You can say all you want, but nothing will change my mind about that.

by QueerPinoy

Summary

Bakugou wasn't rescued when the League of Villains captured him. Instead, he is kept by Deku, thought dead after his disappearance and suicide note. Deku, now twisted by All for One as the perfect Noumu, is sick with power and even sicker with an obsession with his former childhood friend.

Notes

Read the fucking tags guys this one is a big YIKES and I can't believe I came up with this shit. Don't say I didn't warn you!!
Bakugou kept his head down, staring at his restraints. The buckle across his chest would be easy enough to break, it was the metal box binding his hands, similar to the restraints that bound him after the sports festival, that was the problem. His palms were sweaty enough from fear -- not that he would ever admit to that -- for a strong explosion, but the League of Villains probably took that into account when they picked it. He peered down at them, calculating. He could play along, hope they would believe him enough to trust him enough to let him free, but he was a terrible liar. He knew the pro heroes would arrive soon, so if he could buy time…

He resolved to say nothing, barely listening to the blabbering about their just society or whatever.

“You also like winning, don’t you?” What a stupid fucking plea for recognition, but then --

“Dabi, remove his bindings.”

Shiragaki really was fucking crazy. Bakugou looked up in disbelief. He didn’t think it would be this easy -- it had hardly been five minutes.

“This guy’s going to go ballistic, you know.” Dabi had some senses but there was no point.

“It’s okay. We have to treat him as an equal. We’re scouting him out after all. Besides, He should be able to tell from the current situation that he has no possibility of winning if he goes off here. Right Yuuei Student?”

They deliberated, continued their empathetic appeals, but Bakugou was transfixed on his restraints. They really were stupid enough to fucking free him, and he was going to show them just how stupid they were. He lunged, easily reaching Shiragaki with an explosion. He grinned as he watched him fall.

“I stayed quiet and listened to you blabbering on and on… Idiots don’t know how to summarize things so they go on forever.” He reveled in their idiotic surprise. “Basically ‘we want to make people hate us, so join us please!’ Right?! It’s pointless…”

His villain’s grin spread on his face, worse than any of the evil he had seen so far. As far as he was concerned, he could defeat all of them, even justify killing them. They should know to fear him, know better than to underestimate him. “See… I’ve been won over by the way All Might looks when he wins. You can say what you want. Nothing can change my mind about that.”

He lunged forward with murderous intent, but was taken aback by Shiragaki’s face. He looked eerily calm, like he was watching a shark from outside of the tank. Before he could react, Bakugou’s momentum was halted, like he had reached the end of a rope tied around his neck, like a dog tugging at the end of a leash. He fell to the ground, straining and confused.

“Nothing, huh?” Why was that voice so familiar? He turned.

The blood drained out of Bakugou’s face. As far as he was concerned, this actually was a ghost.

“Are you so sure, Kacchan?”

Deku stood in the doorway, his fist raised and tugging. It was his leash. Quirkless Deku, looking ragged in a black and green jumpsuit with his arms wrapped in bandages down to his hands, his face scarred and twisted, was holding him back. How? And how was he alive? How was he strong
enough to hold him back? And... what was he doing with the League of Villains? Bakugou felt sick, suddenly nauseous as he saw Deku’s face, curled into a grin that didn’t belong there. “Shiragaki, I can take him from here.”

Before Bakugou could get a word out, the world disappeared. He knew this feeling.

Midoriya waked forward, picked up the marble that was now Bakugou Katsuki, rolled it in his hand. He gazed at it lovingly, picked it up with his thumb and forefinger, lifted it to his mouth, and licked it. He sighed, blissful, then gestured at Kurogiri, who opened a portal for him. He smiled back at the League of Villains, and was gone.

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Bakugou awoke, cold. He was lying on his side on a concrete floor, back in restraints. An iron collar, heavy and almost too big, like the loop for a tow-tuck, clattered around against the iron chain as he sat up. He looked up. The chain was attached to the ceiling, next to a skylight that was the only source of light, wherever he was. The only place with full light was the cone of light from the skylight, centered on him. Everything else was fuzzy and in shadow. He saw what looked like rafters, a very high, sloped ceiling, but that was it. No door he could see, no windows on the walls. A warehouse of some kind? A barn?

“Good morning, Kacchan.” Deku was behind him again. Bakugou swiveled, eyes wide.

“What the fuck is going on, Deku?” He was in no place to make demands but not making demands was to admit defeat. “They... They told me you were fucking dead! I went to your funeral! They... They told us that you’d killed yourself.”

Deku knelt next to him, grinning. “And it was so believable, right? I wonder why that was.”

Bakugou looked down, head swimming. After Midoriya’s suicide, the entire neighborhood had turned to him, his bullying, as the cause. He had mocked him, sure, but the Deku at the end of middle school seemed determine, hopeful enough to take the Yuuei entrance exam. Bakugou had taken his inevitable failure as the reason he had killed himself. It made more sense that it would be then, at the indisputable end of his childish dream. Bakugou hadn’t even considered the possibility that Deku would go so far as to kill himself after that failure -- after all, there was always the general studies program, other places more suited for the nerd who obsessively took notes on every hero. He could have become a historian, been a manager for a hero agency, anything. Instead he disappeared, leaving a note. They had searched for weeks, at least until his mother had finally checked his computer and found that his last search was the busline to Aokigahara. They stopped looking. They didn’t look far for reasons. Bakugou had sat in that guilt until he reasoned it away. It seemed like that wouldn’t work anymore. He felt like he would vomit.

“Kacchan, Kacchan, number one in 1-A of Yuuei’s hero program, the crazed winner of the most-watched first years sports festival. What did you used to say?” He grabbed Bakugou’s chin, tilted his head up. His tone was so gentle. He was almost whispering. “You good for nothin’! Useless Deku! You have nothing! I don’t need you!”

“How does it feel now, that this good for nothing has you now?” He threw Bakugou’s head down into the concrete with impossible force, kicked him in the gut.
Bakugou roared, getting up without even using his hands, then swung his arms down onto Deku’s stupid face. Or at least he thought. Deku dodged easily, dodged every swing, ducking and leaping back with ease. He was toying with him. He stopped deep into the shadow, just out of reach of Bakugou’s arms. “Shut the fuck up, shitty nerd!! I’ll kill you and get the fuck out of here!”

“Kacchan, you really don’t get it.” He held one hand up to Bakugou’s face, one finger pulled back by his thumb. He flicked that finger and Bakugou flew back with the power expelled. By such a small motion. By Quirkless Deku. He flew back until he reached the end of his chain, the collar snapping up to hit him in the jaw, painfully tugging at his neck. He tasted blood. Deku walked slowly into the middle of the light, jumped up, 12, 10 feet and grabbed the chain, kicking to pull it back. Bakugou swung into the center of the room again, choking, then ending up on his hands and knees, gasping for air. Deku landed in front of him. “I’m doing you a favor, you know. I could kill you right now, Kacchan. It would be like swatting away a mosquito.”

“Then why haven’t you, you sick fuck!” Bakugou spat in his face.

Deku wiped it off, expressionless. “I’ve missed you, Kacchan. I’ve been watching you do so well. I want you to join us. I could stand by your side instead of trailing behind like a dog! Do you see how strong I am now?” He knelt down, kissed him on the forehead. “It’s all I’ve ever wanted.”

Bakugou was stunned. Only a year had passed. Deku had a Quirk… maybe two? Like a noumu? But there he was, still Deku, but twisted into knots until he wasn’t the same person anymore. He hadn’t believed it was him, maybe a clone they had created to fuck with him to get him to join them or to drive him insane. He didn’t think this could be cloned. It had been their secret, ten years old and sharing a first, shy kiss that Bakugou had dismissed in a heartbeat and Midoriya was too afraid to tell anyone. “It… it really fucking is you. What the fuck are you doing with the League of Villains, Deku? What the fuck they do to you?” He started to stand again, but Deku grabbed him by the forehead.

“They saw me for what I really was. I was never useless, Kacchan. In fact, I’m perfect! The perfect vessel for all of this power!” He stood, kicked Bakugou and held him down with a cruel boot on his chest. “The only Noumu who could stay human! Infinite potential! All for One saw that in me. I’m unstoppable, Kacchan! You think of yourself as powerful because your Quirk was so special!”

Deku lifted his hands from his sides. There was a crackle, then a familiar explosion, Deku grinning, unscathed between them. “You should be so lucky that I want you by my side, Kacchan. You’re beneath me now.”

Bakugou’s heart was pounding in his chest, staring at the maniac that was once his childhood friend, the target for his frustration and insecurity, the doormat, Quirkless Deku.

“But you don’t even appreciate that, huh, Kacchan.” Deku sighed, lifting his boot off of Bakugou’s chest. He turned his back, walking into the darkness. “I can’t wait to see you break.”

A sliver of light -- oh, that was the door -- and then he was gone.

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Bakugou didn’t know how much time had passed. He slept intermittently. Sometimes when he woke
up it was bright out. Sometimes it was dark. In between, he stared at the floor, then started to get up and circle the room, examining it, especially where he thought he had seen the door. After a while, he wasn’t sure where he had seen it. There was no sliver of light from a crack in the door, and all the walls looked the same. It was like he had been sealed in a concrete box. He tried blowing off his restraints. The only thing he managed to do was heat up the restraints so much they burnt his wrists, singeing the hair on his arms.

The thirst snuck up on him. His hunger had kicked in first, his stomach growling, then oscillating between growling and a painful, empty numbness. The thirst took its time to settle in, but by the time he noticed it, it had become unbearable. His throat hurt, his nose felt like it was going to close up, his lips were so cracked that his split lip hadn’t healed, the wound reopening again and again. The world was a haze, and eventually he just ended up lying on the floor, sure Deku had decided that he would just fucking let him starve to death. This wasn’t how he wanted to die. He wanted to go out in a blaze of glory, the devastating end of the best hero that had ever lived. He wanted to die old, retelling the tales of his adventures, beloved for decades. He couldn’t be a legend here, not even out of school, without even a provisional license. He would be a tragedy, maybe even the reason Yuuei would close. In his dizziness he cried out, heaving and sobbing without tears.

That was where Deku found him. Bakugou lifted his head at the sound of sloshing water. There was blood on Deku’s bandages now and he was dressed in casuals, a serenity on his face so eerily close to the Deku he had known, the look of a boy who had just met an idol. Bakugou didn’t want to think about the circumstances under which that might have happened.

“Did you miss me, Kacchan?” He said. Bakugou gazed at the bucket of water, fixated on it. He swallowed. Deku sat on the ground in front of him. “You’ve always been so rude. Not even a hello?”

