izuku’s not sure who exactly asks ‘what the fuck was that?’ but he can’t say with all certainty that it’s Kacchan. Other swears enter the transmission, hissed curses that only serve to empower his unease, ice finding it’s way to his throat.

“It’s a raid,” Todoroki says, and it’s not for their benefit, but his own. The way his words slur together, attempting to spit them out and process what’s happening is one of the way’s he seems to cope these days. “Bakugou, we need to run, we can’t handle another attack-”

“You think I wanna fucking take another of those bastards down?” A hiss, “no fucking thanks.”

The connection wavers – or rather, it seems like it does. The transmitter may not be the best in terms of picking up sound, but it certainly picks up the blasts behind. And the slamming of feet against rubble. Hairs stand up on Izuku’s arm as the sound of explosions vibrate against his ears.

“The lead,” Todoroki shouts and he’s loud enough that Izuku hears him over the explosions, over
the racing of his heart as he realises what they're trying to escape. “A girl – young enough during the disaster that she wasn’t registered.”

Another blast – followed by heavy breathing as they both attempt to outrun raids, and the laws of physics that propel rubble towards them. Uraraka blinks, rubs ‘dust’ from her eyes.

“Fuck,” Todoroki breathes, “what was her name...? Nagisa something. Listen – we’ll meet you in Tokyo. So as soon as you hear this, go to Shibuya.”

Another blast, sound bursts from the speaker, an explosion of it’s own. There’s more shouting from Kacchan’s side, incoherent shouts that Izuku doesn’t even want to decipher. It continues for two minutes, until eventually he hears a ‘Bakugou, what-?’

“Fuck,” Comes the response, “freeze the damn thing, it’ll still send a fucking signal out. Todoroki, fucking freeze it.”


The feed cuts into static.

And then, nothing.

After

Izuku waits until the smoke has dissipated before making his move.

The pros: include being able to see Kacchan, and gain bearings of the room. Something necessary during fights, Izuku doesn’t want to lose simply because he’d not been able to see a loose brick laying on the floor. Seeing Kacchan also makes it easier for him to read his following moves, making wider predictions.

The cons: waiting means Kacchan can get nearer. And fire off more explosions.

Meaning more smoke, that he will have to wait to dissipate.

There are only so many ways around the smoke, he thinks, moving one foot behind him and bending his legs. The movement isn’t much, but it’s enough to ensure a spring to his step when Kacchan reaches him. Which, considering the way Kacchan wears his pride, isn’t something he’ll really need to worry about, long distance attacks are something he’ll use right now.

Izuku rakes his mind for ways to close the space without levelling the building. He might not be able to hear All-Might in his comm, but the expression on Kacchan’s face goes to say that they should avoid damaging the building any further, rather than openly destroying it. Not that he’d be able to do anything to the infrastructure without risking injury to Uraraka and Iida…

What to do…

First, shortening the distance. Izuku pushes himself forwards, lunges forward so that he’s nearer to Kacchan, dropping down towards the floor as fire erupts above him. Some of the fire catches his ear as he hits the ground, swiping out with his leg.
“You think I’d fall for that twice?” Kacchan growls, evading the kick with ease, sending another explosion towards Izuku. This time he needs to dive, counts the seconds it takes for the flames to burn out, leaving only smoke in response.

“No,” Izuku says, eyes glancing around the rubble. It’s moderately dull, there’s not a lot that he can use of the surrounding area, Iida must have taken objects from out here as well before Kacchan had blown everything up. Now, there is metal and bricks but that’s really going to help him in the long term. “I was expecting to fool you twice.”

Izuku’s gaze flickers between Kacchan and the exit. It’d be impossible to get past, not without leaving his back wide open. He crosses the idea out in his head, glances down and shakes his head. The movement is subtle.

Where else? There’s a mangled exit, and while Izuku’s certain he can get over to it, the door itself is charred, flames having licked away at it. He’d have to break the door down itself, snapping through the melted lock.

Most doors aren’t quite so sturdy, but this building has been built especially to hinder break ins. It’ll be simple enough to break through the door, but it’ll take seconds. With Kacchan’s reflexes, that’s almost as bad as heading to the door.

Unless…

His gazes drifts back down to the bricks. It’s risky, and he’s certain All-Might won’t find it very impressive, but it’ll work at least. And, if he makes sure to use only a fraction of One-for-All, he should be able to create a window of opportunity.

“Stop fucking around!” Kacchan shouts, sending another explosion towards him. This one is succeeded within seconds by another, bigger blast that sends Izuku off of his feet. Izuku drops, rolls until he’s certain he’s not going to breath in smoke.

“Okay,” Izuku mutters, and it’s almost like something shifts. He’s not been putting his all into the fight, Izuku knows, and maybe it’s plain to see. Maybe Kacchan isn’t annoyed at his presence, like usual, but at his lack of determination. “Let’s fight Kacchan.”

Izuku throws himself forward, eyes narrowing as smoke fills his lungs. It burns, but pain isn’t something he’s unaccustomed to. He’s had years to test his limits, Izuku hardly thinks a little smoke is going to do any heavy damage. Not with the way Kacchan ignites nitroglycerin. There’s smoke, yes, but it’s not thick black wafts, rather thinner wisps of grey diffusing into the air.

“Uraraka,” he breathes – these comms are more sensitive seeing as they’re sending live messages, and he can only hope that Uraraka can hear his voice over the explosion. He receives a ‘yeah?’ from the other side, and Izuku bypasses more fire by jutting his ankle sideways, stopping his movement before jumping backwards. “Can you get past Iida?”

Uraraka isn’t sure. Izuku isn’t sure whether that’s much better than a ‘no’, but he’ll just have to roll with it and hope she’ll follow through. He says, “does he have sight of the exit.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Good, we’ll trap him there. I need you to-”

He doesn’t have the time to explain in depth, purely because he being on the defensive is always more difficult than outright offense. His lungs are practically screaming by the time he’s finished his explanation – and it hasn’t even been a minute.
Not that they’ve got longer than a minute to explain. If he’s got the timings correctly, then there’s only really two minutes left of their original fifteen. And they can’t waste it on unnecessary explanations.

Curses meet his ears, but Izuku drowns them out.

He blinks once. Twice.

And after the third blink, he attempts to change his cognition. It’s impossible to change core values so simply, but Izuku’s mastered the art of convincing himself things are different to what they are – it’s an unwanted repression tactic formed from watching people die over and over.

For just a few seconds, he needs to change his thoughts. He’s not Deku fighting Kacchan; Izuku is a hero fighting a villain.

He glances at the rubble, dives towards it, hands scooping up a brick. What percentage of One-for-All will he need here? Five? No… four. Four will give enough time not to cause injury, but to buy him a small amount of time.

With a flick of his wrist, Izuku thrusts the brick towards Kacchan.

He propels himself forward at the same time, feints right as Kacchan lifts his arm, releases a large amount of nitroglycerin in an attempt to make the brick explode.

It doesn’t… explode as such. But the pressure of the blast, mixed with the heat, stops the momentum, making it drop without hitting him. The edges crumble away, leaving sand.

“Are you a fucking idiot?” Kacchan shouts, but Izuku’s hardly listening. He jabs an elbow into his side, circles around him and scoops his hand back down to the brick. Except, this time, all he gets is sand.

He throws it backwards – the mask should make sure none gets into Kacchan’s eyes, but his reflexes will still make his friend jerk backwards.

Izuku doesn’t take the time to glance back, eyes scouring Kacchan for any changes in his demeanour will only lose him time, so he darts towards the exit, taking any time for himself.

The knowledge that he only has seconds, and that he’s going to need to kick in the door, is something that doesn’t fully register. By the time he’s a meter away, he’s lifted his leg, ready to kick the door in. 4% of One-for-All is enough to send the door off of it’s hinges, a foot-shaped dent left in the metal as he plants his foot back on the ground.

No time to stop though, Izuku thinks, rushing down the small corridor to where the ‘weapon’ is being stored.

The door is wide, the length one wall, open with only a few pillars restricting movement. Izuku stops, and he waits. He can hear Uraraka in his comms, and if she’s acting alongside their plan, then she’ll be floating towards the weapon as he waits.

Footsteps are followed by muttered swears, the sound slowly raising in pitch until they become furious yells. Bakugou practically stomps like a child having a tantrum – which, really, isn’t that what he is? Izuku doesn’t know how but he’s going to have the find patience to deal with this – turning the corner.

“Deku,” he snarls.
Izuku turns, offers a small wave. He almost considers smiling, but he doesn’t. Instead he turns his shoulder, glancing in the room and says, “Uraraka, now.”

He’s pretty sure that she responds to him, but the vibration from his comm is drowned out by the loud bang that echoes from behind him. Now that he’s not looking at Kacchan, he offers a small smirk, shaking it away with a turn of his head.

“You’re cheating,” Izuku says, taking a step towards Kacchan. He pulls the capture tape from his pocket, narrows his eyes at his friend. “That’s not fighting fair.”

He doesn’t add that fighting dirty is the best way to fight, mainly because Kacchan already seems to know this. It doesn’t matter how you win, as long as no one gets killed and you don’t walk away with too many injuries.

“You the poster boy for fucking fighting fair aren’t you?” Kacchan hisses, “lying all these years about your fucking quirk, so you could get ahead and beat everyone else.”

And… Ah.

Yes. This Kacchan doesn’t know yet, doesn’t understand the legacy that All-Might has balanced on his shoulders, the future’s version of atlas, trying to make sure the world doesn’t break, as the sky comes crashing down.

Bakugou raises his hand, holds his palm out. He raises an eyebrow.

Izuku turns away from him again.

There are all of seven seconds before the explosion Kacchan sets off reaches Izuku.

In this time, Izuku turns, watches as Uraraka tries to grab the weapon. Iida grabs the weapon instead, as Bakugou ignites the nitroglycerin he’s stored back. And then, the future class-president, races towards the very exit Bakugou and Izuku are standing outside of.

Izuku shuffles to the right slightly, and sticks out his foot.

Iida trips. The weapon tilts forward, out of his hands, going forwards towards the end of the room – Iida skids across the floor, and it’s only thanks to timing of his fall that he isn’t exposed to the oncoming fire.