Bakugou could hardly hold himself up. He looked pathetic, delicious.

“You must be thirsty.” He held the bucket in front of Bakugou’s face. Bakugou leaned in, then Deku pulled it back, spilling some. “Come on now, are you an animal already? I was only gone for three days and you’re already reduced to this? I don’t even know if I want you anymore, Kacchan. Come on. We’re equals now. Ask nicely.”

Bakugou looked at the bucket of water, then Deku’s face. He forced his pride down his empty stomach, smoothed it over. “Please, Deku.”

Deku held out the bucket again. Bakugou leaned forward, about to lap it up like a dog when Deku pulled it away again and poured the entire bucket on Bakugou’s head. Bakugou lost it. “What the fuck, Deku? I even fucking listened to you! What do you even want? Do you want me to join you? Are you trying to drive me fucking insane? What is it?”

Deku laughed, lifting a hand to stroke Bakugou’s hair but he pulled away, looking down at the puddle of water on the floor. He considered kneeling and drinking it off the floor. “You don’t really want me, Kacchan. You’ve always been selfish. It’s all about you.” He stood. “Do you think you deserve to live? You might as well have murdered me. You’re hardly a hero.”

“Open your mouth.”

Bakugou craned his neck to look up at him. In his daze, he obliged. Get this fucking over with.

Deku unwrapped the bandage on his right hand. His entire arm looked crooked, like a knotted tree, covered in scars. There was still dried blood on his fingers. There were no fresh cuts on him. He leaned forward and stuck two fingers in Bakugou’s open mouth, pressed on his tongue. “I think you
know what will happen if you bite me, Kacchan.”

Bakugou didn’t like where this was going. He wanted to back away, run as far away from Deku as
he could, try to pull on the iron chain until it snapped and he could run. But he knew better. There
was no way he could outrun Deku, not when he was this dizzy, maybe not even at his best, given
what he’d seen. So he closed his eyes, tasted the salt of skin and the metallic taste of blood on his
fingers. He almost gagged.

Deku pulled a water bottle out from his back pocket. “Drink.”

He poured the water into Bakugou’s mouth, kept his fingers there. Bakugou strained to swallow,
pulling his tongue out from under Deku’s fingers, the water pooling in his open mouth and starting to
drip out. His throat burned as the water filled his mouth. He forced down a cough. He wanted to
cough so badly.

Deku took his fingers out of Bakugou’s mouth. “Do you want more? Are you still thirsty?”

Bakugou was delirious. He needed more. “Yes… please.”

A shiver went down his body when he saw Deku’s face shift from patronizing to evil. He watched
with horror as Deku unzipped his pants and pulled out his dick, already hard. “You’re so beautiful
when you beg, Kacchan. You’re still thirsty, right? And yes I’m ‘fucking serious.’ You forget that I
know you.”

Bakugou weighed his options. He had none. The water had slipped away on the concrete, and he
was left with only a thin, dirty layer. He had no hands with which to wring the water out of his shirt
to drink. He couldn’t even reach it, given the girth of the collar around his neck.

So he lifted his head, opened his mouth.

Deku gripped Bakugou’s head and thrust in, the head of his cock hitting the back of Bakugou’s
mouth, so deep and so hard that Bakugou felt his throat lurch. Some of the water he had just
swallowed lurches out. Nothing else. He had nothing else. “So wasteful, Kacchan,” Deku moved
Bakugou’s head back, then pulled him back, pushing him all the way to his pelvis. Bakugou
squirmed, making awful gagging noises. He couldn’t breathe His mouth was too dry for this. It hurt.
The sides of his mouth split. He closed his eyes and waited for it to be done.

“Why am I doing all the work when you’re the one that needs something?” Deku let go of him.
“Come on.”

So Bakugou closed his lips around Deku’s cock, worked his tongue along the bottom. “This isn’t
your first time doing this, huh, Kacchan? I’ll have to ask who it was later.”

Deku moaned, biting his lip. Bakugou’s mouth was hot, slick with precum and the little saliva he had
left. He looked awful, sopping wet, kneeling at his feet, eyes closed as he worked Deku’s cock. It
was heaven, a dream. He was beside himself, giddy, his heart pounding. “That’s it, Kacchan… I’ll
cum if you keep doing that. Make me cum, Kacchan.”

He came in Bakugou’s mouth, forced his head down so he couldn’t pull away. “Swallow. I thought
you were thirsty?”

Bakugou gulped it down, almost threw it up. He couldn’t look Deku in the face.
Deku pulled out another waterbottle, tilted Bakugou’s messy head up, and poured the water into his mouth, gentle enough that he so he could actually drink. He stroked his hair, kissed his forehead again. “That’s a good boy. I can be nice if you stay good, understand?”

Bakugou said nothing as he left.
Chapter Summary

“You’re stuck with me, Kacchan.” Deku sighed, sipping his water. “You might as well enjoy it.”

Chapter Notes

there's no actual rape in this chapter but somehow I feel it might be worse.

When Bakugou awoke he was naked. In front of him was a bowl of water — a dog bowl, but it was still water. He crawled over to it, dunked his head in and slurped and drank until his stomach was full of liquid. He sat back, panting and almost blissful. The fog in his head dissipated, and he was left with the clarity of fasting. He would starve to death if he was neglected, but he had so much more time now that he had water. He could think. He could move.

He looked up at the skylight. It was far, but the chain was right next to it. Maybe… maybe he could climb up it, somehow, and squeeze his way out. Maybe he could wrap the chain around his restraints and pull himself up? If he failed he would break at least his arms, accidentally hang himself, fall to his death on the concrete. Would that be worse than facing this psychopathic Deku? The League of Villains might not actually want him, he realized. They might have given him to Deku as a gift. The thought made his stomach turn. If that was the case, then Deku really could kill him without hesitation. Maybe that was his plan all along, to torture and abuse him until he broke and Deku decided to kill him.

Whatever the case, he had to do something. Inside his restraints his hands were held a few inches apart. He had already burned himself, but his explosions damaged him much less than they damaged others. He could manage another blast. He needed one more powerful to break out. Even metal had its limits with heat and pressure. He might end up breaking, no, losing his arms. Would that be worse?

He wasn’t ready to give up yet. He lay on his back, did sit ups, stood and did squats and lunges. He jogged in place until his heart was pounding and sweat was dripping from his forehead. He twisted the rope back and forth until sweat dropped down his back. His arms were sore, hot and clammy in the restraints. Perfect.

He cupped his hands together as best he could. If he could narrow the blast radius in the direction that the joint opened, he might be able to knock the restraint open. Once he did that the chain would be a piece of cake. He closed his eyes, focused, exhaled slowly.

He let loose an explosion that rattled his teeth. His arms hurt. There was a loud metallic clatter. Bakugou’s heart pounded in his chest as he watched the smoke clear. His hands were burnt badly, but they were free. He could bend his fingers. They weren’t even that bad. He grinned. He tasted victory and raced towards it. He grabbed the chain and held it in his hands, watched the metal melt and break apart. He ran to the wall, groping in the darkness for a handle, a groove, anything that
would indicate a door. He found a handhold, tugged in both directions until he saw the sliver of daylight trickle in. He braced himself, threw the door open, winced as he was met with bright sunlight.

Chickens. Wheat, a field with long, rippling grass. A dirt road that stretched out into nowhere. Yellow mountains, a bright blue sky, boulders and tumbleweeds dotting the landscape. No houses anywhere nearby. And Deku, sitting in a chair beside the door. “California is beautiful, isn’t it, Kacchan?”

Bakugou’s stomach turned. He dropped to his knees, then his hands. He screamed, overcome by loss and fear.

“So do you understand now, Kacchan?” Deku looked out across the wilderness not even turning to acknowledge him. “There isn’t a soul for hundreds of miles. What are you going to do? Kill me? Then what? Wander around, starving, until you collapse and are eaten by coyotes and crows? Even if you make it anywhere, chance upon a kind soul who would take you in, what are you going to do? Beg for help in your elementary school English? Panhandle until you can afford a plane ride home? Call Yuuei to save you in America? They think you’re defected.”

Bakugou heaved. He would have thrown up if he had any food in him.

“You’re stuck with me, Kacchan.” Deku sighed, sipping his water. “You might as well enjoy it.”

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Deku left him in the barn with no restraints. If you so much as try to use your Quirk on me, I’ll cut your hands off, Kacchan. Bakugou sat in the dark, leaning his back against the wall and slept in darkness.

The next day, Deku brought him a blanket and a new shirt and sweatpants. The day after, a loaf of bread, which he fed Bakugou one piece at a time. Bakugou silently seethed, still trying to come up with a way out. He could push back his ego and pretend to give in. If he joined the League of Villains, if that’s what they wanted from him, he knew they would bring him back to Japan to work for them. If he could get away from Deku, he could escape. He wondered how long he could keep up the ruse. He wondered if Deku would see right through him. He wondered what Deku would do if he tried to lie.

He considered setting the barn on fire. He considered blowing up the house, burning the field to the ground. Maybe when help arrived, he could tell them what was happening. Maybe the news of the missing Yuuei student has made it here, and someone would recognize him. He needed a plan, a foolproof plan.

“What are you thinking about, Kacchan?” Deku held the piece of bread in front of his mouth, not quite in reach. If you get to eat, it’s going to be the way I want you to eat. There was still half a loaf left. Bakugou still felt empty.

“I… I don’t fucking know, Deku.”

Deku grabbed his head, slammed it back against the concrete wall. “I’m sick of you still calling me that. What’s my name, Kacchan?”
Bakugou heard ringing in his ears. He glared at Deku, eyes ablaze. Not now. He couldn’t fight yet. “Izuku. Your name is Izuku.”

Izuku smiled, let go, and took a bite of bread himself.

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Bakugou didn’t know how much time passed. Weeks? Time flitted in and out of his attention. It didn’t matter. All of his plans depended on one thing—beating Izuku. If he couldn’t do that, he’d die. He didn’t even know what Izuku was capable. If he really was the perfect Noumu, who knows how many Quirks he had at his disposal. He could probably escape, maybe at night, but if Izuku spotted him or hunted him down, as Bakugou was sure he would do, they’d end up fighting. He couldn’t rule out the possibility. He couldn’t come up with a strategy with partial information. He needed to squeeze it out of him, somehow.

It would be easier than playing along with the League of Villains. Bakugou was genuinely curious.

He found himself anticipating Izuku’s next visit. It took days again. He was starving again. He felt like he was going mad, smiling his customary demon’s smile, so far from spitting in his face, almost normal, when Izuku appeared, this time with a basket. He had a warm expression on his face, almost like he was the same old Deku Bakugou had always known. He was cautious, wondering when he would snap.