Izuku glances at the weapon – not enough time for him to grab it and run – and leans forward to tilt it slightly, it’s still falling, but now the angle is altered, slightly different…

The force of the blast Bakugou uses destroys another wall, fire melting Izuku’s suit until he comes to realise that this fabric just isn’t practical since it’s not flame resistant just yet. Izuku steels himself to keep standing, although fire licks at his skin, biting and tearing into him until he can feel little blisters rising like goosebumps against his skin.

By the time the smoke clears this time, the weapon is gone. A glance to the right confirms it – the tilt to the angle, combined with the momentum from the explosion had sent the weapon flying–

“The hero team…”

– backwards, right into Uraraka waiting hands.

“wins.”
Chapter End Notes

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Or you can talk to me in the comments below.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Fun fact: Everyone who’s left a comment or kudo so far is a basically a star and should be gifted with cookies. Thanks you guys. No seriously, how are there so many of you???

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

“They said they’ll meet us in Tokyo, right?” Uraraka says, breathless, grief already lacing her voice. Izuku knows well enough that denial will be her coping mechanism.

He also knows from the way she refuses to let herself cry, that her denial will be enough to get them killed. It’s how she’s gotten the scar that runs down her stomach, a pink raw line that stretches against her leg. He’s not going to let her refusal to accept their friends’ deaths lead them into any traps.

Not again.

“Uraraka. They’re not going to meet us there.”

Her resulting laugh is strained, laced with despair as she turns to face him. She stares – practically begging – for him to go along with the illusion she is attempting to weave.

“Of course they are,” Uraraka mumbles, and there is something akin to hysteria in her voice. It bubbles, rises from her throat, catching on the tip of her tongue. “They’re not liars, Deku. They said-”

“They’re not liars, no.” Izuku agrees, narrowing his eyes. He pockets the transmitter, bites the inside of his cheek and attempts to think a way around this revelation. It’s impossible – there’s only one outcome of those raids and they both know it. “They’re dead.”

Uraraka recoils at the statement, trips over her feet. Banging her elbow on a piece of rubble she lets out a yelp, alarmed as the rock digs into her skin. The second she recovers from the shock, she scrambles to her feet, glaring through narrowed eyes.

It burns. “We don’t know that.”

“Yes,” Izuku replies, “we do.”

Disbelief. Uraraka doesn’t look at him, but it’s present on her face, pure refusal to believe anything other than the best. Shouldn’t she know by now not to be so hopeful?

“They never came back for the transmitter,” he says, voice harsh, not the gentle tone he’d have used once. Maybe he’s just tired, maybe he knows he can’t be empathetic any more without tearing himself apart, piece by piece. When the silence stretches in on itself, he continues, “they didn’t come back for it. And Kacchan’s transmitter is offline too.”
“They-”

“They’re either dead Uraraka,” Izuku says, firmly, “or as good as dead.”

He offers her a hand, the closest thing to comfort he can give without leaving himself vulnerable. “It’s just us now. Let’s not waste their information.”

Uraraka nods. Takes his hand before wrapping both arms around his waist, resting her head on his chest. She’s shorter than he is – has been ever since Izuku had hit that one growth spurt in their third year at U.A – but it’s not just her height that makes her seem small. The news has hit, makes her shoulder curl inward.

“Tokyo then,” Uraraka whispers.

“Tokyo.” Izuku agrees.

After

The hero team wins.

Izuku deflates at the words. He feels them like a slap to the face, as if the sting is enough to bring him back to the present moment.

This is not a fight against villains, it’s a fight against children. A strategy game intended to make them better at fighting, to turn them from amateurs into full blown heroes. It’s not something to be proud of, even if Uraraka’s lips lift upwards into a grin as she jumps up and down in excitement.

Heroes don’t win, Izuku thinks, as he turns to Uraraka and feigns his own happiness. They always lose – because by the time they show up, something has been stolen, whether it be innocence, or valuables or… or life.

“The losing team is unscathed,” All-Might’s voice blasts through the speakers of the training building, something that leaves Izuku’s smile thinning into a sad smile, his eyes turning to the rubble around them. How long, he wonders, has it been since a battle has ended without severe injuries. “The winning team, however, seem to be out for the count.”

Izuku turns, glances over at Uraraka. She’s on her knees, trying to deal with the queasiness that comes with using her quirk too much. Other than that though, she doesn’t look injured. He turns then, glances at one of the surveillance cameras to where he knows All-Might must be watching.

“Oh no, Uraraka’s just feeling a bit queasy, she’s fine.” He sends a smile and gives the camera a thumbs up, before his expression falters. Then, he tilts his head, “…wait… did you mean me?”

Out of the corner of his eye, he watches as Iida stands up. The boy steps closer, a frown creasing his forehead as he makes his way towards Izuku. He stops in front of him, lips tight in a grimace as he narrows his eyes. Iida says, “of course All-Might is talking about you, you’re… you’re injured Midoriya!”

Izuku glances down at himself, at that is when it really clicks.

His suit has practically melted, he’s severely burnt, and the thing that’s been distracting him slightly, is his own pain as each neuron screams at the next, echoing the fact that he’s in agony. Well… not so much agony, but Izuku definitely feels it, and has to lock his jaw to keep from reacting.
Izuku waits a moment, counts to five, and then lets out a small laugh. He says, “I’m okay, really. Nothing a bit of ice won’t heal.”

The look he receives is nothing short of bafflement. Iida places both hands on Izuku’s shoulder, hesitantly, as if to avoid causing any further pain, before saying, “ice reduces swelling, but not to this extent… Midoriya… you need to go to recovery girl.”

Izuku supposes he’ll have to, but for now, he’s going to help Uraraka up.

“Oh,” he says, offering her a hand, the skin feels raw, but it’s doesn’t hurt too much when he pulls her up, so he figures he should be fine. “we did great.”

Uraraka sends him a look filled with only doubt. But she is standing, and so is Izuku – and even better yet, the only person actually injured is him – so he decides to negate it. He offers her a grin, pulls her out to where Iida and Bakugou are stood, waiting for All-Might’s grading verdict.

Last time, Iida had been the VIP of the match. Izuku doubts it’ll turn out any differently.

“No seriously,” he babbles, as they meet with their two classmates, “we couldn’t have won without your quirk Uraraka.”

Uraraka smiles, and the movement is shy. Izuku squeezes her hand, offers a smile, before they stop. He wonders how long they’ll have to wait for All-Might’s verdict, whether he’ll be conscious enough after recovery girl uses her quirk on him to watch the other matches his classmates will carry out. Probably not, he’s sort of… lacking energy today.

“I’ve come to my decision,” All-Might says, and his voice is a boom in their ears, too loud for their ear pieces to handle without leaving their ear drums buzzing afterwards. “The VIP from this match, is Uraraka!”

There’s a small gasp of air from beside him, and maybe Izuku has deflated due to this match, but Uraraka has practically inflated. She lets out a small laugh, uncertain, before turning to Izuku and grabbing both of his hands. She gets a little too close for Izuku’s liking, but her happiness makes it easier to bear, if only a little.

“I’m the VIP Deku,” she says, and Uraraka shakes him slightly in her excitement, “I can’t believe it. Me!”

Izuku smiles.

It’s not an unexpected result though, not if he thinks it over. Out of the two groups, only the Hero team had worked together. And Uraraka had adapted to each of Izuku’s plans with little confusion. Unlike the first time they’d fought the match, she’d been on guard too – well, mostly – not getting distracted or letting the situation run away with her.

And well – she’s unharmed too. If only a little sickly from the overuse of her quirk.

Her being the star of the match is only expected, but still, she glows.

Izuku thinks that maybe Uraraka hasn’t won much before. It’s almost sweet how much it makes her feel happy. Her expression is one that he wants to protect, the innocence, the pure giddiness she feels at being recognised by their teacher for having performed well in the fight.

*Izuku can’t let her lose that. Not again.*
“Yeah,” he says, and he feels heavy on his feet, pain making his vision blurry, “you’re deserve it, you know?”

He doesn’t hear her reply.

Everything goes black, and he faintly recalls the feeling of unconscious grabbing hold of him, but mostly, it happens in the time it takes to blink – milliseconds, and he’s gone.

He wakes to the sound of All-Might talking to Recovery girl.

They’re talking about him, about how he’s only been a student two days but has already been in the medical wing three times. Maybe it’s inevitable, Izuku thinks, he’s never been particularly good at escaping trouble without receiving at least one new injury.

He’s tired though, absurdly so. It’s a feeling that drags him down, makes it difficult for him to sort through his thoughts. It’s almost like he’s forcing himself to search through murky water for a penny, it’s impossible.

Instead, he blinks until his eyes feel less heavy. Glances around the white medical room. His arm is linked to an IV, and it’s itchy against his skin, but Izuku’s isn’t stupid enough to rip it from his arm. He hardly wants to bleed out, and he doesn’t have the energy to press against the hole in his arm until blood congeals and seals the puncture.

His arms don’t feel so burnt any more.

Which is probably good, considering the sting he’d felt. A glance at his skin shows that it’s slightly red – like a faint sunburn, but it’s not as severe as he supposes it must have been to make his pass out. Damn… that means he must have missed the other fights.

And he’d almost been hoping he’d be able to watch them this time…

It doesn’t matter, he supposes – after all, he already knows their fighting styles. Just not how much they’ve developed them so far. Maybe he should know, should remember, but frankly it’s been so long and most things about UA come back to him in a haze.

“Midoriya, my boy!” All-Might seems to notice that he’s regained consciousness, and he steps away from recovery girl – away from the scolding he’d been receiving for not teaching Izuku to use All-for-One without injuring himself – turning to his student. “You’re awake.”

And Izuku, barely conscious, finds himself muttering. “All-Might… It’s really you.”

All-Might coughs. He looks small too, when he’s living his life as Toshinori Yagi, unable to stay in the inflated body his fans know him to wear. It’s not a quiet small though, Izuku thinks, but rather a strong and determined small.

Izuku has missed it. Has missed being able to see his mentor without it being a memory he’s conjured from his head to convince him to keep going.

“Of course it’s me Midoriya,” All-Might responds. He looks confused for a moment, but it’s not overly worried. “Who else would it be?”

Who else indeed.