Izuku sat next to him, held out an apple. Bakugou took it in his hands. It was the first time he’d been able to eat without being fed since his capture. The apple in his hand felt precious. He let himself dive into it. It was sweet, perfect.

Bakugou ate all of it, down to the last bits of flesh around the core. As he finished he scanned his head for ideas of how to get him to talk, how to broach the topic, ask what he could do, how this all happened.

Izuku beat him to it. “You’re not the reason I wanted to die, Kacchan.” He was holding an orange, pushing his thumbs under the peel to lift up the skin. He looked wistful, caught in a memory. “Did I tell you I met All Might? Before you were attacked by the slime villain it attacked me first. He saved me, and I asked him, even without a Quirk can I become a hero?” He chuckled to himself, letting the peel fall, pushing his thumbs between the sections to separate the flesh into quarters. “You know what he told me? ‘I cannot simply say you can become a hero even without power,’ he said. ‘It’s not bad to dream, but you also have to consider what is realistic,’ he said.” Tears rolled down his face now. Bakugou was frozen.

“You had always told me the same thing, but… I was never hurt by it. Not really. I knew you, Kacchan. You said all those things because you had to build yourself up. You needed to believe you were the best so that you could push yourself to follow your dream. I can’t hate you for that.” Izuku smiled to himself, put a piece of orange into his mouth, chewed on it slowly.

“You… You didn’t tell me you met All Might.” Bakugou said, hesitant. He was lost. This sounded so much like his Deku. Who was the Deku that… that hurt him? Was there more than one? Were they both in there? “And that was before the entrance exam.”

Izuku nodded. “I gave up, and All for One found me. I was going to become just another Noumu,
but he saw something in me that even All Might didn’t see. You’ll never guess what he did, Kacchan! He gave me All Might’s Quirk. He gave me that power and so much more. He says he’s not done with me yet. He says I’m the most valuable piece in his plans!”

“All Might’s… Quirk…” Bakugou turned that over in his head. All Might was the strongest pro hero around. Even without full hero training, Izuku could probably destroy him. The time they fought… it all clicked into place. He only used one finger’s worth of power. He could have demolished him then. He didn’t.

Izuku wiped the tears from his face. “I have all this power but I’m not ready yet. I’m still training. I have to get stronger.” He turned to face Bakugou. “I’ve been watching you get stronger.”

Bakugou felt a chill run down his spine.

“I missed you, Kacchan. I watched the news when they were looking for me, you know. I saw you. You looked like you’d been crying for days.” Izuku ate another piece of the orange, biting the segment in half first before eating the rest. “I wish I had this power before the entrance exam. I wish I could be at Yuuei with you! This is probably crazy. You probably hate me. You should, I think. I wouldn’t blame you. It was my idea for the League of Villains to capture you. I convinced them that they shouldn’t kill you, that the hero industry would restrain you, stunt your growth, that you’d grow to hate it and become a villain anyways. I told them to catch you and give you to me. That’s sick right? I’m so sick. There’s something wrong with me, Kacchan, right?”

Bakugou was at a loss.

“I thought… I thought I could get you to join me. To be by my side. To help me get stronger. I thought you’d be proud of me, when you saw how strong I was but…” Izuku stared down at his bandaged hands, sticky with juice. “But I hurt you. They made me hurt you. Those first few days they were suspicious. They watched me. So I convinced them.”

Izuku threw his arms around Bakugou, pulled him close. Bakugou tensed, not sure what to believe. “Kacchan, I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry.” Izuku was sobbing now, burying his face into Bakugou’s shoulder. “I’m disgusting. You must hate me. It’s okay if you hate me now I…”

Izuku let go, then lifted Bakugou’s hands to his face. His eyes were red, snot and tears messing his face. “Bakugou, kill me. I deserve to die for what I did to you.”

Bakugou stared at him, heart drumming in his ears, his eyes wide. His hands cradled Izuku’s head. If he let off an explosion, he’d blow his head off. He’d be free. He had a chance… Izuku probably had food, maybe even a way to get back to Japan… He’d gotten here from the League of Villain’s hideout, after all.

But…

Bakugou stared into Izuku’s eyes. He’d watched those snivelling eyes for years. He’d made Izuku cry, over and over, for a decade. And Izuku had followed him even then. And Izuku was still here, even in these circumstances. He didn’t know what to believe. He didn’t know if every word that came out of his mouth was a lie.

What Bakugou did know is that he couldn’t kill him. His hands were shaking as he lowered them. “I can’t do it, Izuku.”

Izuku smiled through his tears, pulled Bakugou in. He was laughing and sobbing at the same time. He took in several deep breaths, then, calmer, leaned forward and kissed him.
It was different this time from when they had kissed as children. That time it had been just a wet peck on the lips. They had pulled away immediately, laughing. It was different this time, Izuku’s soft lips pressing into Bakugou’s, tender and lazy and sweet. And Bakugou closed his eyes and kissed him back.
Chapter Summary

Bakugou looked at him, stunned. He wanted to believe this side of the story, that Izuku was being coerced. He wanted to believe that he had been caught in this trap, that they were both prisoners of the League of Villains. But, looking at Izuku’s face, wet with tears, he couldn’t shake the memory of the villain’s grin on his face as he beat him in the barn. It had been the look of someone drunk on power, craving more.

Chapter Notes

There's a really lengthy and thorough description of suicidal thoughts and an attempt. If you want to skip it, just skip the entire first section. It's plot relevant in that it's the first part of a set of memories, but it's not new information.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Midoriya Izuku has given up well before he met All Might. The world had gone muted — people’s voices, sensations, moments of joy all came through him like he was underwater. Bakugou’s verbal abuse rolled off his back like dew on a lily pad.

Midoriya Izuku had two loves.

He loved All Might, brought to tears with joy watching that video of him grinning. When he heard “I am Here!” he heard it as “I am here for you!” He believed it deeply, held onto that hope, cradled it like a candle flame on a windy night. That hope kept him going. He wanted to be so strong, so effortlessly incredible. He wanted to save people. He wanted to become a Symbol of Hope, just like All Might.

He loved Bakugou, a crush turned obsession that started in kindergarten and only intensified over time. He started studying Bakugou, his Quirk, thinking about what kind of hero he could be. Combat, certainly, maybe propelling himself with the explosions to become an agile, mobile fighter. When he saw Bakugou’s performance at the sports festival, he felt seen, like the deep, fated connection between the two of them was confirmed.

It was this feeble hope that kept him going, like he was pulled along by two strings. It didn’t matter how much of a disappointment he was. It didn’t matter how unfair it was that he, intelligent, ambitious, pure of heart, would end up Quirkless. But no matter how angry he felt, how hollow he felt inside, he could at least move forward. Maybe, just maybe, if he could prove himself, he wouldn’t be worthless anymore.

All Might’s dismissal of his dream cracked the glass of his hope.

Failing the hero exam and watching his dream of a future with Bakugou finally broke it.

His failure drowned him. He couldn’t eat, couldn’t sleep. He could barely even bring himself to cry.
This went on for weeks, well into the break between school years. He had ended up in a regular high school. He took down all of the posters of All Might in his room, folded them carefully into a box, which he shoved under his bed. His room was as blank and empty as he felt. He’d probably never see Bakugou again, he realized. And what right did he ever have to think he could stand by his side? Bakugou was sure to become a top pro hero. What would it look like if his lover was a Quirkless loser?

Izuku had nothing and he longed to disappear.

So he did.

He left his note carefully folded on his desk. He took his notebooks with him, with intent to burn them, or leave them there so someone might find his body and know who he was. He brought a rope with him. His head felt full of concrete. He couldn’t think enough to make decisions, other than this one. He booked a ticket to Mt. Fuji, hiked to the entrance of the forest, hiked past the signs — “Your life is a precious gift from your parents,” and “Please consult the police before you decide to die!”

He walked and he walked. His stomach ached. His head ached even more. He stepped over the tape leading hikers on a safe path. The further he got, the more often he smelled the stench of death. He came across a skull being picked clean by maggots. He kept going.

To his disappointment, the forest was dense with pine trees with flimsy limbs. He walked and he walked until he found an oak tall enough with strong enough branches. He opened his notebook to a page of instructions. He tied the rope into the right knot, then climbed the tree and secured it on what looked like the tallest, strongest branch.

He jumped.

And he hit the ground, the branch splitting and bending until it was on the ground next to him. He hadn’t been high enough to even injure himself.

Izuku was a failure and he even failed to do this.

He lay there, sobbing, screaming until he was empty. By now his mother had probably found his note. By now they were already looking for him. If he went back, the scrutiny that would follow would be a hellscape. He was stuck here.

He emptied his lungs, emptied himself of tears. He balled his hands into fists and slammed on the ground, over and over, until he cracked his skin. He plummeted into a rage, throwing his backpack away. It didn’t get that far, but the clasp opened and his notebooks flew out of it, littering the ground.

He was panting heavily. He punched the tree once, crying out, then crumpled, exhausted.

He could sit here and starve to death, die of dehydration. He wanted it to be quick, painless, but this would have to do. He sat, his back against the oak tree that had failed him, and waited. Night fell and he was freezing. He curled in on himself, warming his hands with his breath, warming his stomach with his hands. It wasn’t cold enough to die of hypothermia. He couldn’t sleep. His eyes burned, but he couldn’t cry any more.

He heard footsteps.

Izuku froze. Had someone heard him, called the police? If it was the police, they would take him back, probably check him into some hospital, pump him full of psychopharmaceuticals. His mother would be notified. She’d rush in, hug him. She’d be devastated. He didn’t want to look her in the
eye. She would blame herself, just like she blamed herself for him being Quirkless. She was hurt, but it was a grief that would dull over the years. Having him there, knowing he was sick in the head enough to want to die, having to take care of him... that was a burden she didn’t deserve.

If it wasn’t the police, was it someone else who wanted to die? Would they be able to help him. He peeked around the trunk of his tree and his stomach dropped.

Standing there was a gangly man, grey haired, his entire body covered in what looked like dead hands. One of them covered his face, so all he could see was one red eye. Izuku froze, caught in what he could only describe was the weight of power carried by a determined, evil man.

“I came out here to find a body but I’ve found a living soul” The man spread his arms, laughing. “How exciting! How lucky!”

“What… who are you?” Izuku whimpered, crawling backwards.

The man reached his hand forward -- his actual one -- to help him up. “Someone who can give you something to live for.”

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Bakugou woke in a bed.

Somehow his back hurt even more than when he was sleeping on that concrete floor. He twisted into a more comfortable position, soaking in the warmth of a real blanket, the softness of a pillow. He’d lost a lot of muscle, his cheeks hollowed, and his new boney-ness made it hard for him to find a comfortable position.

Izuku lay, sleeping next to him. Bakugou could kill him here. He could find the way that Izuku made it between here and Japan (that portal fucker, probably). He could finally know for sure how long Izuku was away, have enough information for a plan. He could gather information here, as long as Izuku trusted him. He had to work to keep that trust.

Izuku rolled over to face him, smiling softly. He looked almost beautiful, if Bakugou hadn’t known of the twisted cruelty behind his former friend’s face. Some stupid part of him had wanted this, to have Quirkless Deku to himself. It couldn’t happen, he reasoned then. He had to choose between striving to be the best and this crush. He chose his dream. A pang of something -- guilt? -- rose to his throat. If Yuuei really believed he had defected (could he believe anything that Izuku said?), then this door was still open. But did he want this villain, this overpowered monster? He had seen the cruelty he was capable of, monitoring or not. And that was against him, someone that Izuku had strong feelings about. What was he capable of doing to someone he didn’t care about.

Izuku leaned forward to kiss him gently, and Bakugou tensed. Izuku didn’t seem to notice, sliding his hands up Bakugou’s shirt. Heart pounding, Bakugou blurted out, “I can’t fucking do this!”

Izuku stared at him in disbelief. Fuck… He needed to fix this. What could he say?

“I’m just… this is really fucking sudden. It’s a little fast, don’t you think? I want this but…”

Izuku softened. “Of course, Kacchan.” He leaned forward again, this time kissing his cheek, and got up. He got out of bed, left the bedroom, closing the door behind him. Bakugou got up, paused, then
followed him.

The door was locked. He wondered if what he had said had changed Izuku’s mind. Either way, there was no illusion. He was still a prisoner. He whispered a quiet fucking shit… between his teeth, hoping that Izuku couldn’t hear him. Being trusted with a bedroom, one with a window and everything, seemed like a sign of progress. If he tried to escape, would he be thrown back in the barn? His window faced it, the shade of it darkening the room. It felt like a deliberate threat. Izuku could be waiting for him outside like last time. He had gotten off easy last time. He had no idea how Izuku would react. He seemed inconsistent, volatile. If he could figure out Izuku’s patterns, maybe if he stayed long enough to predict his comings and goings, then he could actually devise a plan to escape. He had to keep Izuku close, build him up. Some twisted part of him was happier now, allowed into his embrace, being almost doted on. The rest of him felt like a dog, being given treats some days and being kicked other days.

He sunk to the floor, head in his hands. “Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck…” He repeated this to himself, curling forward until his forehead touched his knees.

The door opened. Izuku walked in with a bowl of rice and a small plate with a boiled egg and sliced apples. “Kacchan, what are you doing there?”

Bakugou sat up, eyes fixed on the floor. “I don’t know.”

Izuku knelt next to him, put the plate on the floor. “Kacchan, I know how you must be feeling. You’re scared, you don’t know what’s going to happen to you. I’m trying my best, Kacchan. I… I don’t want to hurt you anymore, but…” His eyes started to fill with tears. “They told me if I failed them they’d turn me into something like one of the other Noumus. I’d be powerful, but I wouldn’t be able to think for myself! They’d kill you too! I couldn’t live with myself if I let that happen! Don’t you get it? This is the only way we can both stay whole!”

Bakugou looked at him, stunned. He wanted to believe this side of the story, that Izuku was being coerced. He wanted to believe that he had been caught in this trap, that they were both prisoners of the League of Villains. But, looking at Izuku’s face, wet with tears, he couldn’t shake the memory of the villain’s grin on his face as he beat him in the barn. It had been the look of someone drunk on power, craving more. Bakugou had made that face before. He would have done anything to get stronger. Who’s to say that Izuku was no different, that he’d give anything to be stronger, that the League of Villains was where he could get it?

Izuku kissed him again, left the plate of food next to him, and left again.

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Izuku was gone until sunset, Bakugou noted. If it happened again and again, he could assume that was how much time he had. Eight hours might get him far enough to escape, if Izuku didn’t have some sort of Quirk that could track him. He couldn’t rule that out. He also thought it might be his best chance of escaping. Going through a portal with Izuku, if that really was the way that he travelled, would only put him back in the hands of the League of Villains. He needed another way. He could figure one out.

Izuku returned with another plate of food and a small table. He set it on the ground, sat cross legged, and smiled at Bakugou. “It’s not the best circumstances, but we can eat together, Kacchan.” The
food was simple, just some stirfried vegetables and meat, but it was hot and Bakugou ate it vigorously while Izuku ate carefully and watched. After their meal, he took Bakugou by the hand and led him out of the room.

The house was surprisingly spacious, an open floor plan with tall ceilings and huge windows. The floors were wood, the undecorated walls painted pale yellow. It looked like a plain American home. The room was upstairs in a hallway with only one row of doors, like a hotel, so he could look out across the entire house. As he looked, he counted four doors -- the room he was in, a room that had a computer and papers and notebooks strewn everywhere, and downstairs, a closed door. He saw a kitchen, a small table with a dropleaf and two chairs, a couch covered in even more notebooks, some books. The fourth door was a bathroom, where Izuku took him.

Izuku peeled off Bakugou’s clothes. He was filthy. He smelled. He didn’t remember the last time he had been washed. But still, Izuku looked him up and down with a hungry expression that Bakugou found both unnerving and arousing. Izuku also undressed, led him into a shower, slid the glass door closed behind him. He turned on the water, which was freezing at first, but warmed up gradually.

Izuku squirt a dollop of shampoo into his palm, then started to massage it into Bakugou’s hair. He didn’t move, letting Izuku run his nails vigorously over Bakugou’s scalp. He didn’t care, as long as he was getting clean.

Izuku gently pushed Bakugou’s head forward so his head was in the stream of water, the shampoo rinsing from his hair. He closed his eyes so he wouldn’t get shampoo in his eyes. He felt slick hands work their way around his back, smelled soap. Izuku ran his hands up and down Bakugou’s back, then wrapped around to his torso, hands concentrating on Bakugou’s abs. Bakugou opened his eyes. He felt Izuku’s hard penis press against his back. Izuku kissed the back of his neck tenderly as he worked his hands up Bakugou’s chest. “You’re so beautiful, Kacchan.”

Bakugou felt like he might faint. Izuku stood between him and the shower door.

Izuku turned Bakugou around to face him, leaned in to kiss him. It was a slow, slick kiss, their faces wet from the water. Bakugou froze, then slowly kissed him back, hesitantly, with the least amount of motion. Izuku slid his hands slowly up Bakugou’s torso until they reached Bakugou’s nipples. He rubbed them in circles, then kissed down Bakugou’s neck and collarbone until his lips pressed against the sensitive flesh. He licked the hardening nub. Bakugou felt his chest tighten and, to his horror, felt aroused. Soon he was hard as well, his cock rubbing against Izuku’s. He hadn’t been touched like this in months, his body was hungry for touch even though his mind wrung out fear.

Izuku dropped to his knees, rubbing soap into the back of Bakugou’s legs. He looked up and made eye contact with Bakugou. He looked so pleased, eyes glazed with excitement. He opened his mouth, lifted his lips towards the head of Bakugou’s cock. “Is this alright, Kacchan?”

Bakugou hesitated, then nodded.

Izuku’s mouth was plush, colder than Bakugou expected. He gripped the shaft of Bakugou’s dick in one hand, twisted it as he worked his hand up and down in rhythm with his mouth, making exquisite slurping noises and he took his cock into his mouth as far as he could, licking the sensitive vein on its underside. Bakugou hissed sharply, then let out a low moan, which seemed to excite Izuku even more. He upped his tempo.

The head of the shower on his back and Izuku’s tight, wet lips around his cock was almost too much for Bakugou. After the seemingly unending hours of silence and lack of stimulation, he felt
completely overwhelmed. He felt himself melting into the sensation, for the first time forgetting about his objective, his plans. His entire world now was his breath, the water, and Izuku’s mouth.

“D… Izuku, I’m gonna cum…”

And Izuku stopped. “I’m not done with you yet, though, Kacchan.” His other hand, still coated in soap, worked its way in between Bakugou’s ass cheeks until it found his puckered entrance. Bakugou pulled back, but Izuku kissed his thigh. “Don’t worry, Kacchan, I’m just going to clean you off right now.”

Izuku touched one soapy finger to Bakugou’s asshole, made circles, alternating clockwise and counterclockwise. Bakugou shook. No one had ever touched him there before. Izuku lead the water down the groove of his ass so he could rinse him, then carefully turned him around again, staying on his knees as he spread open Bakugou’s ass.

“I’m nervous too, I’ve, uh, never done this before.” He pressed his face into Bakugou’s ass, flat tongue slipping across the rim of his asshole. Bakugou leaned forward, supporting himself on the wall with one forearm. His legs trembled as he tensed to keep himself from slipping. The water ran down his shoulders now, all the way down to Izuku’s head. He didn’t stop, letting the warm water pool on his tongue. He worked his tongue in indulgent, languid circles, then pressed inside. Bakugou was impossibly tight, burning hot, exactly as Izuku has suspected. He hummed, then replaced his tongue with a slick, curled finger. Bakugou’s legs buckled, and he held himself up by gripping the top of the shower glass. It hurt, but not in a stinging, sharp way. It felt hot, his ass spreading open as Izuku swiveled his finger inside him, groping deeper like he was looking for something.

Whatever it was, he found it. Bakugou cried out, a sound that embarrassed him immediately. Izuku rubbed the fleshy part of his finger against that spot, slow at first, then pressing harder and faster. Bakugou’s head was swimming. His orgasm rose within him without warning, and he came on the linoleum tile of the shower wall. Izuku got on his feet, washed off his face and hands, clamped his arms around Bakugou’s face and kissed the spot between his shoulderblades.

Bakugou panted, his insides distorted.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for riding on this minivan to hell with me y’all! I wonder how fucked up I can make this story until all of you leave me lmao
“The world gave up on you, Midoriya. I want to crush that world! I want to crush this world that wastes away on All Might!” He grabbed Izuku by the shoulders. “Do you understand?”

Izuku thought it over, still teary eyed. He was still weak, still lost, still confused. He was upset but… Something about this didn’t seem right. “Why are you telling me this, Shigaraki? I get what you’re saying, but I don’t know how to feel about it. I don’t even feel angry at All Might. I… I don’t see why you would bother telling me this unless you wanted me to help you but… it’s not just that I don’t have a Quirk. I really am useless.”

He jumped as a voice came through the television. He had hardly registered that it was on.

“We can find a way to make you useful, boy.”