“Sorry,” Izuku says, and he smiles sheepishly, “I think I’m still half asleep. And it’s not until I fully
wake up that I convince myself this isn’t a dream.”

He’s not even been here a day and already the pressure is loading itself onto his shoulders. Izuku will be able to deal with it, he’s dealt with worse, but until then…

“It’s not a dream, my boy,” All-Might says, “you’re going to become a hero.”

Ah. Yes – he must be thinking that Izuku is excited about becoming a hero, that he thinks attending U.A high is just a dream. Which… well it was, once. Somewhere between then and now, it’d changed into something more desperate. The dream twisting into a nightmare until the only thing he’d desired was to survive.

“Yeah.” Izuku says, and he knows he should smile at this point, but he closes his eyes instead, tries not to grimace. “I’m going to be a hero, and I’m going to save everyone.”

All-Might doesn’t respond. He probably thinks that Izuku’s fallen asleep again. He doesn’t sleep though, remains awake listening to his breathing until Recovery girl wakes him up and tells him class has come to an end.

He has to grab his bag to leave for the day, but Izuku doesn’t think he’ll be able to do so rather quickly. He pulls half heartedly at the bandages around his wrists, something just to ensure the burns that haven’t fully healed yet won’t grow agitated, but it doesn’t offer any comfort.

Izuku’s classmates, he knows, will be waiting for him.

Last time, they had offered him sympathy for losing his match against Kacchan. Kirishima has offered to spar with Izuku until he felt more confident in his fighting technique, but he’d never really taken him up on it. Had felt far too embarrassed about losing. Now, he’s not sure whether he’d be able to actually say yes – not without letting them see the skills he’s picked up. Although… Izuku will need to reteach himself certain techniques, moves that had relied on instinct and quicker reaction times…

“Oh, it’s Midoriya!” Kirishima is the one who drags his attention from his thoughts, as he opens the doors. He looks impressed, as he leans forward, glancing at the smaller boy. “You’re fight was epic.”

Izuku offers him what he hopes looks like a shy smile. “…Yeah?”

“Definitely!” Ashido jumps in as he makes his way towards his desk, grabbing his bag. She fist pumps the air in excitement, offers a grin. “You dodge really well.”

“And those moments when he just went straight into the flames!” Tsuyu adds, joining the mini crowd around him.

“Oh yeah man,” Sato says, “I wouldn’t have the balls to do that!”

They introduce themselves after that, which… would have been useful if he didn’t already know them. Izuku rubs the back of his neck, and grins, feels awkward about the entire thing. He’d actually been trying to hold back… but had he still done too much?

“I grew up with Kacchan, that’s all,” he says. “I know some of his tells.”

*Some tells* meaning, all of the tells he’d had as a teenager.
“But still!”

Izuku tunes the praise out, and he grabs his bag. He interacts when it’s his turn to speak, but his mind is on other matters. Like Kacchan’s who’s probably leaving school already. And the home he’s going to have to step inside when he leaves the school gates behind.

“I’m sorry,” he says, waving his hand in what he hopes looks like an apology, “but I need to go catch up with Kacchan before he leaves. Can we pick this up tomorrow?”

His classmates seem very understanding – Uraraka states that they’ll have to work together another time, and Kirishima still asks if they could train together some time, and Izuku leaves the classroom behind feeling both happy and lonely at the same time.

First he needs to deal with Kacchan.

He finds him just outside of the school building. The other boy’s shoulders are slumped slightly, and he kicks at a pebble as Izuku calls his name, trying to grab his attention. It works, but Kacchan doesn’t turn to look at him. He stops walking though, and Izuku thinks maybe that’s enough.

Now, he just needs to think of what to say.

His quirk – something about that, he supposes. He can’t spend much time with Kacchan thinking he’s been fooled for years, so he should say something about that. And then, he should also mention the fight in a way that doesn’t sound boastful…

Ah, why is it difficult to deal with teenagers?

“Listen,” Izuku says, racing down the steps, nearing to Kacchan, “I can’t tell you much, because it’s not my secret to tell. But… I’ve not been lying to you – This quirk… It was given to me.”

Kacchan turns to face him. He glares.

Izuku thinks that it’s prompt enough to keep going. He says, “I only won today because Uraraka and I worked together. I wouldn’t have won against you by myself— a lie, but Kacchan needs a little ego boost after a loss like this, “so… next time, let’s fight just you and me. Okay?”

The glare deepens.

“Goddammit,” Kacchan growls, and if Izuku’s right, there are tears in his eyes. He decides not to comment on them. “I don’t understand what you’re saying at all. Gifted power? Listen, I lost to you today, but next time… I won’t lose to you again, got it Deku?”

Izuku nods, and Kacchan turns away, stomps down to the gates.

Now that he’s dealt with Kacchan – one difficult task checked off the list – he thinks over what he’s got to do next. The thought fills him with dread, the next task that he won’t be able to put off. He has to go home for the day. And he’ll have to pretend everything is fine.

He has to go home.
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Or you can talk to me in the comments below.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

I like this chapter. It's cute, it's nice. It rips my *fucking heart out*. Nah, I'm kidding, it's a nice one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

*Izuku isn’t sure how long it’ll take them to walk to Tokyo, but he does know that it’ll take days. They don’t have any quick means of travel – cars and bikes are useless with all of the rubble acting as blockades on streets – and while they could use their quirks, they can’t afford to use up any stamina with such a high risk of villain’s being around.*

*They need to have enough energy for a fight, if it comes to it.*

*So, it seems, they’re stuck with walking.*

*They’re headed East, making their way through sheltered areas that they can hide inside if any planes come flying overhead. The risk of raids is high in this area, although as long as they stay hidden during these moments, they planes fly past without creating any explosions.*

*That means risking cities and woodlands – it’s dangerous, because there’s the risk of running into dangerous animals and survivors scavenging for supplies, but it’s better than walking out in the open. It eats away at their time too, but neither Izuku nor Uraraka complain.*

*“We need to come up with a way of travelling through Tokyo,” Uraraka says, on their fifth day of walking. They’ve been going over what they can remember of Tokyo, the reports they’d received. Getting in won’t be the problem, it will be extracting the girl – making sure Nagisa gets out without any injuries.*

*They’re both exhausted, and while there’s enough light to continue walking, Izuku’s forced Uraraka to help him set up camp so they’ll have enough energy to continue tomorrow. They need the rest, after all.*

*“You’re right…” Izuku nods. He points towards a cluster of bushes, something they slowly make their way towards. They split up, circling in opposite directions so that if there’s anyone there, they’ll have an upper hand in the confrontation. No one’s there, so Izuku continues, “Tokyo is practically villain central these days, we’ll have to be discreet.”* 

*Uraraka pauses, crosses her arms. “Deku… what if this is a trap?”*

*Izuku has to stop himself from asking, ‘what if it isn’t?’ He knows it’s a lot put on their shoulders, but well – everyone else is gone, there is no one else they can transfer this weight over to.*

*“This is our only lead,” Izuku breathes instead, the two of them settling down on leaves and overgrown grass. “We don’t have much of a choice but to go ahead with it. Even if it is one.”*
Izuku’s quiet on the way home.

It doesn’t matter so much, seeing as he walks home alone. The quiet gives him enough time to watch the streets – safer streets now, than the warped version of Tokyo he’d been walking in shortly before his trip back – a soft smile on his face.

It’s overwhelming, just how different everything is. Not just because the buildings are intact, and there are actually children playing in parks and not huddled up in alleys trying to keep warm. It’s not the signs of safety that’s odd, but the streets themselves. Izuku walks home and remembers apartments where a small rundown supermarket is stationed, sees a mall where there’s empty office buildings.

Everything had changed before the villains had taken over, and even normalcy doesn’t seem normal, because he’s walking down streets he’d reminisced about once.

‘Hey, remember when the park was just a few slides and a tyre swing?’ Izuku doesn’t need to remember, because he’s looking at it again, thinking about how they’ll install a climbing wall for the more adventurous kids, something parents will dislike because there’s an element of risk alongside it.

Izuku thinks about risk, about the one’s he’s taking now. What if he ends up making things worse, or causes the deaths of people who had managed to survive as long as he had.

He thinks about what he’d been called, the last remaining hero, and decides he doesn’t want to hear it again. To hell with risk, he’ll make sure everyone survives, and he’ll do his best to avoid getting people caught in the crossfire.

By the time he climbs up the stairs to his family home, he’s determined again. He’s glad he’s been thinking about the future he wants to avoid, the risks he’ll be taking, because it means he hasn’t been dwelling on this – coming home.

Seeing his mother again.

He grabs his key from his backpack, waits until he hears the click that accompanies the door unlocking and enters the home he’s ached for, for years. He closes the door behind him, places his backpack on the ground, before hesitating.

Izuku takes a deep breath, slips off his shoes, and shouts, “I’m home.”

The response is immediate. His mother comes running from the kitchen, like she used to ever time he’d returned from school, and she greets him with the widest smile she can muster. Izuku’s glad he’s put his slippers on before she’d arrived, because he can’t look away from her.

Midoriya Inko stands in front of him, and she smiles as she says, “welcome home Izuku.”

She has not been able to say welcome home for years. Izuku’s lips part, and he’s certain he’s getting overemotional but who cares because this is his mothers. She’d… he’d lost her and it had torn him apart at the seams. He remembers the feelings of losing his friends, and even if he added it all together – every friend, every loss – it would never reach the same amount of pain that he’d felt when he’d heard the news.

“Izuku?” Inko says, and Izuku listens to her voice as if it is music, something he’s not heard in years. He moves then, quickly – so quickly in fact that it surprises a soft ‘oh?’ from his mother as he wraps his eyes around her.
“Mum,” he says, and his voice cracks. He tightens his hands around the fabric of her jumper, and feels relax under her touch, as she lifts her hands up to pat him on the back. “I… missed you.”

“Silly,” Inko says, and there’s a soft laugh, “I’m not going anywhere. Come on now Izuku, don’t cry.”

Regardless of her pleas, he does anyway. He considers telling her everything, there and then, but he can’t bear to steal the son she’s raised away, swapping him with an older, more scarred version. But… he also can’t bear to lie to her.