Midoriya Izuku sat on the barstool, his feel dangling. He stared down blankly at the cup of tea warming his hands. They had offered him something else to warm him up, but he had said no, tea is fine, and they had listened. The steam wafted up in his face and breathed it in. He hadn’t expected to do that anymore.

“It’s perfectly fitting that All Might would dismiss you like that, Midoriya.” Shigaraki’s tone of voice was surprisingly calm, given his appearance. He looked mangled, scary, but he had only shown Midoriya kindness. “This society is twisted at its core. Why would a hero stomp down the dreams of a normal boy? In this world, men are not created equal. All Might heard you were Quirkless and then you became useless to him. This society doesn’t have room for anyone that isn’t useful to its corruption. The heroes you see on television aren’t heroes, Midoriya. They don’t stand for justice. They stand for their own selfish pursuit of money, fame, and power. And All Might is the worst of them all!”

Midoriya watched as a teardrop fell into his tea, ripping the surface. He had lost his will to live as his dream was swept out from under him, by the very man who sparked his dream in the first place. His hero… Could he even call him that anymore?

“Midoriya, if All Might was a hero, why didn’t he save you?” Shigaraki spread his hands wide. Midoriya looked up at him, sideways. “He has this whole world under his thumb, grinning so the people don’t notice the power he has stolen and given to people like him. People with ‘strong’ Quirks, people with ‘useful’ Quirks. The rest of us are supposed to sit here and idolize him!”

“I hate people like that, Midoriya.”

It had never occurred to Izuku to hate All Might for what he had said. He had turned it inwards, hating himself, giving up on himself. His dream was crushed, but his dream had only ever been to be like All Might. Without All Might, who would he even be?

“The world gave up on you, Midoriya. I want to crush that world! I want to crush this world that
wastes away on All Might!” He grabbed Izuku by the shoulders. “Do you understand?”

Izuku thought it over, still teary eyed. He was still weak, still lost, still confused. He was upset but… Something about this didn’t seem right. Crush the world? Did that mean crushing All Might? “Why are you telling me this, Shigaraki? I get what you’re saying, but I don’t know how to feel about it. I don’t even feel angry at All Might. I… I don’t see why you would bother telling me this unless you wanted me to help you but… it’s not just that I don’t have a Quirk. I really am useless.”

He jumped as a voice came through the television. He had hardly registered that it was on.

“We can find a way to make you useful, boy.”

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When Bakugou awoke, Izuku was gone and the door was open. The shadow from the barn had already sunk past his window. It must be the afternoon. He sat up, swung his legs over the side of the bed. Was he… allowed to leave the room? He stood, walked cautiously to the door, mindful that his footfalls were quiet enough that if Izuku was still around he wouldn’t be able to hear him. He peeked out the door.

The house was empty. Izuku was nowhere to be seen, not even outside the windows. Bakugou didn’t think there was anywhere he could hide, unless he was in one of the other rooms. He peeked into the room in the hallway, the one that opened up to the office. Empty. He paused for a long moment, then slowly cracked open the door. The room was dark, lit only by the computer screen, left on the log in page, and small, basically a large closet. On the walls were maps of cities, big cities, all the places with many hero agencies. Notebooks were stacked in a pile around the desk. There must have been dozens of them.

He picked one up. He expected it to be like Izuku’s hero studies, the stupid notebooks he took everywhere, muttering to himself while he wrote furiously. Bakugou had hated those notebooks. The thought of being observed that closely made him squirm.

These notebooks didn’t seem to have pages on pages of different heroes. Each one seemed to be concentrated on one hero. A thorough drawing of their appearance in costume, speculation about what each part of the augmentation of their suit might do. A printout of their official license, a map of their jurisdiction, their usual patrol route, their schedule, a list of their sidekicks and what days they worked. Lists of their salaries, their sponsorships, any ad campaigns or commercial appearances. Photos of them out of costume, blurry like they had been taken with a cell phone and then printed out.

Bakugou picked up one after another. Each one was a different hero, same level of detail, though some had more notes in the margins like “reacts slower from the left” and “lower performance in rain.” Heroes that he knew his classmates had interned with had those classmates listed already. Heroes he’d never bothered learning the name of still had the same amount of information. He felt sick with dread.

The one on his desk was for Ingenium.

Bakugou backed out of the room and carefully went down the steps. There wasn’t even a cubby underneath the stairs to hide in. He curled his foot on the wooden floor. He could run now, blow
open the windows and bolt, even try to run through the front door.

He didn’t know how long Izuku would be gone, or even if he was off the property. The explosion would be loud. And he had nowhere to go. He paused in the kitchen. Izuku had even left the knives in their rack. He really wasn’t afraid of Bakugou now.

Bakugou opened the fridge. It was well stocked, the drawers bursting with fruits and vegetables. He takes out a red bell pepper, shiny like a polished stone. He rinsed it, then bit into it reverently. He broke off pieces of it with his fingers, removed the pith and stem, then continued to bite into it as he moved around the kitchen. He found a glass and fills it with water. He sat on the counter, drinking it slowly, eating his pepper. He could gorge himself but he doesn’t want to. He needed to think clearly.

Thirty minutes pass and a dark portal opened in the middle of the living room. Izuku stepped through it. His clothes are dirty, his bandages loose, revealing bruised skin. He wiped the dirt off his face with one hand. He smelled like soot.

“Kacchan!” And he was grinning, ran over to hug and kiss him, then backed off. “Ah, I’m so filthy, I shouldn’t have done that.”

“Where have you been, Izuku?” Bakugou asked cautiously, pretending to focus on the bowl of canned soup he had found.

“What do you think, that I sit around here all day waiting for you, dummy?” Izuku sat down next to him on the counter. “I’m getting stronger. I still have work to do.”

Bakugou paused. This was his chance. “What do you do, Izuku?”

There was a loud crack as Izuku smacked him across the face. He threw Bakugou off of the counter, the bowl clattering and spilling everywhere. Bakugou’s head hit the floor, hard enough for his vision to black out for a moment.

“What the fuck, Izuku! What did I even fucking do wrong?” Bakugou had spent so many days being careful, toeing the line between pleasing Izuku and protecting for himself. He slipped. “Are you really going to beat the shit out of me for asking a stupid fuckin question?”

Izuku hopped off the counter and kicked him in the gut. “Don’t play games with me, Kacchan! I know you! I can see right through you! You’re still trying to escape aren’t you? You’re gathering intel, you’re watching me! I’m doing everything for you, Kacchan! They would have killed you without me! I’m doing so much but I’m still nothing to you, aren’t I?”

Izuku was bawling, but his face was crazed, wrong. He kicked Bakugou again. Was he smiling or grimacing? He knelt and punch Bakugou in the face again and again, still crying. It was like he couldn’t control himself.

Bakugou caught his hand, spat out blood. He could stay quiet through nonsense but a fucking beating? “Shut the fuck up, Izuku! Shut up with your fucking bullshit! You’re trying to lead me along like a fucking dog, but you’re still a fucking villain! What did you have to fucking do with Ingenium?!”

He pushed Izuku away and launched an explosion between them to get some distance. He sprinted, didn’t bother trying the door. He blew up the window with one hand, jumped to avoid the broken glass, using his hands to propel himself.

Izuku was on his feet, power visibly coursing through him, green tendrils of lightning sparking off of his body. He launched himself. He was fast, too fucking fast when did he get that fast, so Bakugou
pivoted to face him, to dodge the punch that was coming.

It passed him with a force that blew a gust of air through the field, uprooting the grass. That really was All Might’s power. Bakugou had seen it this close before.

Izuku had missed so Bakugou took the opening to grab him and launch him into the ground with an explosion, slamming him as hard as he could, then backing away from the smoke and dust. Izuku was up immediately, hardly scathed. Bakugou roared, threw explosion after explosion at him, rapid fire, not seeming to get a good hit. He seemed to be coming from all directions.

Smoke and dust clouded the air. Some of the grass had caught on fire and with a snap it raged, smoke billowing up. This might be his chance to escape. He ran into the cover of the smoke, past the fire. Maybe he could use the cover to launch an ambush, catch him off guard is a head on attack was useless.

He felt his stomach drop. He looked over his shoulder and Izuku was there. He hadn’t even cleared that much distance. He took the full front of a blow, the air knocked out of him as he was flung to the side, tumbling through dirt and grass until he got his bearings and let out a blast in the opposite direction to stop his momentum. He launched himself upwards to avoid Izuku’s kick, then twisting into a spiraling nosedive, propelling himself.

**HOWITZER IMPACT!!!**

Izuku didn’t move. As Bakugou’s fist reached him, he grabbed it with one hand and effortlessly slammed him to the ground.

He pinned Bakugou to the ground with one knee, both hands gripping his head.

Izuku was crying, smiling, shaking his head.

—

“You want to be strong like All Might, boy? I believe that you could surpass him.”
Chapter Summary

Izuku gets everything he wanted.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

You spared my life, Kacchan, so I’ll spare yours… but it’s going to be on my terms now.

Izuku had once been afraid of All for One. It was hard to look past that mangled face, the overwhelming presence. But Izuku knew better, knew him as a father, a protective figure, a hand that had pulled him out of the mud and reshaped him into something strong and beautiful.

“I know I’ve asked so much of you already, sir. I’m sorry to ask of you again.” Izuku bowed deeply, his torso perpendicular to his legs.

“That is true, boy. All I needed of you was to eliminate a threat and to rattle Yuuei’s precious ego. You have already done that. Why are you wasting your time with this one?”

Bakugou was bound at Izuku’s side, ears and eyes plugged into darkness. He was breathing hard, couldn’t even muster the strength to rattle the chains on his restraints. They were stronger now, reinforced, since the last ones had failed them. Izuku had let that mistake slip, but he couldn’t do it again, not if he needed All for One’s trust.

“I believe he can be useful to you, sir. If I can be this strong with your guidance, I know that he can be just as strong! He’s even stronger than me!” Izuku didn’t dare look up from his bow. He didn’t want to see All for One’s reaction.

All for One laughed at him. “Then why not give him to me! He’d be a fine Noumu! But you don’t want that, do you? You’re attached to this one.”

Izuku sighed. He was always transparent, easy to read. “I am. I want to save him, sir, from being trapped by the corruption of the hero industry. He is important to me. He drives me to want to be stronger.” He shut his eyes tight. All for One had only been giving to him — giving him purpose, giving him freedom, giving him power. He was the one who had seen Izuku’s worth even when he was Quirkless, saw his potential even with the strongest Quirk, seen that he had room for more. “I’m sorry for deceiving you, sir. These are my true feelings now.”

All for One placed his palm on the top of Izuku’s head. “A father knows that children will try to lie. I will give you a chance, since you’ve been working so hard. But it is as you’ve said — we need to change him. I will allow it.”

From All for One’s side shifted a man, his eyes sealed closed, clothes tight around his body. The Blank Slate villain, Hippocampus. Izuku rose from his bow, heart pounding. He hadn’t wanted to do this, but it was the only way. He wanted Bakugou badly, needed him by his side, whatever it took.
Izuku was sitting on the bed when Bakugou awoke. It was midday, the sun trickling in, perfectly illuminating his face as he sat up, bleary eyed. He looked lost, eyes lazily scanning the room like he didn’t recognize it at all. He finally turned enough to see Izuku, smiling at him, and his eyes went wide. “Deku?? You’re alive?”

Before he could stop himself, he lunged forward, throwing his arms around Izuku like he was afraid he’d turn to dust and slip away. He shook him, then punched his arm. “Holy shit, dude! You’re never fucking allowed to pull a stunt like that again, dipshit.” He stared at him for a long moment and Izuku was shocked by the warmth on his face. “What the fuck even happened?”

Izuku was beaming. “It’s a heavy story, Kacchan. Do you want to walk outside while I tell you?”

As they walked through the field, Izuku crafted a beautiful tale about his suicide attempt and his eventual rescue. He told him about All Might, and Bakugou was just as stunned as the first time he had heard it. He told him about the weeks after the entrance exam. He told him about getting to Aokigahara. Hiking through the trees, breathing in the sweet, dewy air… something about the beauty of that moment had made him change his mind. He tried to go home, but ended up lost. He panicked. The forest was horrified, haunted. He described the smell, the bodies he’d seen. He told him about how he wandered around for days before giving up. He told him that the police had found him, shivering and starving and half conscious. They had taken him home to his teary-eyed mother. He had ended up in a hospital, then ended up here. “My mom thought a change of scenery would help my mood, so we’re taking a vacation.”

It was a flimsy lie, like a threadbare curtain barely doing its job, but Bakugou was so overwhelmed, seeing Izuku alive after having thought he’d lost him, that he didn’t seem to notice. “Fuck, I’m… I’m really glad you’re here. And I’m so fucking sorry! If I had known…”

“Hey, hey, my mom told me people were saying all those things. She told me that you were devastated, practically fell into a depression yourself.” Izuku touched him on the shoulder. “I know you. I know you’re probably blaming yourself, but it was never your fault, Kacchan.”

Bakugou looked at him for a long time before saying anything. “I never thought you would be so upset that you’d want to fucking kill yourself, Deku. When we were looking for you… shit, when we thought you were dead, it really fucked me up. I’ve been such an ass to you. I don’t even fucking know why. Even if I’m not the reason you did it, I’m still sorry, Deku.” He covered his mouth. “I mean—“

“Deku’s fine, Kacchan.”

The first few days were nerve-racking. Izuku fidgeted, fretted when Bakugou wasn’t looking. He was sure that he would notice that the pieces didn’t quite add up. Bakugou was smart, observant. Hippocampus had wiped his memory, but only becoming a Noumu could erase a man completely. His anxiety spiked at Bakugou’s every comment, which came often. He seemed delighted by their surroundings (I haven’t been outside of the city in years -- shit, it’s so quiet here!), even the minute
details (Holy shit, are these eggs brown?). Izuku had scrubbed the place of evidence, top to bottom, but he was certain he had missed something.

Wiping the slate clean wasn’t enough -- he still needed to convince Bakugou to join him.

“Now this is the fucking life, Deku! You never told me your folks had a place like this! Where are we even?” Bakugou made himself at home. He kicked up his feet on the coffee table, slouching back on the couch. He’s sweaty, towel draped on his shoulders after a long morning workout. “Where are we again?”

Izuku wondered if he was so amazed by their surroundings as a game, letting him know that he knew what was going on.

“New Zealand, remember? You’re seriously telling me you don’t remember the plane ride over? You must have been really upset.” Izuku doesn’t look at him, just continues pushing eggs around in the pan. He has it on low heat, so they don’t burn in the bottom and stay undercooked on top. He’s perfectly aware of the holes between his stories, the threads that don’t quite connect, but the mind can make wonderful connections and people be fooled by anything with enough trust. At least, that’s what he’s banking on.

“Shut the fuck up, Deku, I told you I was done with the sappy shit.” He didn’t seem all that upset though. And he especially didn’t seem suspicious. After all, he did end up in this house, and he must have gotten there somewhere. “I’ve never had this kind of vacation before. Just ‘cause you’re in ‘intensive therapy’ or whatever doesn’t mean I have to fucking do it.”

Izuku brought him half of the eggs, kept a plate for himself. “Well then, Kacchan, what do you wanna do on your vacation?”

Bakugou looked at him. Was Izuku making up the rosiness in his cheeks? “I don’t know. We haven’t spent this much time alone since we were kids.”

“We can’t exactly play ‘dinosaur hero, alien villain’ anymore.” Izuku relaxed into the seat next to Bakugou on the couch, pushing the eggs around on his plate. He’s torn. He wants to dig into the ‘sappy shit.’ Bakugou was always strangely open when they talked -- that man had no shame -- maybe is Izuku played his cards right, he could reveal his true motivations, spoonful by spoonful.

Bakugou are his eggs vigorously. He was always hungry these days, not entirely sure why. “It doesn’t have to be like old days like that, Deku. We can make up new shit now.”

“Like what kind of shit, Kacchan?” Bakugou always had the silliest look on his face when Izuku cursed, like he had just watch a cat not quite make a jump.

“Anything you want, Deku, I’m all ears.”

Izuku paused. “Kacchan, are you… are you being delicate with me? You can tell me you’re bored or if you want to go home, you don’t need to keep pretending. You’ve been really nice to me and I know you’re doing it because you’re trying not to hurt my feelings, but I really am feeling better and you don’t need to --”

Bakugou kissed him.

“I told you I had some time to work some shit out.” He looked at him with a piercing intensity, gauging Izuku’s reaction.

Izuku cupped his head in his hands and kissed him back.
Izuku had expected to feel warm but all he felt was empty.

——

Izuku still left the house, telling Bakugou that he was going to therapy and other treatments. He’d leave out the front door, walk down the road, then step into Kurogiri’s portal when he was well out of sight.

Through the portal was the League of Villains headquarters, usually just Shigaraki and Kurogiri. They didn’t discuss much. Izuku had one job and he was trusted to do it. He donned his jumpsuit and hooded cloak, re-wrapped the bandages around his arms, reviewed his notebook.

“Around this time of night, since he’s a combat specialist, he’ll probably investigate anything suspicious and come to the fight instead of waiting for a disaster… probably the kind of hero that doesn’t need a disaster to act… his patrol crosses three main throughways and loops here, through a less populated part of town, to check for suspicious characters…” And on and on. Shigaraki was surprised that he ever actually got anything done with all that mumbling.

Izuku left his notebook on the counter. He stood in the doorway, taking a deep breath, running through his objective again and again, until it drummed in his head like a heartbeat. He pulled up the caged mask that covered most of his face, and launched himself into the night.

It was warm out, muggy even, the air heavy. Izuku bounced up the walls outside of the hideout to the rooftop of the building, then bounded, rooftop to rooftop, headed in the direction he had planned. He felt light, free, all his clouded thoughts falling off him like water droplets onto the ground below. His thoughts were always jumbled, his head like a swarm of bees, especially now, especially with this new Bakugou, this new chance. Everything going so perfectly but he was just waiting for it all to come crumbling down… All of that rolled off his back. He could breathe.

On the last rooftop he paused, crouching at the edge and peering down. He waits. He is patient. Even with Native’s habits mapped out perfectly, there were always other variables to consider — a crime that he would run to stop, interrupting his patrol loop, an intern he was training that he may show a different part of the city. No matter. Izuku had never failed before

He doesn’t have to wait long before heading the tap of leather moccasins on pavement. Native turns the corner of the patrol route alone. His sidekick was probably off that night or covering the handoff of a captured villain.

Perfect.

Izuku leapt down from the rooftop down the dark gap in between buildings. He pulls down his mask, hides it in his hood. Just as Native passes, he kicked the dumpster in the alley so hard it falls over. He slumps down next to it like he’s been hurt. He cries out.

“What the— who’s there?” It’s too easy, like baiting ants with poisoned honey.

Native entered into the alley with no fear. “This is a pro hero! Is anyone there?” He walked further and further down the alley, looking for signs of anyone. He spotted Izuku and ran to him. “Young man, are you alright?”

“There… There was a villain…” Izuku choked out, pointing down the alleyway.
Native nodded, started to sprint to chase the ‘villain.’ Typical. Izuku had been skeptical before, but he’d seen it over and over again, these so-called heroes were always so quick to leap into battle, where the press would gather and where the glory and excitement was. Nevermind that the first priority of a hero should be to actually save people, even if no one else noticed.

That had been his first mistake. The second was turning his back on Izuku.

Izuku lunged forward, faster than Native could react. He grabbed him by the arm and threw him down so hard that he bounced up off the concrete. There was a sickening crack, a splatter of blood flying out of his mouth. Izuku knelt over him, hands at Native’s throat.

In the darkness, Native could only see Izuku’s crazed eyes. He must have seemed so young, so fragile, so helpless until now.

“Who are you?” Native gasped, choking feebly.

“Don’t worry about that.” Izuku grinned

He let loose a full power explosion and left the burnt body on the ground.

Chapter End Notes

izuku would have made a better hero killer just sayin'

sorry for the short chapter -- there was some shit i was gonna put here but instead im just gonna have a rly long last chapter for everyone
a spark

Chapter Summary

Izuku was overwhelmed. He felt so good, but after he came he suddenly felt his stomach drop, heavy with shame. He told himself *this is okay, this is okay, this is what I wanted*, but the other side of him drowned out that thought.

This was wrong. This wasn’t even Bakugou, just a tamed, hollow version of him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

No one wanted to tell Bakugou Katsuki what had happened to Midoriya Izuku and this was why.

He erupted, violent and screaming. It wasn’t safe anywhere near him. They had the sense to tell him outside but not the sense to remember to bring a goddamn fire truck. Bakugou raged, his face covered in soot, tears leaving a clean path through it. He smashed everything in sight.

Usually, there would be someone able to quell that rage but he wasn’t here anymore.

When the fire department finally arrived, the park was reduced to rubble, twisted metal where there once were swings, melted plastic on charcoal trees. They found him in the middle of the disaster zone, still screaming, his voice hoarse, but he was spent, almost docile when they led him back to the ambulance. He’d torn the muscles in his forearms, burnt his fingers and palms until the skin was blackened and cracking, like volcanic rock. No one knew that he could burn himself like that. He said nothing as they bandaged him up, said nothing to Recovery Girl, who promptly gave up scolding him.