Izuku moves to let go, looks at his mother again, and resumes the hug. Now, he’s not crying, but sobbing, gasping in air as he chokes on tears, and regrets and words he’d never spoken because he’d thought he had time.

He’d considered himself lucky.

His mother had died in the initial villain take over, hadn’t been alive long enough to live through all the atrocities – he’d hated to think of his mother living in such a broken world, like his friends’ parents had. Seeing how stressed they’d been trying to ensure their families weren’t lost in attacks, taken as hostages…

Izuku quickly realises he’d lied to himself. Seeing his mother now, hugging her and seeing her smile at him again, well he would have made sure she’d stay alive, regardless of the stress he’d be put through.

“Izuku honey, what’s wrong?” She says, and Izuku finally pries himself off of her, standing awkwardly in the hallway as he looks at her. She’s got tears in her eyes too, she’d always been sensitive, and Izuku feels a wave of guilt flash through him like lightning.

The feeling is jarring.

“I had a bad dream,” Izuku says, and he wipes the tears from his face, only feeling faintly embarrassed, “that you were gone. I just… I don’t want to relive it you know?”

Inko blinks. She says, “oh Izuku, come here, I’m okay. It was just a dream, I’m not going anywhere.”

She gives him another hug, this one firmer, more certain. Then, she turns and says, “I was just making curry for dinner, do you want to do your homework in the kitchen while I continue?”

Izuku nods, and he follows her as she walks away.

He wipes away more tears.

He’s halfway through his homework – how do they have homework on the second day, it seems barbaric – when Izuku comes to a decision. So he can’t tell anyone about having travelled back from the future, not without putting that person at risk, or causing people to scrutinise what he says.

Not that he’d want to talk to them about the future. Seeing as it’s something Izuku’s going to ensure they don’t live, it’ll all become irrelevant anyway. But there are some secrets he can tell.

Starting off with his mother. He’ll tell her about his deal with All-Might, because then she’ll stop feeling so awkward about his being enrolled at U.A high. Plus, he feels almost angry at himself for not having told her the first time without having it practically forced out of him.
And then… he’ll tell her that he’s worried about what having this power means. He won’t be able to share the main burden weighing down on his shoulders, but his mother might understand a little more, and… and maybe she’ll overlook any strange behaviour that he exhibits.

Izuku nods his head.

He’ll tell her after dinner, and… and maybe he could spend the evening reading in his room, but Izuku decides he’d much rather sit with his mother and watch one of her terrible dramas on screen.

“Mum?” Izuku says when the drama goes to adverts. They’ve eaten their food – Yes, Izuku had cried eating his mother’s cooking again, but it had been overwhelming and frankly if he can’t cry around his mother than who can he cry around? – and Izuku had settled on the sofa beside his mother, drawing small doodles in one of his notebooks.

“Yes?” Inko responds, turning to face him. “Oh… Did you want me to bring out the diafuku, we could snack on them while we watch-”

Izuku pauses and decides that diafuku would be great, but it’s not what he’s after right now. He says, “maybe in a minute, but… I wanna talk about something important first.”

Inko nods her head, leans forward to pause the TV, and turns to him with her full attention. She says, “I’m all ears.”

“Ah… Okay how do I start…?” Izuku says, because he doesn’t know how to put it without it worrying his mother. He clasps his hands together and decides he should just blurt it out and deal with whatever comes next. “…I uh… well you remember when I said I met All-Might? Back with the sludge monster?”

His mother nods.

“Well… I asked him if he thought I could become a hero, even if I was quirkless.” Izuku knows he’s told her part of the story but he’d left the more important parts out. It hadn’t felt like a lie at the time, because he’d told her something, and something was always better than nothing. “And… he told me no.”

“Oh… Izuku…” She frowns, and he knows that she’s looking for some form of comfort that she can offer him. Izuku continues before she can come up with it. He does not need comfort from this conversation, he just needs to tell her the truth.

“But then… after I tried to help Kacchan, set him free, All-Might changed his mind.” Izuku says. “Well… I still think he thought people without quirks couldn’t become heroes, but he did say I could.”

His mother’s frown wavers, mixing with confusion.

“He said I could, because he could give me a quirk.” Izuku says. “It’s… it’s really strong, and I know I should have talked to you before I accepted it but I wasn’t really thinking. I just… well, it’s All-Might, you know? It’s just… this means that I’m All-Might’s successor. And… Mum, I don’t know what to do.”

Inko takes a moment to think. Her expression changes a few times, confused, to worried and so forth, but Izuku’s glad to notice that she never once looks angry. That, blended together with the fact that her lips finally settle on a soft smile, leaves Izuku feeling a rush of calm.
“What do you want to do Izuku?” She asks, because she’ll always prioritise his wants over anyone else’s. All-Might’s wish for him to become his successor… somehow, Izuku knows that she’d find a way for him not to become it, if he’d decided the pressure was too much.

“I…” Izuku hesitates, “I want to be someone All-Might can be proud of, you know? And… and I want to save people, everyone… anyone. I just don’t know if you can.”

Inko’s smile blossoms, she smiles toothily at her son, and Izuku wants to step forward to hug her again. He doesn’t have to move, she scoots across to meet him on the sofa and hugs him close to her.

“Oh, when did you begin to grow up so much?” Inko says, and then, as if she knows she’s getting too sentimental for a teenager, she laughs. “Honey, you can do whatever you put your mind too. Remember when the doctors said you had no quirk, you thought that meant you couldn’t be a hero – but… but look at you now Izuku, you’re at U.A high and you’re on your way.”

Izuku blinks. His mother squeezes him and when she lets go, she’s got tears in her eyes – again. She cries almost as much as he does, Izuku thinks. Well… as much as he had before the disaster.

“Every time someone tells you that you can’t do something,” Inko continues, “you prove them wrong. So… I’ve got no doubt in my mind that you could save people…”

Izuku feels tear forming around his eyes.

He lets them fall.

His mother plants a kiss on his hair, stands up. Then she says, “I’ll get the daifuku. We can snack together, alright?”

Izuku nods.

Chapter End Notes

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Or you can talk to me in the comments below.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Since it’s such a horrible day outside where I live, I decided to stay in and write this chapter.
(Not that I was going to go anywhere, anyway. But now I have an excuse to spend an entire day writing.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before

A storm leaves them unable to keep walking. Everything is rain, and wind, the blowing of dust as they struggle to see where exactly they’re walking. It leaves them safe from the continued raids – the planes can’t see them through all the rain and darkness spreading around them – but they’re still in danger from the cold.

The temperature seems to drop immediately.

One moment, Izuku is trying to use the tarp they carry with them to hold up the tent they’ll stay inside, and the next, the wind brings debris flying, the speed of the rubble cutting through the tent before he can even prop it up.

So they’ve got no shelter, Izuku thinks with a groan, great.

Luckily, they’re in a town, and while none of the buildings are inhabitable due to countless raids damaging the infrastructures, there is some possibility of finding some material that’s been left amongst the rubble.

“Come on,” Izuku says, calling to Uraraka. The woman joins him as they move debris, throwing bricks behind them in desperation to find something that will shelter them from the storm.

Cold seeps into his bones, his fingers frozen as he sorts through the rubble. He shivers, tries not to think about how hopeless the situation is.

“Deku,” Uraraka says, and he turns then, “Deku look.”

Izuku stands, shuffles over to where she’s been digging. She points down at a small man-hole, a way underground. She says, “let’s go down here for now. Come on.”

It’s difficult to pry it open, it’s been sealed shut for a long time. Izuku finds a long stretch of metal, wedges it in the dip between the manhole and the street, pulling down until it pops open.

“You could have just ripped it out,” Uraraka says, “with your quirk.”

Izuku shakes his head. “Not if we want to keep it discreet that we’re down here.”

He grabs a torch from his bag, shines it down so he can see into the sewers. Then, after a short nod at Uraraka, he pulls himself over, holding onto the ladder, climbing down into the abyss below.
Uraraka follows in suit, pulls the manhole back into place with her quirk. Everything is dark, except for the beam of Izuku’s torch.

“Uraraka,” Izuku says, and he’s quiet until he hears her affirming ‘yes?’ “I think we’ve just found our way in and around of Tokyo.”

The sewers.

After

The media uproar is outrageous.

People are surprised to hear All-Might will be working at U.A. as a teacher, and so, naturally, the media flock outside of the school, eager to gain any comments from passing students and teachers.

Izuku finds it awkward.

He’s more experienced with the press, with saying things that have no definite answer but is enough to sate them, than he had been his first year of U.A.

He’s certainly not comfortable with them, mainly because by the time villains had taken over Japan, being caught on camera had equated to danger and attacks on the person being caught.

When he is asked about All-Might however, attempting to show at an early enough time, he doesn’t flinch away from it. Mainly because he knows it’s not dangerous – not right now. Izuku is asked ‘what’s it like learning from All-Might’, and he smiles in response.

“He’s a good teacher,” he says, because while there’s some things the man still needs to learn about teaching, he’s also pretty great. “It’s awesome being his pupil.”

And it’s all he’ll give them. The moment they see that he’s willing to respond, they attempt to pounce – what does he teach? What are his methods? – but Izuku just walks past them, pushing through the crowd on his way up to the school.

He sees Uraraka, struggling under the questions of one reporter, and cuts in, tapping her on the arm and asking if she’s done the homework. Uraraka nods, and he pulls her away from microphones and cameras. He does the same with Tsuyu, when he sees her struggling beneath questions, making sure to save his classmates from the press.

“Thanks,” Uraraka mutters when they’re past the gates, “I can’t believe they wouldn’t let us go.”

“Reporters are terrible.” Tsuyu says, and Izuku lets out a small laugh, glancing back at the crowd of reporters and camera men. He sees Iida and Kacchan walking through without much trouble, notices Kirishima as well, before turning back to the school.

“They’ll take whatever they can get,” Izuku says as they start walking towards the main building. Both girls fall into step beside him and he continues, “you just need to be able to tell them no without feeling guilty.”

Tsuyu nods, clicks her tongue. She speaks with her usual bluntness when she says, “wow Midoriya it sounds like you’ve been in front of a camera before.”

Izuku turns to look at her, blinks, and shakes his head. He says, “not really, but I’ve watched a lot of
hero interviews… the best heroes always know when to stop giving out information.”