Yuuei threatened to rescind his acceptance. In the end, he got academic probation before he’d set foot in the classroom.

Bakugou Katsuki had been famous as the victim of the sludge villain. Now he was famous as the terror that might have killed his childhood friend. The role suited him. No one went near him. He put up the tightest barrier he could, cursing the name of anyone who even tried to come close. When he yelled ‘DIE,’ people believed him. He buried himself in his work. He spent hours in the gym, even more honing his Quirk, pushing its limits. He had already felt what it was like to overuse it. Nothing scared him anymore.

He garnered a reputation as the one everyone had to reluctantly look up to. He was used to this, but not the silence that followed when he entered a room. He was the best and no one wanted to acknowledge him. Old Bakugou would have been pissed, demanded the attention he deserved. He couldn’t muster up the energy. He started to prefer the silence.

All Might tried his best at being a mentor, but he couldn’t seem to get through to him. The other teachers fretted, argued, held meeting after meeting, but Bakugou stayed within the bounds of his probation, was an excellent student. They decided the most reasonable course of action was to give him a supportive environment with enough room for him to grieve.
But it was Bakugou that stepped in to help All Might when the villains attacked, so viciously that while All Might fought that first Noumu, Shigaraki and Kurogiri were forced to retreat early or risk death. Bakugou always had a short fuse, but now it lit ablaze with violence when sparked. He was determined to stamp out the evil in the world, leave a smouldering crater in his wake if that’s what it took.

He had learned that the world was cruel too soon, risked imploding with that knowledge.

---

They slept, tangled in each other. Bakugou didn’t seem to be capable of letting Izuku go. When he awoke, he watched Izuku, watched his chest rise and fall. There he was, breathing. It was a marvel every time.

They may as well have been attached to each other. Izuku started skipping his therapy sessions, prioritized kissing on the couch.

Bakugou was always tender, always sweet in a way that Izuku didn’t think he was capable of. He kissed him everywhere -- his cheeks, his forehead, his nose, all sides of his neck, his back, shoulders, chest, legs, thighs… Bakugou started becoming coy, started mixing those kisses with a wet tongue, sharp teeth. Izuku let himself be devoured.

They kept this up for days, layer upon layer of affection. Something shifted between them. Bakugou’s hands started to stray slowly down Izuku’s torso, stopping at his pubic bone. He nibbled Izuku’s ear, then whispered, “Is this alright?”

“Yes, Kacchan, yes.” Izuku was grinning. He ran his hand through Bakugou’s hair, guided him into a slow, lavish kiss. Bakugou was impatient as always, tongue tracing Izuku’s teeth. He gripped Izuku’s hips and started to grind against him. Izuku felt the bulge between them. His skin tingled with anticipation.

Bakugou pulled back from their kiss, a thin thread of saliva between them. “Deku, do you have any lube on you?”

Izuku’s face went red. “I actually don’t…”

“No matter.” Bakugou crawled down, his mouth never leaving Izuku’s skin for too long. He paused at Izuku’s heat, sucked the side of his cock through his clothes. “Take them off.”

Izuku wriggled gracelessly out of his boxers. Bakugou kissed the tender skin between his hip and his balls, the dark skin surrounding them, delighted by the sounds he was rewarded with. He licked slowly up the underside of his shaft, then pressed his lips around the side and slid down, mouth plush and wet, then slid back up the other side. He smiled with a devilish look in his eyes, making full eye contact as he lowered his mouth onto the head of Izuku’s dick. He rolled his tongue around it, then rubbed on the slit of it, tucked his tongue under his too-sensitive foreskin. Izuku gripped the arm of the couch with both hands, trembling as Bakugou swallowed him. His mouth felt like a dream.

Bakugou closed his eyes, his hand gripping Izuku’s cock and shifting up and down in time with his movements. He rolled his wrist back and forth, made an awful slurping sound that made Izuku bit his lip. Bakugou went faster, coaxing a moan out of him, didn’t relent. He paused, licked the head of his cock while his continued to pump it. “Feel good, Deku? You like it when I suck your cock, Deku?”
Izuku couldn’t stand to look at him, hid his face in his hands and nodded.

“Cmon, babe, let me see your face. I wanna watch you cum.”

Izuku reluctantly lowered his hands. He felt a wave of pleasure roll up his body. “Kacchan, I think I’m close…”

“You think?” Bakugou tightened his grip, ducked his head down and pressed his face into Izuku’s balls, sucking the skin of them.

“I am, I am, I am!” Izuku was sweating. Bakugou returned his mouth to his cock and that was enough. Izuku let out a shaky breath, filled Bakugou’s mouth. He held it open as he came, letting him watch as he licked the last drop of it and swallow.

Izuku was overwhelmed. He felt so good, but after he came he suddenly felt his stomach drop, heavy with shame. He told himself this is okay, this is okay, this is what I wanted, but the other side of him drowned out that thought.

This was wrong. This wasn’t even Bakugou, just a tamed, hollow version of him.

He covered his face as tears began to pool. Bakugou returned to his place, face level with Izuku. “I fucking blew your mind, huh?”

Izuku snorted. “I’m just… so happy.”

Bakugou kissed him, sloppy. It dawned on Izuku that it was his own cum wet on his cheek and he laughed, wiped it off. “I thought I should leave you with something good before I went home.”

A long pregnant pause.

“Kacchan, about that…” Why was he saying this now? “I don’t want you to leave. I want you to stay with me.”

Bakugou’s face darkened the way it always did when encountering something in his way. “The fuck are you talking about.”

Izuku matched his gaze with determination. “I told you about All Might. I don’t believe in the hero industry anymore.”

“You’ve got some fucking weird pillow talk, Deku.” Bakugou grimaced, wiped his mouth. “Your head still isn’t screwed on right, is it? Heroes are like, your fucking thing.”

“At least hear me out!” Izuku grabbed his shoulders. “Listen, there’s so many people who became heroes because they look up to All Might! If he doesn’t actually care about people, then why is he doing it? I’ve had a lot of spare time, so I’ve been doing my research. Did you know that the average salary for a hero is almost 2 million a year? It’s subsidized by city taxes too, so there’s so much money being funneled into them, and that’s without sponsorships! Since All Might rose to prominence, the number of heroes has tripled, but the crime rate has stayed about the same. They’re not actually helping people! There’s so much corruption, Kacchan!” He took a deep breath. He hadn’t realized that he’d raised his voice. “I couldn’t live with myself if I just stood by and let that happen to you.”

Bakugou closed his eyes, his face strained. Finally, he turned away, stood up. “Maybe what you’re saying is true but I’m gonna grow up to be a half-bit shit hero in it for the glory. I’ll surpass All Might! I’ll fucking fix it on my own!” His voice trembled. “This is my fucking dream. You of all
Bakugou was surprised to find that he didn’t have his backpack on him, but his phone and wallet were on the nightstand and all of his clothes were in the drawers — he just figured that Izuku was the kind of person to do that for him, no matter how weird. He picked up his phone, found a metric fuckton of missed calls and messages, which he figured he could ignore for now. He dialed his home number.

“Hey mom, I totally forgot when my return flight is could you--” He stopped abruptly. Why was his mom crying? “Hey, hey what’s up?”

“You idiot! You’ve scared me! They told me that they couldn’t find you or maybe you’d turned but I didn’t believe them for one second I told them not my fucking boy--”

“What the fuck are you talking about.” Bakugou felt his stomach drop.

She didn’t stop talking. “They gave up looking for you, I thought you were dead, it’s been months--”

*Months?*

“Katsuki, what did they do to you?”

“Who is ‘they,’ Mom? Will you stop being so fucking vague and just spit it out?!” Bakugou was losing his patience. His mom was always crazy, but not this crazy.

There was a pause, long enough that Bakugou had to check that the line wasn’t dead. “You really don’t remember.”

Remember *what*? He could have screamed at her but he wasn’t cruel enough to scream at a person who was crying for no fucking reason.

“They took you. The League of Villains took you. That’s what your school said. You’ve been missing for months.”

Bakugou put one hand on the wall to support himself. He felt sick, his vision was swimming. His mother’s voice became muffled. All he could hear was the pounding of his heartbeat in his ears.

“Mom, I need to get out of here. I think I need a plane ticket.”

He hung up, hot tears flooding his face. He couldn’t stop them. He roared at the ceiling, in his rage threw the nightstand against the ground. He gathered everything he could carry, kicked down the bedroom door. “DEKU!!!”

Bakugou bounded over the railing, frantic. Izuku was nowhere. He was gone, off wherever he went during the day. It definitely wasn’t fucking *therapy* since he was clearly a fucking *psychopath*. Bakugou blew up the door, ran outside. He realized suddenly that he had no idea where he was. New Zealand? Probably another lie. Every lie that Izuku had told him crumbled, the pieces falling like spilled jigsaw puzzles. He screamed again, sprinted. He passed the field, still burnt from their battle. He didn’t stop running for miles, then relied on his Quirk to propel himself as far as he could go.
It was hours before he saw another soul -- a white woman driving a truck, who looked terrified when she saw this flaming maniac barrel towards her. She tried to swerve the car but Bakugou landed on the bed of the truck, pounded on the window. “Please, I need to get to a fucking airport! God, shit, please fucking help me!”

He was winded, delirious, he felt like he was going to pass out. He heaved, his exhaustion finally hitting him. He fell to his knees, arms throbbing as he tried to hold himself up.

The truck driver parked, exited her vehicle. “Now what are you on about, son?”

Bakugou told her everything, at least everything he knew. There were so many holes in his story, but something about the look on his pitiful face made her believe him.

She drove him to the closest town, bought him a bus ticket, a map. Sacramento, California was his fucking destination. He cried on the bus ride until he had nothing left.

He called his mother again in the airport. She wired him enough money to book a flight to Tokyo. He must have seemed like a lunatic at the ticketing office. The clerk was finally convinced when he told her to look him up, to call his school. He didn’t have a passport. There’s nothing we can do for you, she said.

They sent him to the embassy in San Francisco, another bus ride, another four hours.

Every minute that passed could have given him a heart attack. He half expected Deku to show up, fuck up his story, force him to stay. He never came, didn’t halt the bus and yank him back by the collar of his shirt, didn’t happen to show up at the next stop with a smiling face like nothing was wrong.

He didn’t remember anything about the flight home. As he slept on the plane he had nightmares -- dark rooms and concrete.

There was a swarm of people to greet him when he landed -- reporters, his family, what seemed like the entire faculty and student body of Yuuei. He accepted their affection silently.

His parents asked him questions. The press asked him questions, even as they were kept away. The teachers wanted to know any information he could give them. The students seemed to have forgotten the months of avoidance.

Everyone suddenly believed him.

Everyone wanted to know what happened.

He couldn’t tell them. He just didn’t know.

Bakugou didn’t tell anyone about Izuku. He knew he had been on a plane, he must have actually gone missing, but the details turned fuzzy and he started to doubt himself. Had all of that been a fever dream? Had it been someone wearing his face? Someone with a transformation Quirk who just happened to know how Izuku looked like, how he talked, all his little actions?

They kept him in the recovery ward of the school under a 24/7 watch. He wondered if this is what the psych ward felt like.

---
Yuuei was different. There were dorms now, apparently. His mother insisted he stays there, hesitant to let him walk home alone on the weekends. There’s no silence anymore -- people chatting noisily in the hallway, what sounds like stomping in the halls or the room above him. At night the electric lights home outside.

Yuuei was different. People talked to him now. They stopped asking him about what happened. Most of them figured that he had been traumatized somehow. They never told him that, but that was the consensus throughout the whole student body. People apologized to him -- the ones in class 1-A who had been there on the retreat. They blamed themselves for not saving him in time, for letting him slip between their fingers. Kirishima offered to walk him home, invited him to hang out on the weekends. Sometimes, Bakugou even agreed.

Yuuei was different. His disappearance had struck a chord somehow. People understood what he already knew -- being a hero wasn’t a game. The world was cruel. None of them were invincible.

It wasn’t just Yuuei that was different. There were rumors of a hero killer -- maybe more than one. Bodies on bodies of pro heroes were found. It was never clear if there was a pattern, but it did seem clear that it must be multiple people, each with a different Quirk. That was the only logical explanation, the press said. All of the attacks had centered on Tokyo, with some on the outskirts or nearby suburbs. People stayed indoors more at night. If heroes weren’t safe, how could anyone feel safe?

Bakugou had to fight to be allowed to take the preliminary license exam. He wasn’t ready, they told him. He still had to recover, they told him. All Might in particular was a thorn in his side. Some small part of Bakugou couldn’t shake the suspicion that what Deku had said, might have said, he might have made up that he had said, was true.

They kept talking over him, talking like he wasn’t there.

“It would be a huge liability to the school. What would happen to our reputation if he is captured again?”

“We still don’t know the League of Villain’s intentions and Bakugou doesn’t have that information for us either. Who’s to say that they won’t come for him again.”

And his least favorite one, “It’s just too dangerous.”

Bakugou lost it. “If anyone fucking knows that it’s dangerous to be a hero, it’s me!”

In the end, it was a split vote on whether or not he was allowed to take the exam. All Might was the tie breaker vote that allowed him to go.

Bakugou was exhausted from making his case. He was always exhausted these days. He waited at outside the conference room for the teachers to file out. When All Might left, Bakugou grabbed his arm. “All Might, I need to talk to you.”

It was the first time Bakugou had spoken to any of the teachers of his own volition since his return, so All Might clamped a big hand on his shoulder. “Of course, my boy.”

They sat in the otherwise empty teacher’s lounge, All Might leaning forward with the grin that seemed to be permanently fixed onto his face, Bakugou kicking his feet up right into the coffee table. He was already the most notorious student. He couldn’t give two fucks about being rude. All Might decided not to scold him out of pity. He would probably be furious if he found out how much All
Might pitied him.

“Bakugou, what would you like to talk about?” All Might tried on a hospitable tone of voice. It came out awfully close to a game show voice. He wondered if he should have been more gentle.

“Before you saved me from the slime villain, was there anyone else before that?” Bakugou stared intently at the cup of tea in his hands. He didn’t want to look at All Might and wonder. He just wanted to hear a truth.

All Might was taken aback. “Why, yes actually—”

“What did you say to him?!” Bakugou raised his voice. It didn’t make sense in the context. If it was anyone else, All Might would have sat next to them, comforted them. Somehow he thought it wouldn’t help.

“Ah, Bakugou, I’m not sure what you want from me.” He searched for a reason, came up empty. “I need you to give me information. I don’t mean to sound conceited, but I have saved a lot of people.”

“How can I be more fucking clear, All Might? How many fucking villains do you have to fight twice?” Bakugou looked up. He was crying. All Might didn’t realize that he was crying. “What the fuck did you say to Deku?!”

Memories flooded him. All Might remembered Bakugou in the paper, had been part of the deliberations about rescinding his application. The young man who had demolished a neighborhood park, one he had allegedly loved and grown up with. And why?

“I really want to help you. Could you tell me—”

“Deku! Midoriya Izuku! About this tall, curly hair, and a fucking Quirkless nerd! You saved him from the slime monster too! Did you fucking talk to him after?!” Bakugou was shaking. All Might was surprised he had the mind to put down the tea cup instead of breaking it. “Please… I need to know.”

All Might remembered him. “He’s the one who wanted to be a hero.” He could feel the tense, impatient AND? between them. “I told him that he could try, but he should be realistic.”

Bakugou collapsed, his head in his hands. He was heaving, sobbing like he hadn’t since his escape. Everything was jumbled inside of him. If this was true, how much else was true? Izuku had lied, there was no doubt about that, but he didn’t know about what, or how much, or if it even mattered anymore. He felt like his insides were on fire. He stared down at his hands and they didn’t feel like his own.

All Might finally got the nerve to sit down next to Bakugou, put an arm over him. “Tell me. Let me know what’s going on.”

Bakugou had abruptly stopped crying. He felt like he wasn’t touching the floor. “He’s the one who killed himself.”

A knot twisted in All Might’s stomach.

All Might shushed him, pulled him into his shoulder. “I had no idea, Bakugou. I’m sorry. It was never my intention to hurt him. If it means anything, I’m sorry that I’ve played this part in your pain. I wish I had figured that out sooner. I wish I could have helped you. I want to help you now. It’s the least I can do.”
Bakugou stared into the distance. His eyes looked hollow. “He killed himself but… I saw him, All Might.”

“In a nightmare? Or--”

“No, I… I really saw him. While I was gone. I don’t know why.”

“You don’t need to know. I believe you, Bakugou.”

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The months flew past him like someone else was experiencing them. He wasn’t there for his triumph at the licensing exams. He watched himself receive offer upon offer for internships, watched himself silently listening to other people that he was supposedly hanging out with. It was like his head was full of concrete. He didn’t feel bad. He didn’t feel anything.

He should have felt more excited to have the chance to learn from the number two hero, truly the best option given that All Might didn’t do internships. It was a good fit, honestly — between their personalities and their Quirks, Endeavor and Bakugou seemed to understand each other. At least, that’s what Bakugou assumes as Endeavor slowly warmed to him, started to relax and complain about his son. Bakugou would laugh along, an empty, stilted laugh.

It’s because of Endeavor that Bakugou is in Hosu City when the Noumus attack. It’s because of Endeavor that he ends up alone. He was told to stay here and wait by an idiot who didn’t realize his pupil would be the last person to wait. Bakugou chased Endeavor, propelling himself through the air to catch up. He watched as something odd happened -- a hero fell with no reason to fall.

Izuku is also in Hosu City. The commotion of the city only makes it easier for him to move. He might get lucky, given that all these heroes were swarming like flies to a bug zapper. He might as well wait in place, given the change of plans and given the predictability of hero motions. They’d be taking the obvious route, running straight towards the commotion without paying attention. He could pluck them out of the air effortlessly.

He was inconspicuous to the fools passing overhead. Anyone actually paying attention should have noticed if someone wasn’t moving — everyone ought to running to or from the danger. What if he had been injured, needed help? Where were the rescue heroes? There seemed to be so few of them these days.

Izuku watched the heroes come and go, patiently waiting for the right target.

Izuku struck out, snatched a hero as she passed his alley — lucky, lucky, he was. Uwabami, the worst of the worst, the pinnacle of corruption in the hero world. He crushed her like the bug she was —

An explosion flooded the alleyway — fire and compressed air knocking Izuku back. No, no, no, no, not tonight. He shielded himself with his arms, stepped over the body carefully so as not to bloody his boots. He still had time to disappear before he was seen.

Bakugou was in his face in a flash — when did he get so fast? — and pummeled him. Izuku flew back, landed and paused. Bakugou was too late. His face went white with horror, then twisted into knots.
“Hero Killer!! I’m gonna kill you with my own goddamn hands!” Bakugou launched himself at Izuku.

Izuku was forced to retreat briefly, head spinning. Bakugou was predictable as a fighter, but he still was dangerous in close quarters, even worse with his complete disregard for damage or injury. His movements were erratic, twisting in the air and bouncing off of walls, and he relentlessly closed the distance between them. “Don’t fucking run from me! Fight me!”

The alleyway lit up orange, again and again, plumes of smoke rising. It was loud, flashy, bound to draw attention. Izuku needed to get away quick, so he dodged again and again, didn’t engage. Bakugou lunged forward at full strength, intent to kill—

Izuku kicked him back, hard in the gut, slamming him to the ground. He didn’t want to keep this up much longer. It was a waste of his time. He had so much work to do. But Bakugou propelled himself with explosions and bounced back up. It was an idiotic move — his entire front was unprotected, a huge opening. Izuku kicked again, meaning to knock him back. Bakugou sidestep and caught his leg and swung him laterally into the wall. Izuku hit his head, hard. He split his forehead, blood running over his eyes.

Izuku’s mask clattered, broken on the floor. He forced a smile, lop-sided because of his injury. “Kacchan, wait—”

Bakugou could have swore he heard a click in his head.

He screamed without realizing it. His brain felt stuffed full, like there were two of him that knew two different worlds. The notebooks and the barn. The chains and the hopeless, endless field. “The perfect Noumu,” Izuku had said. “Infinite potential,” he had said. All Might’s Quirk and his own. Izuku’s freakish, nonsensical rants, the League of Villains, his endless information, the patrol routes, multiple Quirks, disappearing for hours, the cruel, misplaced smile on his face… Bakugou remembered it all and--

--the world went white and silent. The rage he flew into was total. It swallowed him whole and snapped him.

Bakugou woke up dizzy, restrained. He panicked, flailed before he realized that it was a stretcher. His knuckles were charred and bloody, his arms a wreck again. He stared down in horror at Izuku, still breathing but battered, disgusting, his eyes closed with resignation, covered in burns. His face was streaked with tears and blood.

He watched, silent, as they took Izuku away.

Chapter End Notes

I love all you sinners. Thank you so much for your support and for riding this roller coaster of emotions I’ve built for y’all.

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