“I guess that makes sense,” Tsuyu says, and Uraraka agrees.

Izuku offers them a smile, and they move their conversation from reporters, to heroes, and the English homework that Mic had given them. It’s all around, a pleasant conversation, and yet, Izuku can’t find it in him to feel calm.

As they’re entering the school, Izuku turns, looks back towards the crowd outdoors. There are security measures, steel doors that will slam shut if someone without the correct clearance tries to step foot inside, and yet…

He scours the crowd, searching for silvering hair. A shiver runs down his spine when he can’t find him – and yet Izuku’s certain that Shigaraki would want to see All-Might with his own eyes, have it confirmed that he’s alive…

“Deku?” Uraraka says, when she realises that he’s not stepped inside with them. Izuku turns to face them, offers them a smile and joins them by the footlockers changing their shoes for indoor slippers.

“You just said it yourself,” Tsuyu says, as she clicks her locker shut, “don’t worry about the press.”

Izuku nods. “I won’t.”

It’s not the press that he’s worried about.

Eraserhead begins the homeroom by announcing Class 1-A needs to appoint a class president. Immediately, the room breaks out into sound, people claiming they want to be president, or vice president, sounds that Izuku immediately erases from his mind.

People raise their hands, and yet Izuku stays still.

He’d wanted to be class president once, then he’d been appointed, and it hadn’t seemed right. He’d given the role to Iida – the other boy had deserved it more – when the other boy had proved it was a good role for him. Then, he’d died, and the presidency had gone to Yaoyorozu, a role no one had really wanted.

Izuku had spent time as the vice president, it hadn’t been a nice feeling.

“We need to vote,” Iida claims, begging diplomacy as a class. Izuku glances at him, eyes following the boy without faltering, a sense of sadness weighing down on his shoulders. He’d made a good class president, although he’d not been one for very long.

Izuku wants him to be a long-lasting class president this time.

And so, he lets things run the way they had the first time. He lets himself get three votes, becoming president, let’s Yaoyorozu become vice president. And he tries not to let it show just how uncomfortable being in the position makes him feel.

They’re sat at lunch, around the table when Iida explains about his brother, Ingenium. The boy explains, grins about his most favourite hero upon their questioning, the most relaxed Izuku ever remembers him being.

“I want to be a great hero,” Iida claims, “just like my brother is.”

Izuku offers him a smile, and nods his head. “I really think you will be.”
The alarm – just as Izuku has been expecting – starts ringing. It’s a loud, clattering sound, metal scraping against metal. It’s scratchy, enough that Izuku winces, turning to look around at all of the students that get to their feet.

‘Security level three has been broken,’ an overhead radio states. Izuku takes his drink, sips at it, with a calmness that no one else seems to be feeling. ‘All students, please evacuate in an orderly fashion.’

Iida asks about the level three alarm, gets the answer that people have infiltrated the building, and flocks towards the exits, alongside Uraraka. Izuku stands, watches people rush towards the cafeteria exit, before making his way towards the windows.

There are only so many entrances to U.A. There’s the front entrance, which is used primarily by teachers and students, and then there’s the back entrance, used by vans bringing in supplies for the school.

The front entrance is easily seen from the end window, and so Izuku makes his way towards it, squinting to see the barriers that should keep people out. The press pile inside, seeming to be as unorganised as the students that have been told to evacuate.

The teachers had never told anyone how the media had gotten in.

IzuKu presses his lips together and tries to see if he can figure it out. There are too many reporters rushing in though, it’s practically impossible to see the doors. He’ll have to think it through fully.

There are doors all around the school designed to keep the press out – the one they’ve gotten through is thick steel. Izuku doubts the school would just let them in. With the security alarm going off, it’s pretty clear that the system hasn’t been hacked into – meaning…

The doors must have been forced open.

After a few minutes of waiting – during which he hears Iida shout that it’s just the press and everyone should just calm down – the reporters seem to stop entering the school at such a vivid pace. There’s a steady flow, yes, but now Izuku can see the entrance.

The doors have been disintegrated. Left in crumbled pieces on the ground, multiple layers of the doors broken as if they’re nothing.

Izuku bites the inside of his cheek, as he thinks. Of course, there’s only one explanation – but what can he do about it.

Right now… there’s nothing he can do. The villain alliance has sent U.A a declaration of war. The message aimed at All-Might. Seeing as no one knows about the villain alliance in its entirety yet, it’s a declaration that will go unnoticed.

“Shigaraki Tomura,” Izuku mutters, before turning to join the crowd of students that have started to disperse back towards classrooms.

Later, when Izuku suggests that Iida take his place as class president, everyone agrees. Iida is bashful, glad about it, something which makes Izuku smile in response as he makes his way back to his seat.

They pick the other class representatives, and none of them include Izuku, something that he feels
“Glad about. He’s got enough to figure out, without adding school council business on top of everything.

“Midoriya,” Iida says as they’re readying to leave class that day. He looks a little nervous, glances towards the peers that are leaving before them. Izuku offers him a smile, waits for anything the boy says. “Thank you.”

Izuku tilts his head as if he doesn’t know why he’s being thanked.

“For letting me have the presidency,” Iida continues. The boy scratches at his cheek, offers Izuku one of his rare smiles. “It means a lot to me.”

“You’re the one who deserves it,” Izuku says after a moment, putting his bag over his shoulder, making his way over to the exit. The rubble is gone now, the doors left open to ensure no one realises that the doors have been demolished. “You’re really deserving of the title class president, you know?”

Iida falls into step beside him, and together they make their way towards Uraraka, the girl waiting for them on the path. She’d walked ahead, with Hagakure and Tsuyu, and now she turns to them, ready to walk home in the same direction.

“I think you would have made a good class president as well, Midoriya,” Iida says, and he’s certain about that at least. “I think you’ve got the capability to be a good leader.”

Izuku thinks of burning down buildings, taking charge of the final heroes able to stand, the pressure weighing down on him to keep them alive. He thinks of all the people he’s been unable to save, and lets out the faintest laugh. It’s soft, sad, but in a detached manner that, to most, appears shocked more than anything else.

“Maybe,” Izuku hums, “but I’m not ready just yet.”

He’s not a very good leader, he thinks. Mainly because everyone had wound up dead, even—

Even…

Izuku smiles at the other boy, “you’ll be better as a class president than I could be anyway.”

Chapter End Notes

You can come talk to me on tumblr if you want at: http://mintchocolateleaves.tumblr.com/
OR, you can talk to me in the comments. :D
Chapter Notes

Sorry for taking so long to update this. With university and being admitted to hospital, I've not really had much time to do the whole writing thing. Either way, here's a late update that I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

“I know we’re walking all this way, and pretty driven to find this kid,” Uraraka says as they near Tokyo, voice listless as exhaustion finally sets in. Izuku can feel it in his bones, hollowing them out and wrapping complaints around his throat. “But is there really even a point?

Izuku glances at her. He raises an eyebrow.

It’s not the first time Uraraka has questioned a task, nor will it be the last. Most times the complaints aren’t meaningful, are just attempts to fill the silence – sometimes questioning tasks is easier than questioning everything that’s lead them to this point.

“I mean, all we have is her name.” Uraraka pauses, skips forwards to a pile of debris from a demolished building. “Nagisa. And even then, all we know is that she’s no older than ten.”

Izuku lets out a hum. Turns to her with blank eyes, for a moment, they just stare at one another. Then, “do you have a point?”

“It’s practically impossible.” Uraraka says. “Going into Tokyo again, just the two of us? We’ll die.”

No back up – there’s no one left keeping Japan safe except for them. And yet, the word impossible tastes sour on Izuku’s tongue.

“You can head back if you want,” he says, “but I’m not giving up. I’d rather die a hero than a coward.”

Uraraka stills, glances over at him, canines piercing her bottom lip. She says, “you know, when All-Might talked about never giving up back at school, I’m pretty sure he didn’t mean this.”

Izuku cannot keep from glaring. Fire burns in his eyes at the name of him mentor – despite everything they’ve seen, the horrors and monstrosity’s, Uraraka flinches away.

“Don’t pretend you know what he meant,” he whispers, trudging forward, “no one does. He’s dead.”

Uraraka sighs. But she doesn’t turn back.

And eventually, they reach the outskirts of Tokyo.
Today’s the day.

Izuku remembers it more clearly than the other days. Whereas most of the days he’s relived has been a murky fog of remembering, intricate details catching him off guard, this day is impeccably clear. Maybe, because this is where it had all started to go wrong.

Aizawa enters the classroom with an almost bored look – Why he chose to become a teacher Izuku’s never quite figured out – and as soon as attendance has been taken, he announces the day’s special class.

Rescue training.

His classmates, as soon as they hear it, aren’t excited. The first time around, Izuku hadn’t been so eager either, had wanted to learn more about fighting bad guys that rescue training. It couldn’t be that difficult could it – rescuing people from burning buildings or from earthquakes. Common sense was the only necessary thing.

Except. After spending years rescuing others, avoiding fights that would give prolonged injuries, Izuku feels a slither of warmth run down his back at the concept of rescue training.

Only a slither though – the rest of him is all dread.

Mainly because he knows that he’s not really going to be practising anything. This is going to be the first dangerous stint he’s going to have to guide his classmates through, and…

This is going to be the moment they lose their innocence.

Izuku almost wishes that it didn’t have to be like this – if he manages to postpone the training, blow a tire on the bus so they can’t go, then they’d avoid this, right? His classmates wouldn’t become so haunted, would remain light-hearted and not ghost-like in the same way he pretends not to be.

And yet… if he changes things too much, he’ll be walking into things blind. His friends could die all over again and there will be no going back.

“We’ll be going by bus,” Aizawa says now, “so go get dressed – into either your gym clothes or costumes – and we’ll convene at the bus in ten minutes.”

Ten minutes, Izuku thinks to himself, biting into his lips. So little time to prepare for what should be his first encounter with Shigaraki Tomura, and his alliance of villains.

He needs a good enough counter-offence. He’ll have to plan on the bus as well – a twenty minute trip another prefecture in Tokyo, past Shibuya – to come up with the most efficient course of action.

“Smile Deku,” Uraraka says, tapping him on the shoulder as everyone stands up, making their way to the changing rooms, “even though it’s rescue training, we’re all going to have a lot of fun!”

Izuku forces a smile. He hopes that the crack in his voice as he says, ‘yeah’, goes unnoticed.

They’re walking to the bus when Iida turns to Izuku with terse lips. He says, “you changed the design of your hero costume?”
Izuku looks down, runs a hand against the material. It’s a dynamic material, fire resistant and reinforced so any blades thrown towards him won’t rip through as easily.

He offers a smile, and says, “yeah, my other one was burnt pretty bad, so I asked if I could design a different one.”

“It’s less…” Iida takes a moment to pause, thinks his words over and says, “colourful than the last. Did you not like the blue you’d originally worn?”

It’s an innocent question that Izuku answers easily enough – if anyone asks, the only colour they had material wise was this juniper green or a sickly yellow. A lie – but Izuku can’t exactly say that he feels safer with camouflage colours and that this new suit is more symbolic of the one he’d worn following the end of the hero community.

“Oh,” Iida says, “that’s a shame. Maybe when we do adjustments after summer they’ll have a wider range of colours. If you want them, anyway.”

“I dunno Iida,” Uraraka says, from Izuku’s other side, “don’t you think he looks pretty good in camouflage colours?”

Iida pauses. Izuku sends Uraraka what can only be described as a wry grin and shakes his head.

“I accept it looks nice,” Iida says, “but part of being a hero is diverting the attention of villains to you, and that’s almost impossible, is it not, with camouflage?”

Izuku bristles at that. “It depends on the hero, I think.”

Neither Uraraka or Iida respond. Maybe they’re thinking about what he’s said, but Izuku thinks it might be because his own irritation has bled into his voice, raw and real.

He’ll have to work harder at keeping his emotions in check.

On the bus, Izuku sits next to Tsuyu and bites into his lip, struggling to think over what he can do.

Tomura’s invasion of rescue practise happens five minutes within their arrival. Izuku and his classmates are thrown through space, left fighting against villains in each of the simulation areas. While there had been no fatalities, some of his classmates had been severely injured.

“Midoriya.”

He’s gone to the water area, had taken to long getting through the villains, worried about the implications of using his quirk, that he’d not been able to help any of his classmates.

“Hello… earth to Midoriya?”

Izuku blinks, glances to his left. Many of his classmates are looking at him, waiting for him to respond to whatever Tsuyu has said to him.

“Uh… sorry,” Izuku says, “did you say something?”

Tsuyu offers a smile. “It’s alright, I was just gonna say, that I tend to say what I’m thinking, do you mind?”

“No, go for it.”
He’s got a brief idea of what Tsuyu’s going to talk about, offering a comparison between him and All-Might. He’d been caught off guard before, but this time he’ll be less… reactive?

“I was thinking that your quirk is kinda like All-Mights,” Tsuyu says, “but that it’s difficult to see because your fighting style is a lot dirtier.”

Izuku blinks – once, twice.

He says, “I don’t fight dirty.”

Or rather he’s certainly been trying not to. Maybe in the past – err… future - he’d adopted a particularly brutal way of fighting, but since he’s been back in school… he’s tried his best to avoid that.

“Uh, yeah you do.” Tsuyu says, at the same time Kirishima says, “dude, you launched a brick at Bakugou’s face.”

Izuku opens his mouth, takes a moment to realise that he has used a few underhanded tactics during class before closing his mouth again.

Then he says, “oh yeah.”

“It’s an interesting form of fighting,” Yaoyorozu says, although she doesn’t sound much like she approves, “I think it might be effective against villains.”

Izuku knows it’s effective. But he’d not quite expected them all to pick up on the fact that his fighting style is defined to one individual style.

“Yeah,” Izuku mutters, “maybe.”

No. 13 greets them all to the USJ as soon as they set foot through the entrance. He doesn’t give class 1A time to gather their thoughts as they marvel at the sighs, tells them immediately of the different zones. There’s a landslide zone, flood zone, conflagration zone – all things Izuku remembers clearly from the event that occurred years before.

“Every disaster you can imagine,” No. 13 says, waving a hand at the simulation, “is inside these gates.”

Izuku tries not to say that this simulation won’t be a simulation very soon – will be a disaster no matter how they act. All of the work the hero’s put in, and Izuku knows that in a few minutes, villains will lay waste to it.

As his classmates talk between them, offering smiles and getting more excited as the seconds pass, Izuku finds his gaze drifting, looking towards his teachers. There’s a tense energy to the two, and Izuku bets it’s regarding All-Might.

After all, All-Might won’t be there to teach – Izuku knows the man has pushed his limit. His teachers must know this too…

No. 13 turns back to them now, lists off the fact that he’s got some things to say before they start. He begins by explaining his quirk, something which his fellow classmates get excited over.

“Yes,” the hero says, nodding, “but a power like this could just as easily be used to take a life. It’s not dissimilar to the quirks of everyone here.”
Izuku feels his blood turn to ice.

For a moment, all he can hear is his pulse behind his ears, whispering the word *take a life* over and over.

Remembering the war he’d been thrown in… Izuku feels like he’s going to throw up.

“…That being said,” No. 13 says, when Izuku zones back in to the words he’s saying, “don’t forget the power your quirks possess, and remember that one wrong step is all it takes to be able to kill someone accidentally.”

*Or purposefully.*

“That’s all!” No. 13 says, offering a small bow, “I hope we all enjoy today’s exercise, okay?”

Now, they turn to Aizawa, ready for him to delegate each of them a disaster zone to work in. Not that he’ll have the time to choose for them – the villains will be doing so for them instead.

“Alright let’s get this started,” Aizawa says. He doesn’t get much time to do anything else before space is ripped open, a hand tearing through nothingness, into existence.

Involuntarily, Izuku takes a step forward, squinting. He doesn’t notice Tsuyu’s glance towards him, or Uraraka’s faint squeak as he uses a hand to move her to the side ever so slightly to get a better view.

Shigaraki Tomura is the first to step out of the nothingness. He is followed by tens of villains – at least fifty – and yet Izuku doesn’t pay attention to them.

Just Shigaraki. He’s just as Izuku remembers, although younger. There are hands all over his body, dismembered limbs that Izuku hates to say he’s used to seeing but is.

The two of them enemies, *mortal enemies*, except Shigaraki doesn’t know that yet.

“Everyone huddle together!” Aizawa calls, turning to offer his students a single glance. “Thirteen, keep the students safe!”

His classmates don’t seem to understand how serious the situation is. Izuku finds his mask melting away, seriousness bleeding from his pores.

Shigaraki will not get away with this – Izuku will not let him.

“Is this like, part of the simulation?” Kirishima mumbles.

“Don’t move,” Aizawa echoes, pulling down the mask of his suit, reading to freeze the movements of whomever he can, “those are real villains.”

Shigaraki does not offer them any words. Instead he glances around the class, at the two teachers and says, “I was expecting All-Might to be here, what’s the point if he’s not?”

He pauses, tilts his head in that childlike manner of his and offers a smile.

Izuku is overrun with a hatred that burns through his body – firing his neurons more that Kacchan’s explosions ever could. He glowers at the man.

“Well,” Shigaraki says.
Izuku glances down — internally he apologises, because he’s going to break No. 13’s rules.

“Maybe he’ll show up if I kill some of his precious students.” The villain says.

*And maybe he won’t have to*, Izuku thinks, wincing at the very thought, *if I kill you first.*

Chapter End Notes

You can come talk to me on tumblr if you want at:
http://mintchocolateleaves.tumblr.com/
OR, you can talk to me in the comments. :D
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I wanted to get one last update uploaded in 2017! Let's wish me luck for writing this next year, shall we?! 
Happy New Year everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

Tokyo is nothing like how Izuku remembers it.

Once, it had been bathed in colour, bright lights and an energy that had left him eager to face the days ahead of him. There had been noise, a bustle of everyday life, half heard conversations that made no sense out of context.

Seeing the ruins of his favourite city almost leaves him crumbling like the buildings around him. This is no longer the place he’d grown up, celebrated birthday’s and gained his hero license – no, now this is the place where he’s suffered.

Where his friends had started to lose their innocence.

Where he’d lost his mother.

Where All-Might had taken his last stand – his last breath.

“Deku…” Uraraka whispers beside him, as if offering some attempt at comfort. It isn’t very effective, especially when he realises her hands are trembling, “this is...”

“I know,” Izuku says, eyes scouring the area for the nearest manhole for them to climb down into, “trust me I know.”

It is not until they reach down to pry the manhole that Izuku realises his friend is crying. And that there is a warmth of his own on his cheeks.

“We’re going to die here, aren’t we?” Uraraka whispers.

Izuku glances up, and for a moment, it’s almost as if he can see All-Might there, stood in front of him with the smile he’d worn, once.

“All the best heroes do.” Izuku sighs.

After

“Who would be dumb enough to sneak into a school for heroes?”

Izuku isn’t sure who asks the question – probably because he isn’t paying enough attention to his
classmates, but rather Shigaraki. And he knows they have a point, even if they don’t.

They’d be dumb to sneak in to a school for heroes if they’d not planned it out. Coming to the USJ had been their plan because there was a lack of trained heroes supervising – as it stands there are only two.

That they know of, Izuku’s mind supplies. Although, after today he’s not completely sure if he’ll still be classed as such.

“Deku,” someone mutters from behind him, as he takes a step forward, eyes sweeping the enemies. He’ll have to knock out a fair few before making his way to Shigaraki… “We need to evacuate.”

It’s Uraraka, having grabbed hold of his arm, trying to pull him the exit. Izuku has to tear his gaze off of Shigaraki to look at her, something which makes the other girl flinch away.

“M-midoriya?”

Izuku glances back towards the main fight. Aizawa is doing a good job right now subduing the villains, but it’s not going to be good enough. And with no. 13 taking an interest in keeping his classmates safe… there’s not enough power on the hero’s side to win.

They will not win – good never wins, because good plays fair.

“Uraraka,” Izuku says, when she tugs him again. He tries to force his voice into something calmer, something that will keep the girl from associating him with the villains around them, but ultimately… She has already seen his expression, Izuku doubts she’ll forget it.

“I’m sorry,” Izuku says, “let’s evacuate.”

There’s no way he’s going to be able to get to Shigaraki now without everyone in class 1A noticing him rush off. But if he lets Kurogiri transport them all into various test areas, then surely he can get to the man quicker.

He’ll help Tsuyu and Mineta dispel the villains around the flood zone and then – then he’ll say he’s going to help the others and that they should split up to offer more help to the others… Surely then – he’ll be able to find Shigaraki by himself.

“Yeah,” Uraraka mumbles. “Let’s evacuate.”

She does not let go of his arm during their short jog to the entrance, almost as if she’s worried Izuku will turn back and stand up for their teacher. Izuku doesn’t know how to feel about the hand shackled around his arm though, it’s… it’s almost too much for him to handle.

He wants Uraraka to keep her innocence and here it’s already falling apart.

They reach the rest of the group, and it’s in that moment that Kurogiri looms over them. The man is all black fog, sinister personality hidden behind a smart suit and smart words.

“I won’t allow anyone to escape.” The villain says, in a voice that reeks of authority. Almost as if he’s expecting to get his own way – well. Last time he’d been wrong. Iida had gotten away, had managed to get the word out to the main school building.

“Forgive our audacity in ruining your class,” Kurogiri continues now. Izuku has to bite his cheek to remind himself not to get lost in the man’s voice, remembering the death of… no, Izuku stop, “we’ve
come here today to end the life of All Might, the symbol of peace.”

Whatever attempt Izuku had made on seeming calm for Uraraka’s sake dissipates with the words. The threat to his mentor’s life – not the first given, or the first attempted, sends shivers running down his spine.

His glare is electric, violent like thunder, bright like lightening and it only manages to fill him with a more desperate intensity, a deeper need to keep All-Might alive. Blood pounds in his ears, his pulse louder than the words Kurogiri says next.

Not that Izuku really needs to listen to know. It’s about them considering All-Might’s schedule, knowing that he was supposed to be present here.

Kacchan and Kirishima rush forward, fists raised to punch at smoke – an impossible task, no matter how much Kurogiri pretends they’d almost had him beat.

Izuku feels his blood boil.

“No, get back,” No. 13 shouts to both students, “both of you!”

Black fog envelops them – envelops all of his classmates and prepares to rip them though space. Izuku can already hear Kurogiri’s voice whispering that he hopes they writhe in torment until their last breath.

“And you,” Izuku hears through the smoke, letting his arms go limp so he doesn’t injure them in a struggle. He’s not going to die by Kurogiri’s hand, not when all the other villain’s need to prove their usefulness, “such bloodlust in this one, I almost can’t wait to see how that pans out.”

Izuku hopes none of the others hear him, that the villain has made it possible for only him to hear, but… How devious does he expect the man to act?

Another blink and he’s falling, face forward into the flood zone.

Izuku heaves air into his lungs, straightens his arms and prepares to dive. The impact of the water almost catches him off guard because his first thought is when he and Uraraka had almost slipped in the sewers, almost drowning themselves.

He opens his eyes to clear water and feels better within seconds. Even when he notices the villain swimming towards him. He’s got an oxygen tank that Izuku briefly considers nabbing, so he can stay in the water for long enough to help Tsuyu take out the villains.

Instead, he prepares one-for-all at fifteen percent, readies to punch the villain into unconsciousness.

Tsuyu knocks the villain out with one swift kick to the head before his fist can even connect. Then, her tongue wraps around his body, pulling him from the water and throwing him up onto the boat in the middle of the flood zone.

She’s carrying Mineta with her, the other boy barely conscious, but not yet fully out of commission.

“Thanks, Tsuyu,” Izuku says as the girl pulls herself out from the water. She offers him a smile, as if glad he’s calling her by her given name.

Then she says, “we’re in a lot of trouble here, it seems.”

“Yeah,” Izuku says, turning away to try and think. How much explanation is too much for someone
who’s only supposed to know the bare minimum. He’ll have to figure it out, based on gut instinct. “They know All-Might’s routine, so… do you think the media rush the other day was part of their plan? It’d give a good cover to get inside to check…”

“They said they’d kill All-Might,” Mineta pipes up from behind them, fear driving his voice and leaving it shaky. He says, “but they can’t do that right? All-Might will just beat ’em up and through them into prison. There’s nothing we need… nothing we need to worry about.”

Even now, years after meeting Mineta, Izuku is not sure what spurred the boy to become a hero. The boy’s cowardice had always confused him, even if it he hadn’t let it stop him from fighting.

“Mineta…” Izuku mutters, almost unwilling to explain the situation properly.

“They wouldn’t come without a plan, right?” Tsuyu says instead. Almost as if she’d read Izuku’s hesitation and answered instead, “they’re only here because they’re certain they can kill him.”

Mineta shudders.

“And what if we can’t even hold out long enough for All-Might to come save us,” Tsuyu continues, “who says we’re even going to get out of this alive.”

“Tsuyu,” Izuku says, “you’re only scaring Mineta.”

This is a fight to get rid of the sole owner of one-for-all – or rather, to kill who they believe is still in possession of the quirk. As All-Might isn’t the only one with the quirk, that also means that they know how to kill…

Izuku can not afford to die here – not that he thinks he will, but the last win had been pure luck.

The boat rattles with brute force.

“First, we’re going to have to deal with these villains,” Izuku says, turning to his classmates. His eyes brighten as a plan comes to the back of his mind. “And we’re going to have to do it quickly, alright you two?”

Mineta gives a small nod, so small in fact, that Izuku isn’t sure if it’s a shudder. He decides to continue as if it’s a nod.

“Got any underhanded tricks that might work here?” Tsuyu asks, then almost looks slightly guilty for asking. Izuku offers a smile.

“I’ve got plenty underhanded tricks,” Izuku says, his lips tugging upwards at the idea, “but that’s scheduled for people who actually have an idea what my quirk is – these villains… they don’t know our quirks – if they did, Tsuyu you wouldn’t have been thrown in the flood zone.”

The frog quirk of Tsuyu… of course they don’t know. Tsuyu nods her head.

“You’ve got a plan?”

Izuku nods, “of course. Mineta, how many of those balls can you create before you’ll be in too much pain to continue.”

Mineta blanches. Then, after a second he says, “how many do you need?”

Izuku smiles.
Considering it’s his first real fight back in the past, Izuku can’t help but feel a jolt at the adrenaline coursing through his body. It’s almost off-putting, how out of sync he feels without his fight or flight reflex constantly leaving him in a state of anxiety.

As he flings himself off of the boat, readying his body to create an explosion of water, he also can’t deny the dread growing in his stomach. Or the fear rippling against the excitement he’s feeling. These aren’t terribly strong opponents, not compared to those he’d had to fight when he’d returned to a ruin stricken Tokyo, and yet the danger is still reinforced in his mind.

Behind him, he can hear Mineta yelling his fear away. A good idea – allowing the boy to let his fear out without leaving him defenseless, Izuku thinks maybe he should try it out sometime.

For now, he’s calm with the prospect of just saying, “none of my classmates will die because of you, do you understand,” under his breath.

It’s the first time he’s said it out loud. And yet, his seriousness doesn’t throw him off guard.

The water is like a whirlpool when his punch hits the liquid. It goes inward, like a water bed, pulling everything inwards. Izuku holds his breath as he’s pulled in alongside other villains, waiting for Tsuyu to pull him from the trap they’ve set out.

A black ball makes its way onto his shirt, Izuku turns inward, attempting to keep any villains from hitting it.

And then – Tsuyu’s dragging him from the water, throwing the three of them towards the edge of the water zone, away from the explosion of water that goes upwards, almost like a geyser.

“That was a great plan,” Tsuyu breathes as they swim the rest of the distance to the edge. In front of them, the central plaza shows the fight their homeroom teacher is engaged in, slowly losing the upper hand. “You make a pretty good leader.”

Izuku hums. “So I’ve been told.”

His eyes glance towards the fight occurring, eyes widening as Shigaraki races forward, attempting to get a move on Aizawa. Beside him, his classmates let out gasps, horrified and drowning in fear as the villain disintegrates their homeroom teacher’s elbow.

Izuku winces. Tries not to think of how it feels to have limbs crumble away, nerves screaming pain against ear drums. He blinks, tries not to think of the events of Tokyo, and pushes himself further up.

Tsuyu and Mineta, perhaps not even realising, follow behind him.

“You two need to get up to the exit, and get out…” Izuku mutters, turning to the two now, “call for help, can you do that?”

Mineta’s eyes widen, “what about you?”

“Aizawa-sensei is injured,” Izuku says, “I’ve got just enough underhanded tactics to get him out of trouble. I’ll grab him and meet you guys at the exit, okay?”

Tsuyu offers him a concerned look before nodding. She says, “don’t do anything stupid, okay?”

Izuku nods – A lie.

He’s going to do something completely stupid.
He waits until the two are past him, just far away enough that they can’t read his expression. And he pulls himself forwards.

Kurogiri appears before he can do anything – they’re leaving, no. They can’t yet – and Izuku feels blood that had previously been boiling, run cold, frozen.

“Let’s kill a few kids before we leave then.” Shigaraki says, and he’s moving, not towards Izuku, but away – to where he’s sent his friends off. His hand wraps around the back of Tsuyu’s head, pulling the girl backwards.

Izuku races forward, using the maximum amount of One-for-all that he can without physically breaking his bones, and forms both hands into fists. His nails dig into his skin.

“Ha,” Shigaraki mutters, turning back towards Aizawa, “so cool Eraserhead.”

The hero’s offered a few seconds of protection for Tsuyu. Izuku’s going to offer a lot longer than that.

“Get away from them,” Izuku says, voice spitting poison. Shigaraki turns to him with eyes that’re wide with something akin to excitement.

“Oh what’s this?” Shigaraki turns to him, “Nomu, block that won’t you?”

Izuku isn’t shocked to see the large bird-like monster to arrive in front of him. Just like how he isn’t shocked when it blocks his attack, seemingly unaffected by his punch.

Instead, he drops down, kicks out to knock the Nomu off balance, before circling around it to face the villain behind the attack.

The Nomu is back on it’s feet before Izuku can get much nearer to Shigaraki. However, the villain raises a hand, a signal to wait.

“And what kind of play thing are you?”

Izuku can’t help his hatred spread across his face. He says, “let her go. And while you’re at it, won’t you just die?”

Chapter End Notes

You can always come talk to me at mintchocolateleaves.tumblr.com
OR you can talk to me in the comments! :D
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Confession time: I'm slow at updates. But hopefully the fact that we're going to start moving away from canon now will make you all feel a little better?

Thank you to everyone who's left me reviews and kudos. I love you all, it's these things that keep me updating! xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before

It's quiet underground.

In the sewers, on their way into the inner city, Izuku realises that the only thing he can really hear, are rats. They scurry, weaving in and out of crevices in the underground tunnels.

The only light around them is that of the small flashlights they've brought in with them. It leaves Izuku feeling nervous, the idea that they're walking blind, that anything could be hiding, capable of seeing their light, from in the dark.

And fighting down in the sewers… does not sound like the best of ideas.

“Deku,” Uraraka whispers from behind him. She's close, not enough that it's uncomfortable in his personal space, but enough that he can feel the shifts in the air as she moves, “I don't like this.”

“Of course not,” Izuku says in response, “it just feels stagnant down here.”

Uraraka hums under her breath. She says, “I wish Todoroki were here… he'd make everything a little brighter with his flames.”

Izuku resists the urge to shut the conversation down, and snorts instead. He says, “please, it's with how dead the air is down here, you want him to use up the oxygen that's in here?”

His partner lets out a sigh. Izuku tries not to judge her for the wistfulness. She says, “well, it'd probably be better to suffocate than suffer the smell down here. It’s like—”

He resists the urge to emphasise that they're walking through a sewer. That the stench is obviously going to be overwhelming. That they're probably never going to forget the smell, not when they've been gagging over it now for hours.

“It's just the sewage Urara—”

Izuku cuts himself off. He freezes – his stopping happens so sudden, that Uraraka walks straight into his back, causing him to wobble slightly from the force of her steps.

“What is it?” Uraraka says.

Izuku steps to the side, allows Uraraka the chance to stand beside him and look at what's ahead.
“Her breath hitches at the sight.”

“I think we’re finally here,” Izuku whispers, as he shines his torch down the tunnel, illuminating the mass bodies piling up. “We’ve finally reached Tokyo’s centre.”

**After**

“Won’t you just die?”

Izuku… probably shouldn’t have said that. He’d had a plan, see, for when this moment happened – seeing Shigaraki again – and it had been to remain calm. He’d go through the same processes as he did last time with this invasion, purely because it’s the only disaster they’ve ever gone through that had left them, the heroes, victorious.

But from the moment he’d seen Shigaraki, hands covering his form, smile wide and deranged, Izuku had also known he’d be incapable. He’s incapable.

Fuck all the plans he’d made in his head. So what if this is the only invasion that gives the slightest resemblance of a victory, Izuku can’t let this go. He won’t.

Shigaraki lets out a laugh. It’s like a growl, resonating through him, but soon it increases in pitch, becoming more and more hysterical. Izuku surprises himself – he’d thought he couldn’t hate anyone more than he currently did, but even hearing that laugh leaves him falling into a spiral of hate.

Perhaps the only good element of this, is that during his laugh, the villain loosens his grip on Tsuyu, the girl dropping to the floor. Izuku watches out of the corner of his eyes as she catches herself, scrambling backwards nearer to their teacher.

“I don’t see a reason for that look in your eyes,” Shigaraki says, once he’s calmed down from his laughing, expression shifting to one more… bewildered.

Izuku is caught between saying nothing or saying that he doesn’t have a reason at all. Because realistically, he doesn’t, does he? He can’t complain that Shigaraki pisses him off because he’s the leader of the group responsible for killing everyone he’s ever cared about because…

Because well, everyone he cares about is still alive.

“You were about to kill my friend,” Izuku says, and maybe that adds into it, the fact that he’d been incapable of keeping Tsuyu from the nightmares she’ll go on to have, but it’s not the only reason he feels like his blood is burning through his skin. “Do I need any reason more than that.”

Shigaraki shrugs. The movement is fluid, as if he’s aware how he has the upper hand. It’s insufferable, knowing that if the villain didn’t have any noumu, then Izuku at least stand a chance in a fight.

“That’s not the look of a hero,” Shigaraki says, and now he flicks his wrist, signalling for his noumu to continue in it’s attack. Izuku barely has the time to throw himself backwards at the suddenness of its movements.

Izuku sidesteps the bird-like creature, considers what he can do to drag it out of commission, levelling the playing board and realises that he can’t think of that much.

“Well,” Izuku says, throwing a punch at the noumu. He needs to know how thick-skinned it is. If
he’s going to fight it and hold any chance of winning without severely wrecking his body, then he needs to gather information for himself. “What kind of look is it?”

The noumu leaps towards him. Brings two hands down towards the ground in a fist, cracking the ground that Izuku had just been standing on.

“Oh, that look?” Shigaraki says, “that’s the kind of thing you see on villains.”

Izuku grits his teeth. Takes the words and adds them to the ever-growing list on why Shigaraki is a horrible excuse for a man, deserving of nothing but a grave.

He can’t afford to focus on them though. Not with this creature attacking.

Its strength is relative to the same as All-Might’s. Meaning that Izuku’s probably going to hit a standstill if they just exchange blows. Even though fist fights have always been his forte, close combat being something that Izuku excels in, there’s not a lot he can do with it now.

Alright, so he’ll have to do something else. Some other avenue of fighting that will help him succeed.

He glances between Aizawa and Tsuyu, between his teacher and classmate – nay, teacher and his friend – and thinks. Muses on their fighting styles, weighs the pros and cons.

Aizawa: He’d taught Izuku the importance of quick fights. In restraining an enemy in whatever way possible.

Alright, so that would be it. Instead of knocking the noumu out, he’ll just find a way to restrain it.

If he can get the noumu trapped in one place, then he’ll be able to go against Shigaraki without any distractions.

Hopefully. Anyway.

And Tsuyu’s fighting style: Stealthy. Capable of adapting to different environments with her skills. Like when they’d been in the flood zone.

The flood zone.

That’s it – he’s in an area designed to emulate disasters. Sure, they’re meant to be using these zones to practise saving people, but well… why not use them to help him win this fight?

Two zones flicker in his subconscious, areas that might help. Areas he’d be able to hold the upper ground. Either the conflagration zone, constantly burning, or the ruins zone.

Izuku’s got enough experience fighting around ruined buildings, shaky foundations, that it’s probably something he’ll be able to navigate without hurting himself too much.

And it’s not too far away. All Izuku needs, is to make sure that the noumu will follow him there, that it’s able to stray away from Shigaraki without the villain being none-the-wiser.

“Fuck,” Izuku mutters under his breath.

The noumu rushes towards him again, forcing Izuku to dive to the side. It follows him, until they’re both at the edge of the central plaza, but he’s pretty sure that the creature won’t follow him any further.

What to do?
The noumu isn’t something he can trick. Izuku knows it’s just some brain-dead creation following orders. It can’t think for itself anymore, so he can’t manipulate it into moving for him.

There’s only one option then. Izuku’s going to have to use some resemblance of force.

Instead of going out of the noumu’s range, instead of leaving a wide berth, Izuku steps into attacks, offering only the smallest gaps between the creature’s punches and his body.

It’s like a dance. Every time the noumu moves one step forwards, Izuku takes two back. Every time it turns its punches, aiming towards the centre of Izuku’s chest, Izuku skirts from the attack.

But all of this is just running away.

He can’t run.

“It took All-Might three hundred punches at one hundred percent to take you down,” Izuku mutters, as he lowers his central gravity, rolling across the ground, aiming a kick at the noumu’s legs. “If I were to try, at fifteen percent, it would take at least five hundred…”

Not an option.

His foot catches on the noumu’s legs, leaves Izuku stumbling, falling to the floor. Izuku takes a moment to blink, watches as the noumu lifts a leg.

“Deku!”

The shout spurs him into moving. He rolls to the right, scrambles up to his feet, and uses as much of One-For-All as he can without breaking any bones. It’s a good offensive power yes, but Izuku’s pretty sure right now he needs to power up his bones, keep them from breaking-

The noumu doesn’t hit him directly.

It’s the aftermath of the hit that manages to sweep him off his feet. One moment, Izuku is on his feet, the next, a wave of pressure hits him in his chest – a build up of air from the noumu’s attack – throwing him backwards.

Izuku heaves out a breath, swallows down the acid that rises from his throat.

“Shit,” he mutters. Forces in a breath, even as he moves back, down the central plazas stairs, baiting the noumu to come a little closer.

“Deku!” This time, Izuku glances around, just long enough to catch Uraraka racing down towards him. She doesn’t stop until she’s next to him, tackling him from the oncoming blow the noumu’s aiming towards them.

They scramble, fall backwards. And it’s all Izuku can do, to throw her to the side out of the noumu’s range, as he makes his way back to his feet.

“Uraraka,” he hisses, glancing at the girl, “what are you doing?”

“That villain mentioned when you started fighting that thing that it was designed to kill All-Might!” Uraraka says, keeping her distance. “We’re students, you can’t defeat it by yourself.”

Izuku resists the urge to scowl. Instead he dives out of the way of another punch, bites into his lip, and takes a moment to think. Uraraka had been a brilliant partner in the past… well, future… and Izuku knows her limitations, but that’s from years of training. Now they’re back at the start…
But, anti-gravity does seem like something he could use for this noumu. If he can’t trip it, can’t use any powers against it right now then, surely, with her help.

“If I can create an opening for you, then use your zero gravity on it.”

Maybe he’d been thinking this through too much – the noumu is designed to kill All-Might, designed to fight any wielder of One-For-All. But that means it’s only adapted for fighting such a quirk.

It’s strong, and durable.

How exactly will it handle operate in a fight if there’s no gravity holding it down? And if Uraraka can keep her hold on it for long enough then… then surely they’ll be able to think of an area that can keep this creature contained until the pro heroes arrive.

He just needs Uraraka’s help, and well, maybe this time his plan won’t be a disaster. They just need to get through this in one piece.

“I’ll try,” Uraraka says.

Chapter End Notes

You can always come talk to me at mintchocolateleaves.tumblr.com
OR you can talk to me in the comments! :D

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